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FORMING A

COMPLETE COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

ESPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF

MINISTERS, BIBLE STUDENTS AND SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHERS

BY JAMES COMPER GRAY

AND

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DISCARD

THE OLD TESTAMENT

VOL. II

CONTAINING CHRONICLES TO PROVERBS INCLUSIVE.

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THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES.

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1659

Introduction.

I. Title. The two Bks. of Chrons., comprised in one by the anc. Jews were called by them "THE WORDS OF DAYS," or "ANNALS;" "prob. fr. the circumstance of their being compiled out of *diaries* or *annals*, in wh. were recorded the various events related in these books" (*Horne*). They are termed in the LXX. "The things that were left or omitted" (PARALEIPOMENA), bec. "they supply omissions in the other historical books" (*Litton*). The title of Chronicles was given to them by Jerome, bec. they contain an abstract, in order of time, of the whole of the sacred history, to the time when they were written. **II. Time.** Not composed bef. time of Ezra, for they close with the acc. that Cyrus, by an edict in the first yr. of his reign, allowed the Jews to return to their country (II. xxxvi. 22, *ff.*), and bring down the genealogical tree of Zerubbabel to his grandchildren. (I. iii. 19–21.)—*Keil.* About 410 B. C. may be named as the probable time when those books were compiled. **III. Author.** Gen. ascr. to Ezra. There is much to favor this view, but it cannot be regarded at all as established. In any case some portions (I. iii. 19–24) must be ascribed to a later hand. **IV. Design and characteristics.** "Their main scope is to raise into conspicuous prominence the religious and eternal aspect of the kingdom of God, as contradistinguished from the civil and temporal form of government under which the people of God were then constrained to live, and so to exhibit such a view of the former course of events as would fitly introduce the state of things presented in the narrative of Ezra and Nehemiah. Recapitulating the history of man before the times of David, they present the higher aspect of that kingdom, which took its origin from his family, had the promise of a perpetual duration, and was to culminate in the Messiah. The history of David and his line is therefore traced to the exclusion of that of the ten tribes, which became, by their apostasy, strangers to the covenant of promise, and with constant reference to the loftier destiny of his throne as the kingdom of God that cannot be moved. Hence the religious, not the civil, undertakings of its kings are dwelt upon with special attention. And the narrative is carried on beyond the burning of the temple and beyond the life of Jehoiachin to the proclamation of Cyrus, authorizing and inviting the banished people to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild the temple and the city. This furnishes the fitting link, to which may be attached the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, containing the history of the remnant who returned on this invitation, until it vanishes in the inert and obscure interval between the Old and the New Testament."—*Murphy.*

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

Part I. — GENEALOGICAL TABLES FROM ADAM TO TIME OF EZRA.

Sect. 1. The patriarchs fr. Adam to Jacob — of posterity of Judah to David — and of his to Zerubbabel, I. i.–iii.

Sect. 2. Of posterity of Judah by Pharez — and of other sons of Jacob, iv.–viii., ix. 1

Sect. 3. Of first inhabs. of Jerusalem after captiv.... ..... ix. 2–34

Part II. — HISTORIES OF SAUL AND DAVID.

Sect. 1. Pedigree of Saul...I. ix. 35–44, x.

Sect. 2. Hist. of reign of David, xi.–xxix. 22

Part III. HISTORY OF UNITED KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH UNDER SOLOMON.

Sect. 1. Death of David. Wisdom, etc., of Solomon..I. xxix. 23–30, II. i.

Sect. 2. Solomon's temple, etc., II. ii.–viii. 16

Sect. 3. End of Solomon's reign, viii. 17–ix.

Part IV. HISTORY OF KINGDOM OF JUDAH FROM JEROBOAM TO ITS TERMINATION.

Sect. 1. Rehoboam..... II. x.–xii.

Sect. 2. Abijah and Asa. .....xiii. –xvi.

Sect. 3. Jehoshaphat..... xvii.–xx.

Sect. 4. Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah..... xxi., xxii.

Sect. 4. Joash .....xxiii., xxiv.

Sect. 6. Amaziah, Uzziah, and Jotham. xxv.–xxvii.

Sect. 7. Ahaz.....xxviii.

Sect. 8. Hezekiah.....xxix.–xxxii.

Sect. 9. Manasseh, Amon..... xxxiii.

Sect. 10. Josiah.. .. .. xxxiv., xxxv.

Sect. 11. Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah; destr. of Jerusalem and temple.....xxxvi.

(Contents according to Murphy.) — These books are naturally divided into four parts. Part I., including nine chapters, consists of a series of genealogies or a bare summary of the ancient history of man in the line of Israel to the time of David. The first chapter brings down the genealogy from Adam to Israel. The following eight chapters trace the pedigree of most of the tribes of Israel generally to the captivity, in which they were removed from their country. The pedigree of David in particular is continued down to the building of the second temple. And that of Aaron is extended to Jozadak, who was carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Part II., completing the first book, contains the history of David Part III., in nine chapters, comprises the reign of Solomon. And part IV., being the remainder of the second book, continues the history of the line of David and the kingdom of Judah to the proclamation of Cyrus authorizing the return of the people and the rebuilding of the temple.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

B. C. 4004, *etc.*

1—16. (1) This list is taken fr. Ge. v. and x., and the differences in the names arise fr. a more exact reproduction of the Heb. forms. **Sheth,** *R. V.*, "Seth." (2) **Kenan,** Cainan. (3) **Henoch,** Enoch. (5–16) **sons,** *etc.*, comp. Ge. x. 2–18.

Adam's posterity

Lessons from genealogies.— Let us think — I. Of the multitudes that have gone through the world, have acted their part in it, and then quitted it. II. Of the providence of God which keeps up the generations of men, and so preserves that degenerate race, though guilty and obnoxious, in being upon earth.— *M. Henry.*

Starting up here and there like rugged cliffs, the genealogies claim more than a sterile grandeur; for bleak and barren though they seem, there is a well-spring at their foot. It is from these dreary crags that the fountain of Christ's manhood takes its rise; and as you follow the stream from Ur of the Chaldees to the manger of Bethlehem, you find how faithful the Promiser, and how watchful the Providence which through all the eventful centuries kept afloat, and guided on the ark of the Advent. — *J. Hamilton.*

Nimrod, the first conqueror.— Previous to this verse we find recorded only *names.* Nimrod is recalled to mind by a brief but suggestive description. "He began to be mighty upon the earth." It is further narrated in Genesis (x. 9) "he was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord." From this it appears that proverbs and legends grew up round his name. "The Eastern traditions make him a man of violent, lawless habits, a rebel against God, and a usurper of boundless authority over his fellow-men." It may suffice, however, to recognize in him the first person to develop war as an agency for subjecting some portions of the human family to the dominion of others. He is the first warrior, the progenitor of the Alexanders and Napoleons, the great world-conquerors. — *Pul. Com.* *The riddle of life.* — How true is that old fable of the sphinx, who sat by the wayside, propounding her riddle to the passengers, which, if they could not answer, she destroyed them! Such a sphinx is this life of ours, to all men and societies of men. Nature, like the sphinx, is of womanly celestial loveliness and tenderness; the face and bosom of a goddess, but ending in claws and the body of a lioness. There is in her a celestial beauty, which means celestial order, pliancy to wisdom; but there is also a darkness, a ferocity, a fatality, which are infernal. She is a goddess, but one not yet disimprisoned; one still half imprisoned — the inarticulate, lovely, still encased in the inarticulate, chaotic. How true! And does she not propound her riddles to us? Of each man she asks daily, in mild voice, yet with a terrible significance, "Knowest thou the meaning of this day? What thou canst do to-day, wisely attempt to do." Nature, universe, destiny, existence, howsoever we name this grand unnamable fact in the midst of which we live and struggle, is as a heavenly bride and conquest to the wise and brave, to them who can discern her behests and do them; a destroying fiend to them who can not. Answer her riddle, it is well with thee. Answer it not, pass on regarding it not, it will answer itself; the solution of it is a thing of teeth and claws. Nature is a dumb lioness, deaf to thy pleadings, fiercely devouring. — *Carlyle.*

"It is to live twice, when you can enjoy the recollection of your former life." — *Martial.*

B. C. 2348, *etc.*

17—28. (17) **Shem,**[a] his descendants are fully given, bec. with them the Bible narrative is mainly concerned. **Uz,** *etc.*, these are, in Ge. x. 23, said to be the sons of Aram. (19) **Peleg** = *division.* "The chronicler intersperses his genealogies with short anecdotes about the different families and tribes." —*Bennett.* (22) **Ebal,** in Ge. x. 28 *Obal.* (24–27) *vss.* 24–54 correspond to Gen. xi.–xxxvi. **Shem . . Abraham,** summarized record fr. Ge. xi. 10–26. **Shelah,** in Ge. *Salah.* (28) **sons of Abraham,** here those only are mentioned with wh. Bib. history is concerned. Keturah's family is mentioned separately.[b] Isaac mentioned first, because most important to the history. He was fourteen yrs. younger than Ishmael.

Shem's line to Abraham

[a] Comp. Ge. x. 21–29.

[b] 1 Chr. i. 32, 33.

Abraham's double name. — F. W. Robertson has some suggestive remarks on the significance of ancient names in his sermon on "Jacob's Wrestling." He recognizes in the Hebrew history three periods in which names and words bore very different characters. We deal with the first of these periods, when "names meant truths, and words were the symbols of realities. The characteristics of the names given then were simplicity and sincerity. They were drawn from a few simple sources: either from some characteristic of the individual, as Jacob, the 'supplanter;' or from the idea of family, as Benjamin, 'son of my right hand;' or from the conception of the tribe or nation, then gradually consolidating itself; or, lastly, from the religious idea of God." Scripture attaches significance to names, and the precise name indicates the minuteness of the Divine knowledge and the tenderness of the Divine care:

"We talk of human life as a journey, but how variously is that journey performed. There are those who walk on velvet lawns and smooth terraces, where every gale is arrested and every beam is tempered. There are others who walk on the Alpine paths of life, through stormy sorrows, over

B. C. 2348, *etc.*

sharp afflictions; walk with bare feet and naked breast, jaded, mangled, and chilled." —*Sydney Smith.*

"I have called thee by name," "I will give him a new name," *etc.* So a change of a man's name may seal to him the fact of new, more important, and more tender Divine relations. — *Pul. Com. The stream of life.* — Life bears us on like a stream of a mighty river. Our boat at first glides down the narrow channel, through the playful murmurings of the little brook, and the winding of the grassy borders. The trees shed their blossoms over our young heads, the flowers on the brink seem to offer themselves to our young hands; we are happy in hope, and we grasp eagerly at the beauties around us; but the stream hurries on, and still our hands are empty. Our course in youth and manhood is along a wilder and deeper flood, amid objects more striking and magnificent. We are animated at the moving pictures of enjoyment and industry passing around us; we are excited at some short-lived disappointment. The stream bears us on, and our joys and griefs are alike left behind us. We may be shipwrecked — we cannot be delayed; whether rough or smooth, the river hastens to its home, till the roar of the ocean is in our ears, and the tossing of the waves is beneath our feet, and the land lessens from our eyes, and the floods are lifted up around us, and we take our leave of earth and its inhabitants, until of our further voyage there is no witness save the Infinite and Eternal. — *Bp. Heber.*

"The sacramental character of a name consists in its divine appointment to represent and commemorate and testify some special grace and blessing." — *Wilkinson.*

B. C. 1921, *etc.*

posterity of Abraham

29—42. (29) **Ishmael,** mentioned first to clear the way for giving posterity of Isaac, the child of promise. God's promise was that he should beget 12 princes.[a] **Nebaioth,** *etc.*, comp. Ge. xxv. 13–15. (30) **Hadad,** in Ge. *Hadar.* (32) **Keturah,** *etc.*, this is abridged from Gen. xxv. 1–4. (34) **Esau,** on the principle mentioned in note on *vs.* 29, Esau's descendants are dealt with before those of Jacob. (35) **sons of Esau,** *see* Ge. xxxvi. 10–13. (36) **Zephi,** in Ge. *Zepho.* **Timna,** in Ge. xxxvi. 12, this is not a son, but concubine wife to Eliphaz. (38) **sons of Seir,** comp. Ge. xxxvi. 20, 21. (39) **Lotan,** Ge. xxxvi. 22. **Timna,** poss. same as *vs.* 36, if the record in Ge. be the correct one. (40–42) **sons,** *etc.*, Ge. xxxvi. 23–28.

a Ge. xvii. 20.

"The great northern desert of Arabia, including the entire neck, was colonized by these tribes." — *Jamieson.*

The perils of life. — Go to some man now past the meridian of life, whose character and habits, with the Divine blessing, have made him honored and successful. He was one of a band, more or less numerous, who set out in life together. They came forth from their homes and from the schoolroom, differing, perhaps, but little either in their talents or acquirements. Ask him to tell you where those his early associates are now, and what he remembers of their history. Ah! how painful the recollection and the recital! One, he will say, as he brings back the half-forgotten past, looked on the wine when it was red, and he went early to the drunkard's grave. Another yielded to the love of vain display; and after a brief career of brilliant folly and extravagance, he passed by bankruptcy to poverty, and was soon forgotten by the world. A third indulged, at first, in some trifling dishonesty, and then he was led on till he became a villain, and finally went to prison, or to an ignominious death. A fourth gave loose to sensual appetite; and then from impurity of thought and word he went on step by step, till he suffered the miseries and met at last the fate of the worn-out profligate A fifth was taken in the gambler's snare, and fell by suicide. A sixth — but why should I go on? So daily perish, on life's broad arena, the hopes of fathers and mothers! So sink into the depths of shame and ruin many who should have shone as brilliant stars in the galaxy of intellect — should have found a place among the noblest spirits that have ever done honor to humanity and claimed the enviable heights of fair renown. The roadside of life is all whitened with the bones of the multitudes who have fallen thus, having made, by their own missteps, an utter wreck of their hopes, their characters, and their all. With such evidence of the perils of life, can it be doubted that youth requires a guide with a friendly hand to lead them? — *R. Palmer.*

All life is a journey, not a home; those transient enjoyments wh. you have in this life, lawful in their way — those incidental and evanescent pleasures which you may sip — are little inns only upon the roadside of life, where you are refreshed for a moment, that you may take again the pilgrim's staff and journey on, seeking what is still before you — the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

How frail is human life! A thin texture of living flesh is the only screen between never-dying souls and their eternal condition.

kings and dukes of Edom

43—54. (43) **the kings,** *etc.*, comp. Ge, xxxvi. 31–43. (44) **Jobab,** is by some supposed to be the Job of the Scripture book. (51) **Hadad died,** this is added to statement in Gen. xxxvi. 39. Possibly he died during the life-time of Moses, after the account in Gen. was written. **the dukes,** this word indicates a change in the form of government on the death of Hadad. Zöckler, in Lange's Com., translates "Duke of Timnah, Duke of Aligh," *etc.*, and says "the list enumerates not persons but seats of gov't, and has a geographical rather than geneological importance."

"They only have lived long who have lived virtuously."—*Sheridan.*

Though transient, not vain. — As we read these following verses and find one king mentioned and then another, with simply the record of his name, his reign and his death, we feel how swiftly flows the current of human life, how many generations have come and gone, how slight attention posterity can spare for those who were once great and honored. Three thoughts befit the theme. I. To each man in his time his heritage seems large and lasting. II. The best earthly estate is a painfully transient thing. III. Our short earthly life is long enough to hold and to work much enduring good. — *W. Clarkson.*

Divineness of human nature. — With our sciences and our cyclopædias, we are apt to forget the Divineness in those laboratories of ours. We ought not to forget it! That once well forgotten, I know not what else were worth remembering! Most sciences, I think, were then a very dead thing — withered, contentious, empty — a thistle in late autumn. The best science, without this, is but as the dead timber; it is not the growing tree and forest — which gives ever-new timber among other things! Man cannot know either, unless he can worship in some way. His knowledge is a pedantry and dead thistle, otherwise. — *Carlyle.*

B. C. *cir.* 1752.

"There is only one king who shall have no successor, and that king's name is Jesus Christ." — *J. Parker.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—12. (1) **Israel,** the new and permanent name given to Jacob. The order of the names is peculiar; it neither follows seniority nor legitimacy. *Vss.* 1 and 2 cover Gen. xxix. to xxxv. (3) **Judah,** mentioned first bec. the right of primogeniture was transferred to him.[a] **Er,** Ge. xxxviii. 7. (5) **Pharez,** Ge. xlvi. 12. (6) **sons of Zerah,** taken from sources unknown to us. *Cf.* 1 Ki. iv. 31, where it is said that Solomon was wiser than these four men. "Hence it appears that they were eminent among the sons of the East and of Egypt for their wisdom. In Egypt they dwelt when Joseph was in authority, and his family was still in high esteem; and in Egypt, accordingly, their natural talents for the fine arts and for social wisdom were developed and cultivated. These qualities of the Zarhites descended in the tribe of Judah, and attained their highest lustre in David and Solomon." — *Murphy.* (7) **Carmi,** not previously mentioned, but a son of *Zimri.* **Achar,** same as Achan.[b] *Vss.* 10–17 give the descendants of Ram, of the line of David. Comp. Ruth iv. 18–22. **Nahshon,** *cf.* Num. i. 7. Probably in this list some names have been omitted. (11) **Salma,** spelt also *Salmah* or *Salmon.*

posterity of Israel and Judah

[a] Ge. xlix. 8.

[b] Jos. vii. 1.

God's dealing with sin and the sinner (*vs.* 3, last clause). — I. God's estimate of sin, not man's. The judge's, not physician's, or father's, one of condemnation: not disease or misfortune; but guilt, not a thing of sentiment. II. God's treatment of sin. 1. Prompt; 2. Decided; 3. Severe; 4. Watchful. (1) The sinner a firstborn son; (2) The firstborn of Judah. Jesus, the true "firstborn of Judah," was made sin for us. — *Bonar.*

vs. 3. "The repetition of a *vs.* in Genesis, in a very unlikely place — in the midst of names and genealogies; God thus giving us to know the stress He lays on it" — *Bonar*

"There will be a resurrection of names some day," says Ruskin.

Sons of Israel sons of Judah. — The child is truly and literally "the heir of all the ages." The past, with all its legacies, has existed for it, just as all the future will be its own. To whatsoever heights of human excellence it may rise, or to whatsoever depths of human degradation it may sink, the child is now an element in the sum of human life; a new unit in the aggregate of mankind. It is therefore worthy both of study and reverence. Did we but form an adequate conception of the dignity and also the marvellousness of human existence, the oldest man might well stand bareheaded and thoughtful in the presence of a babe. — *Anon.*

"Not only the language of a nation, but its spiritual life is written in its names and words. Read in this light, what meaning is thrown into these dry genealogical trees of the old Testament!"

13—17. (13) **Jesse begat,** *etc.*, 1 Sa. xvi. 10.[c] **Shimma,** Shammah, in 1 Sa.; *Shimeah,* 2 Sa. xiii. 3. (14) **Raddai,** prob. *Rei* of 1 Ki. i. 8. (16) **sisters,** by the same *mother*, not by Jesse.[d] **sons of Zeruiah,** 2 Sa. ii. 18. *Abishai* may have been eldest born. (17) **Ishmeelite,** comp. 2 Sa. xvii. 25. The Sept. has "Jesreelite," which is more likely to be correct. Comp 1 Chr. iv. 3.

children of Jesse

[c] This list only gives seven sons, the *vs.* in Samuel indicates that David made eight. Perhaps one died young without issue.

[d] 2 Sa. xvii. 25.

Greatness. — That which especially distinguishes a high order of man from a low order of man — that which constitutes human goodness, human nobleness — is surely not the degree of enlightenment with which men pursue their own advantage; but it is self-forgetfulness, it is self-sacrifice, it is the disregard of personal pleasure and personal indulgence, personal advantages remote or present. — *Froude.*

18—24. (18) **Caleb,** *vs.* 9, *Chelubai.* **and of Jerioth,** secondary wife: the names of her children are not given. (19) **Ephrath,** *see vs.* 50. (20) **Hur,** who supported Moses in the battle with Amalek, Gen. xvii. 12. **Bezaleel,**

posterity of Caleb and Hezron

B. C. *cir.* 1471.

the great artificer.[a] (21) **Machir,** Nu. xxvii. 1. (22) **Jair,** Nu. xxxii. 41; Ju. x. 4; Josh. xix. 34; Deut. iii. 14; Josh. xiii. 30. (23) **took,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "and Geshur[b] and Aram took the towns of Jair from them, with Kenath and the villages thereof, even three-score cities. All these were the sons of **Machir,**" *etc.* (24) **dead in Caleb-ephratah,** *i. e.* probably Bethlehem.

[a] Ex. xxxi. 2; xxxv. 30; xxxvi. 1. 2; xxxvii. 1.

[b] De. iii. 14; Jos. xii. 5; 2 Sa. xv. 8.

The greatness and littleness of man.—

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful, is man!
How passing wonder He who made him such!
Who centred in our make such strange extremes
From different natures marvelously mix'd,
Connection exquisite of distant worlds!
Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!
Midway from nothing to the Deity!
A beam ethereal, sullied and absorpt!
Though sullied and dishonor'd, still Divine!
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!
Helpless, immortal! insect infinite!
A worm!—a God!—*Young.*

"Whose silent prayers and labors Heaven employs
To do the good, whilst others make the noise."
—*Jane Taylor.*

posterity of Jerahmeel

25—33. (25) **Jerahmeel,** *vs.* 9; this genealogy is not given elsewhere. **Ahijah,** prob. the name of Jerahmeel's first wife. (26) **another,** wh. seems to involve that one had been mentioned. (27–33) **and . . Jerahmeel,** merely genealogical interest attaches to these names. (31) **children of,** *R. V.*, "sons of," The *A. V.* was evidently intended to harmonize with *vs.* 34.

Evil and good men.—An evil man is clay to God, wax to the devil. God may stamp him into powder or temper him anew; but none of His means can melt him. Contrariwise, a good man is God's wax, and Satan's clay; he relents at every look of God, but is not stirred at any temptation. I had rather bow than break to God; but, for Satan and the world, I had rather be broken in pieces with their violence than suffer myself to be bowed to their obedience.—*Bp. Hall.* *The consecration to God of the military talent.*—We cannot accept fully the facts of human history without recognizing the Divine gift of the genius of the warrior. Different views are held on the righteousness of war. From the Christian standpoint all *offensive* war must be at once and entirely condemned, but defensive war—and aid to those called to defensive war—appear to be fully consistent with Christian principles. Still, we shall unfeignedly rejoice when the principle of arbitration can be universally adopted, and the "nations learn war no more." It is, even in its best forms, a terrible human scourge and evil. But, whatever our view of it may be, history keeps her testimony, and declares that, in the long story of our race, *war* has been one of the important agencies used by God, and overruled by Him, to the accomplishment of His gracious ends; and that He has, again and again, raised up men who had "war" for their life-mission, and the military endowment as their precise trust. There have been the Joshuas, the Davids, the Maccabees, the Marlboroughs, and the Wellingtons, *etc.* Times and circumstances have made war the only possible agency for the punishing of wrong and the deliverance and confirmation of the right.—*Pul. Com.*

"Sink not beneath imaginary sorrows: call to your aid your courage and your wisdom: think on the sudden change of human scenes; think on the various accidents of war; think on the mighty power of awful virtue; think on the Providence that guards the good."—*Johnson.*

As the arteries fill the veins with blood, so the Spirit of Christ fills the soul of the believer with a new life.

posterity of Sheshan

34—41. (35) **gave,** "that a master who had no male issue might marry a slave to his daughter and adopt him in the place of a son is shown by these verses."—*Oehler.* (36–41) **Attai . . Elishama,** none of these names are known to us.

Eastern relation of servants.—The usages of the East differ very much from those of the West, with relation to the more than kind treatment of their servants; but they perfectly agree with those that are referred to in the Scriptures. They marry their slaves frequently to their daughters, and that when they have no male issue, and those daughters are what we call great fortunes. That Hassan, of whom Maillet gives a long account in his eleventh letter, and who was kiaia of the Asaphs of Cairo; that is to say, the colonel of four or five thousand men who go under that name, was the slave of a predecessor in that office, the famous Kamel, and married his daughter: "for Kamel," says he, "according to the custom of the country, gave him one of his daughters in marriage, and left him, at his death, one part of the great

"No man ever miscarried because his life was short, but because it was bad. That life is long enough that dispatches the task of it."—*Herle.*

In each succeeding stage of life there is no higher wisdom than to discern the duties which belong to it.

riches he had amassed together in the course of a long and prosperous life." What Sheshan then did was perhaps not so extraordinary as we may have imagined, but perfectly conformable to old Eastern customs, if not to the arrangements of Moses; at least it is, we see, just the same with what is now practiced. — *Harmer.*

B. C. *cir.* 1471.

posterity of Caleb

42—49. (42) **Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel,** a son of Hezron, poss. by the wife *Jerioth* of *vs.* 18. (42) **Mesha,** same as *Mareshah.* Some of these names belong to places rather than to persons. "In the original division of the land not only limits of tribal territories were fixed, but inside these also the districts of families." (A certain town would be the district of a certain family.) From this the towns themselves came to be personified and inserted in the tribal registers, in which local dependence is represented as genealogical descent." — *Oehler.* (49) **Achsa,** Jos. xv. 16, 17.[a] This locates Caleb and distinguishes him from the son of Hezron (*vs.* 18). This Caleb was the son of Jephunneh, and one of the twelve spies mentioned in Num. xiii. 6; xxxiv. 19.

Live for something. — Do good and leave behind you a monument of virtue that the storms of time can never destroy. Write your name by kindness, love, and mercy on the hearts of thousands you come in contact with year by year, and you will never be forgotten. No, your name, your deeds will be as legible on the hearts you leave behind as the stars on the brow of evening. They shall shine as brightly on earth as stars of heaven. — *Chalmers.*

[a] Repetition of names in a family was very common.

"Content of mind springing from innocence of life, from the faithful discharge of our duty, from satisfaction of conscience, from a good hope in regard to God and our future state, is much to be preferred before all the delights which any temporal possession or fruition can afford." — *Barrow.*

B. C. *cir.* 1451.

posterity of Caleb, the son of Hur

50—55. (50) **sons of Caleb,** this is the third Caleb, (*cf. vss.* 18 and 42,) not a Jerahmeelite like the second, but a son of Hur, (*vs.* 19) and grandson of the first Caleb. **Ephratah,** comp. *vs.* 19. **Kirjath-jearim,** manifestly the name of a place.[b] (51) **Beth-gader,** the Gedor of Jos. xv. 58. (52) **Haroeh,** comp. ch. iv. 2. **half,** *etc.*, *Manaheth,* a town in Judah, being part peopled by descendants of Shobal and Salma, *vs.* 54. (53) **Ithrites,** descendants of some one named Jether. Two of David's heroes were Ithrites, 2 Sam. xxiii. 38. **Zareathites,** of Zareah, Jos. xix. 41. **Eshtaulites,** of *Eshtaol,* Jos. xv. 33. (54) **Netophathites,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 28, 29. **the house of,** read Ataroth-beth-Joab, as the name of a place. (55) **Jabez.** ch. iv. 9, 10. **Kenites,** Ge. xv. 19, a people mixed with tribe of Judah.[c] **Rechab,** the famous family referred to in Jos. xxxv. 2–19; also in 2 Ki. x. 15, 23, where Jehonadab helps Jehu in the destruction of Baal-worship. "The Rechabites were a kind of nomadic ascetics."

Scribes. — A class devoted to exposition of law, instruction of the nation, and preservation of its records. 1. A noble calling. To study and expound sacred books, intone society, and spread the will of God. 2. A family calling. "The families of the scribes." Hereditary pursuits in all communities. Advantageous to fix traditions and habits in persons, to pursue studies in cities, colleges, and schools. 3. A needful calling. The revelation of God, written and printed, requires study, application, and circulation. A literary profession useful to society; a learned ministry the want of the times. "Writing is now the mightiest instrument on earth." — *Channing.*

[b] Jos. ix. 17.

[c] Ex. xviii. 10-19; Nu. x. 29–32; 1 Sa. xv. 6.

Thackeray asks, "What boots it whether it be Westminster or a little country spire which covers your ashes; or if a few days sooner or later the world forgets you!"

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

B. C. *cir.* 1053.

the sons of David

1—9. This chapter is occupied with the descendants of David — nine verses with his own sons, the remaining verses with the line of kings of his house. (1) **Amnon,** 2 Sa. iii. 2. **Daniel,** in Samuel called *Chileab.* (2) **Absalom,** 2 Sa. iii. 3. **Adonijah,** 2 Sa. iii. 4. (3) **fifth,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. iii. 4, 5. (4) **in Hebron,** 2 Sa. ii. 11; v. 5; 1 Ki. ii. 11. (5) **these,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. v. 14–16; 1 Ch. xiv. 4–7. The differences are chiefly in the pronunciation of names. **Bath-shua,** *Bathsheba.* (6) **Elishama,** also *Elishud.*[d] **Eliphelet,** *Elpalet.*[e] (7) **Nogah,** omitted in 2 Sa. v. (8) **Eliada,** also *Beeliada.*[f] (9) **Tamar,** 2 Sa. xiii. There were other sons; but their names are not recorded. (2 Sam. v. 13; xv. 16.)

The scribes. — As a class they date from the close of the Captivity; and from that time onward they appear to have exercised great and growing influence over the national life and religion. In the time of our Saviour they were evidently a very important class of the community. In their two grades — the lower, the interpreters of the classic Hebrew into the colloquial Aramaic; the higher, the doctors learned in the Pentateuch — they supplied to Israel much of the intellectual and moral element in the national life. Jesus

[d] 1 Chr. xiv. 5

[e] 1 Chr. xiv. 5.

[f] 1 Chr. xiv. 7.

"Few minds are sun-light, sources of light to themselves and to others. Many more are moons that shine with a derivative and reflected light. Among the tests to distinguish them is this: the former are always full; the latter only now and then,

B. C. *cir.* 1015.

when their suns are shining full upon them.—*Hare.*

admitted the excellence of their work when He denominated his ministers "scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven;" He pointed out their defects when He required of his followers a higher righteousness than theirs. And the evangelists contrast the professional formalism of the Jewish scholars with the freshness and authority of the Great and Divine Teacher. — *Pul. Com.*

David's line to Zedekiah

10–16. The line of David to the captivity.[a] (10) **Abia,** *R. V.*, "Abijah" is the same as Abijam, 1 Ki. xv. 1. Queen Athaliah, being out of the line of David, is omitted. (11) **Ahaziah,** called in 2 Chron. xxii. 6 Azariah, and in 2 Chr. xxi. 17 Jehoahaz. (12) **Azariah,** in 2 Kings xv. 13 and 17, *etc.*, called sometimes Uzziah. Comp. 2 Chron. xxvi. 1; xxvii. 2 and Matt. i. 7–8. (15) **Shallum,** (Jer. xxii. 11) same as Jehoahaz (2 Kings xxiii. 30). (16) **Jeconiah,** same as Coniah (Jer. xxii. 24) and Jehoiachin (2 Ki. xxiv. 6, *etc*). **Zedekiah,** prob. an otherwise unknown son of Jehoiakim, not his *successor*, who was Jehoiakim's brother.

a Compare for the changes in names of the later kings, 2 Ki. xxiii. 34; xxiv. 17, 18, *etc.*

Moral varieties in prosperity. — I. Note the words of Solomon, the head of this list, Ecc. ii. 18, 19. II. Of the kings who succeeded Solomon some were wise, but most were foolish. III. Their moral character not inherited, but affected by the condition of things that grew up under their predecessors. IV. Men should remember that though they cannot determine what the moral relations of their children shall be, they may affect those relations by — 1. The example they set; 2. The laws they pass; 3. The institutions they found.

Great men stand like solitary towers in the city of God, and secret passages, running deep beneath external nature, give their thoughts intercourse with higher intelligences, wh. strengthens and consoles them, and of wh. the laborers on the surface do not even dream.

The irony of names. — Abia, signifies "God is Father;" Jehoshaphat, "God judgeth;" Joram, (Jehoram), "God is high;" Amaziah points to strength; Azariah points to help; Jotham indicates perfectness; and Hezekiah signifies "God is my strength." We have often had occasion to point out the irony of names. Whilst in our case there may be no irony of a nominal kind, that is to say, no discrepancy between our names and our actions, yet there may be palpable irony of a circumstantial kind; for example, a man may be surrounded by wealth and yet may be known for his meanness, so that the poor receive nothing from his table, nor are the weak assisted by his hands. The wealthy man who is mean is a self-contradiction. Others of us may have the privilege of living in Christian families, yet in our spirit and thought we may belong to the coldest paganism. The family altar may be but a pile of stones, and the family repute for Christian consecration may be but a concealment of the deepest worldiness of thought and desire. — *J. Parker.*

successors of Jeconiah

17–24. (17) **Assir, Salathiel,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, reads "Jeconiah the captive; Shealtiel his son." (Comp. Mat. i. 12). Shealtiel was prob. the son of Neri, (Luke iii. 27), of the line of Nathan, but heir of Jeconiah.[b] (19) **Zerubbabel** is elsewhere invariably called the son of Shealtiel.[c] Perhaps we are to regard Malchiram, *etc.*, as the sons of Shealtiel and therefore Zerubbabel as his grandson. So in 1 Chr. i. 17, we read "Aram and Uz and Hul," though Rez and Hul are sons of Aram (Gen. x. 23). (20) **five,** from this word we may perhaps infer that Hashubah, *etc.*, were the sons of Meshullam. (22) **six,** this seems to include Shemaiah, acc. to the compiler's habit of linking together descendants of different degrees. — *Murphy.*

b Comp. Je. xxii. 30. Failing Solomon's line, the inheritance passed to the next of kin according to the Jewish law. Nu. xxvii. 8–11. — *Spk. Com.*

c Ez. iii. 2, 8; v. 2; Ne. xii. 1; Hag. i 1, 12, 14. ii. 2, 23; Mat. i. 12; Lu. iii. 27.

Of all acts, is not for a man repentance the most divine? The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none." — *Thomas Carlyle.*

Zerubbabel. — I. Distinguished in work. 1. Leading a liberated people to their own land. 2. Rebuilding the temple. 3. Instituting civil government. II. Distinguished in the prosecution of that work. Courage, patience, faith, and enthusiasm. A personal example and a power among his people. III. Distinguished as the object of prophecy. Often addressed by name by Haggai and Zechariah; received glorious predictions concerning temple he was building and future magnificence of Jerusalem and Judah, which exercised great influence upon his mind and preserved a spirit which endured till the coming of Christ. A name suggestive of important events. 1. Return of captives. 2. Restoration of national government. 3. Establishment of religious worship. "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house," *etc.* (Zech. iv. 9). — *Hom. Com.*

"The religious pleasure of a well-disposed mind moves gently, and therefore constantly. It does not affect by ectasy and rapture, but is like the pleasure of

Zerubbabel. — In verses nineteen and twenty, we come upon a name with which we are familiar, Zerubbabel — this was the famous prince, who, with Joshua the high priest, led the first colony of restored exiles from Babylon to Canaan under the edict of Cyrus. This occurred some five centuries before the birth of Christ. The name of Zerubbabel's father was Pedaiah, which signifies "God hath redeemed." The name of the father would seem to have

been an inspiration to the son. For truly he was a redeemer and a leader of his people. Thus all the names of the kindred and sons of Zerubbabel indicate the religious hopefulness of the people at the dawn of the restoration. All this matter connected with the signification of names is notable, because it points to the greatest incident of all, which we find in the person of the Son of God, who was called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins. — *J Parker.*

B. C. 1700, *etc.*

health, still and sober, yet greater and stronger than when the senses make grosser impressions." — *South.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—8. (1) "This list of **the sons of Judah** is characteristic of the author. Pharez is a son, Hezron a second in descent, Carmi a third in another line, Hur a fourth, and Shobal a sixth."[a] — *Murphy.* (2) **Reaiah** is the Harach of ii. 52. **Zorathites,** *see* ii. 53. (3) **were of the father,** *R. V.*, "were the sons of the father." But Murphy would read "were the fathers (*i. e.* joint founders) of Etam." Jud. xv. 8; 2 Chr. xi. 6. **Hazelelponi,** means, "Give shade, Thou who turnest to me Thy countenance," an interesting illustration of names with a meaning. — *Oehler.* (4) **father of Bethlehem,** *i. e.* chief or founder. Salma, Hur's son, is called "father of B.," ii. 51. (7) **Jezoar,** *R. V.*, "Izhar." (8) **Coz,** *R. V.*, "Hakkoz."

posterity of Judah by Caleb of Hur

[a] Ge. xxxviii. 29; xlvi. 12.

Heredity. — We are the creatures and debtors of the past, though we are slow to own our obligations. We have nothing that we have not received; but we are apt to consider ourselves self-made men, the architects and builders of our own fortunes, who have the right to be self-satisfied, self-assertive, and selfish. The heir of all the ages, in the full vigor of youth, takes his place in the foremost ranks of time, and marches on in the happy consciousness of profound and multifarious wisdom, immense resources, and magnificent opportunity. He forgets or even despises the generations of labor and anguish that have built up for him his great inheritance. The genealogies are a silent protest against such insolent ingratitude. They remind us that in bygone days a man derived his gifts and received his opportunities from his ancestors; they show us men as the links in a chain, tenants for life, as it were, of our estate, called upon to pay back with interest to the future the debt which they have incurred to the past. We see that the chain is a long one, with many links; and the slight estimate we are inclined to put upon the work of individuals in each generation recoils upon our own pride. We also are but individuals of a generation that is only one of the thousands needed to work out the Divine purpose for mankind. We are taught the humility that springs from a sense of obligation and responsibility. A genealogy is a brief and pointed reminder that God has been working through all the countless generations behind us. The bare series of names is an expressive diagram of His mighty process. — *W. H. Bennett.*

High hearts are never long without hearing some new call, some distant clarion of God, even in their dreams; and soon they are observed to break up the camp of ease, and start on some fresh march of faithful service. — *Anon.*

9—20. (9, 10) "The episode of these two verses, offering itself amid what should seem, superficially, a dry mass of dead names, is welcome and grateful as the oasis of the desert, and it warns us that life lies hidden at our every footfall on this ground, spread over though it is with monument and inscription, and hollow, as we thought, with the deadest of the dead. But the glimpse of old real life given us in this brief fragment of a biography is refreshing and is very suggestive." — *Pulpit Com.* **grieve me,** playing on the meaning of his name.[b] (13) **Kenaz,** was bro. to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, Josh. xv. 17. (18) **Bithiah,** = *daughter of Jehovah*, seems to indicate that she became a proselyte. "This sentence has a peculiar interest. It indicates that these descendants, probably of Hamul, certainly of Pharez, his father, belonged to the early period of the sojourn in Egypt, when Israel was free and prosperous, and acknowledged by Pharaoh to be of noble descent. It was then as becoming for a sovereign of Egypt to give a daughter in marriage to Mered, as at a later period a sister-in-law to Hadad." — *Murphy.*

Jabez

[b] Grant that the grief implied in my name may not come upon me. — *Spk. Com.*

Jabez (*vs.* 9). — I. A concise memoir. II. Comprehensive prayer: includes — 1. Best blessings; 2. Enlargement of coast; 3. Divine presence; 4. Divine support. III. The complete answer. Subject teaches us how to pray, and for what — *enlargement of coast* (*or border*).

Jabez. — Judging the case within the narrow limits of the history given in verses nine and ten, it would seem as if Jabez started life in an act of prayer. The image is at once graphic and beautiful; think of a young man standing at the door of his house, looking abroad at the unknown and unmeasured

"Jabez was the founder of the schools or colleges of the Scribes, mentioned 1 Chr ii. 55." — *Wordsworth.*

B. C. 1700, *etc.*

world, listening to the conflicting voices which troubled his native air, and then turning his eyes to heaven and asking Divine direction, before he would take a single step from the threshold of his home. — *Peop. Bib.*

posterity of Shelah

21—23. (21) **Shelah,** Ge. xxxviii. 5; 1 Chr. ii. 3. **Mareshah,** Jos. xv. 44. **linen,** the finest of flax was grown in Egypt and the best of linen was used there by the Hebrews. Comp. Exodus xxvi. 31, 36; xxviii. 6, 8, 15, 39, *etc.* (22) **Chozeba,** poss. same as *Chezib*, Ge. xxxviii. 5. **ancient things,** *R. V.* "and the records are ancient," *i. e.*, the deeds of these men are ancient history. (23) **potters,** employed in the plantations and enclosures of the royal demesnes; and noticed in the prophetical books.[a] **dwelt,** *etc.*, *R. V.* "the inhabitants of Netaim and Gaderah,"[b] two towns belonging to Judah. **with the king,** *i. e.* on the king's property.[c]

The works of man and of nature. — Man has never woven a tapestry like that which May spreads beneath us, in its green and flowery meadows; and where are the imitative works of art that can compete with a flower-garden — can even approach to a single flower? But we admire the imitations and almost forget to look at the reality and the original. Yet, while the former are costly, or even inaccessible, the others are given freely, without cost, and they are given freely to all. The Creator has even empowered us to create for ourselves, and almost without labor, beauty which no art can approach, and no price could teach it to rival. We sow a few seeds in a few minutes, and we become artists, under the kindness of the Great Artist, producing pictures, imperfect imitations of which we must have purchased with gold — as not all the gold of the universe could have stimulated an artist to approach to them. — *MacCulloch.*

a Je. xviii. 1, 2; xix. 1, 2.

b Jos. xv. 36.

c For the country estates of the kings comp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 25-31; 2 Chr. xxvi. 10; xxvii. 4; xxxii. 28, 29.

vs. 22. "Thus writeth Ezra; who yet lived afore that Socrates taught in Athens and afore any chronicles of the world now extant in the world. Such is the antiquity of Holy Writ." — *Trapp.*

posterity and cities of Simeon

24—38. The second of the twelve tribes is here taken. (24–27) **sons of Simeon,** comp. Ge. xlvi. 10; Ex. vi. 15; Nu. xxvi. 12–14. (28–31) **Beersheba,** *etc.*, comp. Jos. xix. 2–6. **unto reign of David,** about wh. time they appear to have lost some of them;[d] or some may have been reckoned as belonging to Judah. (32–33) **Baal,** the Baalathbeer of Jos. xix. 8. (34–38) **princes,** or chiefs of cities.

d 1 Sa. xxvii. 6

Life becomes useless and insipid when we have no longer either friends or enemies.

"*Princes in their families.*"— Words transferred from one language, and one state of society to another, are often misleading. By "princes" here we are to understand head-men of certain towns which were in possession of families among the Simeonites. They were persons of importance, of consideration, and influence in their localities. The record of them bears witness to a settled state of society, and to the establishment of civil order and subordination.—*Pul. Com.*

Gedor: Amalekites in Mt. Seir

39—43. (39) **Gedor,** means a fort, and is a name often occurring. Ge. xxvi. 6-12. (40) **they of Ham,** "certain descendents of Ham, who halted there on their way to Africa, induced by the fertility of the soil."— *Murphy.* (41) **these,** *etc.*, *vss.* 35–37. Comp. 2 Ki. xviii. 8. **the habitations,** *R. V.*, "the Meunim," *i. e.* citizens of Maon. (42) **mount Seir,**[e] Ge. xiv. 6; De. ii. 12. (43) **rest,** *etc.*, fr. the slaughter of Saul. 1 Sa. xv. 7, 8.[f]

e Comp. Isa. xxi. 11, 12.

f Comp. for later existence of Amal., 1 Sa. xxvii. 8; xxx. 1; 2 Sa. viii. 12.

Right of pasturage (*vss.* 39, 40).— Our people, who are extremely watchful over their public pastures, to guard them from intruders, and so ready to go to law with their next neighbors about their right to common, or the number of beasts they shall feed there, may think it very strange that Abraham and Lot, the Kenites and Rechabites, should have been permitted to move up and down, and feed their flocks and herds unmolested, in inhabited countries as well as in deserts. But this ancient custom still continues in Palestine, which, depopulated as it is, probably has as many inhabitants in its towns as it had in the days of Abraham.—*Harmer.*

"The place of habitation of these park-keepers 'seems to have been near the valley of Hinnom, on the S. of Jerus.'" — *Wordsworth.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

the line of Reuben

1—10. (1) **firstborn,** Reuben, though the firstborn, is made the third in the order of the chronicles, comp. Ge. xxxv. 22; xlix. 4. **given,** *etc.*, the double portion of firstborn was given. De. xxi. 16, 17; Jos. xvi., xvii. "The birthright, as respected dignity and pre-eminence, fell to Judah." (2) **prevailed,** Ge. xlix. 8. **chief ruler,** *R. V.*, "the prince." David, we may suppose, with fuller reference to the Messiah.[g] (3–6) **sons . . of Reuben,** Ge. xlvi. 9. **Tiglath-**

g Ge. xlix. 10; Micah v. 2.

pilneser, 2 Ki. xv. 29. (7, 8) **when,** *etc.*, *see vs.* 17. (9) **he inhabited,** *i. e.* Reuben. (10) **Hagarites,** or Ishmeelites,[a] "were a tribe of N. Arabia, perhaps the Agraioi of Shabo."—*Murphy.*

B. C. 1700, *etc.*

Dwelling in tents (*vs.* 10).—The shepherds are not the only class of people that live in tents; many Orientals forsake their villages at the approach of summer, for the more airy and refreshing shelter which they afford. Persons of distinction often retired from the towns into the fields, and lived under tents during the heats of summer. Tahmasp, a Persian monarch, used to spend the winter at Casbin, and to retire in the summer three or four leagues into the country, where he lived in tents at the foot of Mount Alouvent, a place famed for its cool and pleasant retreats. His successors acted in the same manner, till the time of Abbas the Great, who removed his court to Ispahan.—*Paxton.*

[a] Comp. 1 Chr. xxvii. 30, 31; Ps. lxxxiii. 6.

11—17. Gad was the seventh of the sons of Jacob. The chronicler appears to be guided by local settlement and association in military valor. (11) **over against,** *etc.*, Jos. xiii. 24–28. **Bashan,** Nu. xxi. 33–35.[b] **Salcah,** De. iii. 10; Jos. xii. 5. Modern *Sulkhad*, on the southern spur of the *Jebel Hauran.* (12–15) 21 persons in all of "the sons of Gad," none of whom are spoken of elsewhere. **children,** *etc.*, *i. e.* the persons mentioned in *vs.* 13. (16) **Sharon,** De. iii. 12, 13. (17) **days,** *etc.*, this indicates two occasions, one applying to the kingdom of Judah, the other to that of Israel; and the date was not the same.[c]

chiefs and cities of Gad

[b] Jos. xiii. 30.

[c] Jeroboam reigned about B.C. 825, and Jotham about B. C. 758. 2 Ki. xiv. 16; xv. 32.

History.—As a matter of fact, history can never be exhaustively written. It may be questioned whether any man who has lived a long and active life can really write his own biography. Let him take what pains he may he will be conscious that much has been left out; even where a diary has been sedulously kept, it can tell but little of motive, purpose, desire, and all the mysterious operations of the soul; the spirit will not be imprisoned in words; after the words have expended their whole strength in embodying life there is something in life which will not condescend to be represented in symbols or uttered in signs. Let us continually remind ourselves of the lesson we have had so much occasion to set forth, that two or three famed sons in a family do not blot out all the sweet life, the gentle piety, the unobtrusive industry, and the anxious prayers of many an unknown member of the household. We belong to one another. We cannot always trace the influences which have culminated in eminence and power. Be assured that how famous soever any man may be there is a vital defect in his character in so far as he fails to remember all that made his home the beginning of his greatness.—*J. Parker.*

"Nothing unites people like companionship in intellectual enjoyment. It does more — it gives them mutual respect, and to each among them self-respect — that corner-stone of all virtue."—*Sir John Herschel.*

18—22. (18) **valiant men,** *sons of valor* as shown later, 1 Chron. xii. 8, 21. (19) **Hagarites,** or Hagarenes, a tribe of North Arabia. **Jetur**[d] **and Nephish,** comp. chap. i. 31; Ge. xxv. 15. (20) **helped,** by God; comp, *vs.* 22 and 2 Chron. xxvi. 15; Ps. xxviii. 7. (21) **they took,** comp. Nu. xxxi. 32–35. (22) **the captivity,** is that of two kings, xv. 29, when these tribes were carried away from their homes.

census of Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manasseh

[d] "His descendants were called *Ituræans.*"—*Jamieson.*

The best battle-cry (*vs.* 20).—I. Common battle-cries are usually—1. Shouts of defiance; 2. Personal vauntings; 3. Incitements of passion or patriotism. II. The Christian battle-cry is a cry to God in prayer.

Battle-cries.—It would be interesting, and not without instruction, could a complete list be compiled of the war-cries and military watchwords of different lands, times, and men. Since the days of King Ramirez (A. D. 939), the war-cry of the Spanish armies has been "Santiago!" of England, it used to be, "St. George! for merry England;" and of France, "Montjoye St. Denis!" "The King and Constitution!" was the war-cry of Rupert; and "The Lord of Hosts is with us!" of Cromwell. "Victory or Westminster Abbey!" was one of Nelson's; and another of his was "England expects every man to do his duty!" In the latter part of the Sepoy rebellion, the war-cry of the British troops was, "Remember Cawnpore!"

Bef. the bat. of Edgehill, Lord Ashley prayed, "O Lord, if, while I am busy to-day, I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me;" and the K. of Sweden, before the bat. of Lutzen, prayed, "Jesus, vouchsafe this day to be my strong Helper; and give me courage to fight for the honor of Thy name."

23—26. (23) **Baal-hermon,** another name for Hermon; or same as *Baal-Gad.* Josh. xii. 7; xiii. 5. *Thomson* identifies with *Suibeah*, on S. of Hermon. **Senir,** De. iii. 9. (24) **mighty men,** none of these are heard of again by name. Comp. ch. xii. 21. (25) **went,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xvii. All these tribes mentioned transgressed. (26) **Pul,** 2 Ki. xv. 19. He was the last of a dynasty and

half-tribe of Manasseh

"Honor and shame from no condition rise; act well your

B. C. *cir.* 1700, *etc.*

may have been a Chaldean, hence the failure to learn of him from Assyrian monuments. **Tiglath-pilneser,** *vs.* 6. **Halah,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xvii. 6, xviii. 11.

Famous men (*vs.* 24). — Famous men — I. May be known only by name. II. How many such have lived and died of whom not even their names are known! III. The record of the really famous is on high. IV. The best that is known of these is that they were the heads of their households.

Reuben's fall. — We now come to the fall of the very people who, only a few verses before, had been so conspicuous for prayer and faith and victory. And what was the cause of it? They went after the gods of the people of the land. The world around; the pleasure-seeking, self-seeking world; the attractive, smiling, seducing world; — this drew them aside, this stole their hearts from God. What the Hagarites had failed to do, the "gods of the people of the land" did. Satan comes to God's people in one of two forms — either as a "roaring lion" or as an "angel of light." Where he cannot succeed in one way he will try the other. He came as a "roaring lion" in the form of the "Hagarites," but he failed. He then came as an "angel of light" in the "gods of the people of the land;" thus they fell. It is the same always. — *Pul. Com.*

"Whatever that be which thinks, which understands, which wills, which acts, it is something celestial and Divine, and upon that account must necessarily be eternal." — *Cicero.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

sons of Levi and line of priests to captivity

1—15. (1) **sons of Levi,** the whole chapter is devoted to the tribe of Levi, and yet it is not complete, the lists of several families (*e. g.* Gershom, Kohath, Merari, *etc.*) being imperfect. "No one was allowed to execute any sacred office who could not prove his Levitical descent."[a] (2) **Kohath,** the second son put first, bec. Aaron and the priests came fr. him.[b] (3) **Nadab,** *etc.*, Le. x. 1; Nu. iii. 4. (4–10) **Eleazar,** *etc.*, this is a list of high priests.[c] **Azariah,** the same that repelled King Uzziah; Chr. xxvi. 17. (12) **Ahitub,** *etc.*, this list is evidently defective, comp. ch. ix. (13) **Shallum,** *i. e.* Meshullam, Neh. xi. 11 and Ezra vii. 2. **Hilkiah,** was he who found "the book of the Law," 2 Ki. xxii. 8 and helped Josiah in the reformation, also *cf.* 2 Chron. xxxv. 1–19. (14) **Seraiah,** *cf.* 2 Ki. xxv. 18–21. He was an ancestor of Ezra. (Ezra vii. 1.)

a Ezr. ii. 61, 62; Ne. vii. 64. Ge. xlvi. 11; Ex. vi. 16

b Ex. vi. 16, 18.

c Comp. Ezr. vii. 1–5.

Two high priests. — Among the sons of Levi the family of Aaron was the most conspicuous, inasmuch as the Lord selected this family for the priestly office. The high priest was always of Aaronic blood. And the succession of high priests could no more be omitted from the chronicles of Israel than the succession of popes from those of Rome or the series of archbishops of Canterbury from those of England. We select two high priests for special notice. I. The high priesthood in national prosperity. Azariah executed this very important office during that part of the reign of Solomon which saw the dedication of the magnificent first temple. This was the very culmination of the splendor of the Hebrew monarchy, and the office and duties of the national pontiff would be encompassed with peculiar glory. As the religious representative of the nation, Azariah had sacred functions to discharge, especially on the day of atonement, when the sins belonging to the people's prosperity were brought and confessed before the Lord, and favor shown to the sacrificing and repentant nation. II. The high priesthood in national adversity. Jehozadak, as in the succession; nominally filled the same office when the Jews were carried into captivity. He shared the lot, the exile, of his countrymen. It was well that he should go with the others and rather share the fate of the nation, than remain in Jerusalem to fulfil the form of his office. Where the nation was, it became its religious head to be also. — *Pul. Com.*

"The powers of the mind are like the stars, they do not always shine equally brilliant and striking; sometimes clouds may cover them for a time altogether; at other times intermittent clouds may pass over them; a heavy atmosphere at other times may affect them; seldom, in this climate, do they shine in their full glory. But, shine or no shine, the stars are still there." — *J. Bate.*

families of Gershom, Kohath, Merari

16—27. (16) **sons,** *etc.*, here the list is of descendants who were not high priests. (17–19) The names here occur also in Ex. vi. **Gershom,** comp. *vs.* 1, eldest son of Levi. **Merari,** Ge. xlvi. 11. (20–21) **Of Gershom,** compare with longer list of 13 names of descendants of Gershom in *vss.* 39–43. (22–27) **sons of Kohath,** other than dealt with, *vs.* 2. (26) **Elkanah,** father of Samuel

vs. 22, Korah. "Howbeit his children came to good, many of them, as Elkanah, Samuel, the sons of Korah, in David's days." — *Trapp.*

Families. — In reading verse 19 — "And these are the families of the Levites according to their fathers" — we must remember that the word "families" does not mean single households, but groups of households or clans. This is important as showing the beginning of an enlargement which is to continue until the whole world shall be regarded as constituting one family. Towards this consummation we can but proceed with painful slow-

ness. The work of grace within us is long in subduing the idea that God is partial in his choices and blessings. The heart almost secretly cherishes the idea that walls of separation between men and men must in some degree contiuue forever. It is hard for one nation to believe that other nations are as near to God as themselves. All this may not be admitted in theory, but an examination of the heart will lead to the conclusion that every man clings more or less to the notion that God is interested in his fortunes more than in the fortunes of other men. The spread of Christianity is important in a social as well as in a theological sense as tending to the instruction of men in mutual interpretation of motive and purpose. Christianity is opposed to all limitation, narrowness, bigotry, exclusiveness; its noble watchword is "the world, the whole world, the whole world for Christ."—*J. Parker.*

B. C. *cir.* 1700. *etc.*

"We do not commonly find men of superior sense amongst those of the highest fortune."—*Juvenal.*

28—32. (28) **Vashni,** or *Joel, R. V.*, "The first-born Joel and the second Abiah," of *vs.* 33. Sa. viii. 2.[a] (29, 30) **Merari,** *vs.* 1, 16. (31) **David set,** ch. xv. 16–24. **ark had rest,** ch. xvi. 1.[b] (32) *R. V.*, "And they ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting," *etc.* Comp. 2 Chron. v. 12; xxix. 26–31; xxxv. 15, 16.

a Comp. 1 Chr. vi. 33.

b 2 Sa. vi. 17.

Song.—The service of song in the house of the Lord should be the most beautiful of all religious exercises. The heavenly ones are continually praising God in the upper sanctuary. We read nothing of preaching in heaven, but we do read of songs and harps, thanksgivings, and of praises louder than the sound of many waters. We are perfectly well aware that there are persons who would pervert the use of music and do injury to the very spirit of the church, but we must not take our rule of procedure from them; but endeavor to displace them by a right adaptation of music; and to supersede them by pointing out and following a more excellent way.—*J. Parker.*

"The three intentions of song: To improve the understanding, to improve the heart, and to soothe the mind."—*Catherall.*

"It is easy to be humble where humility is a condescension; easy to concede where we know ourselves wronged; easy to forgive where vengeance is in our power."—*Mrs. Jameson.*

33—48. (33) **waited,** attending regularly on the temple service to sustain the singing. **Heman,** chief master of song, was, then, grandson of Samuel the prophet. Ch. xv. 17–19; xxv. 1–6; 1 Ki. iv. 31. **Shemuel,** *R. V.*, Samuel. (34–39) **brother Asaph,** 14th from Levi, Heman is 21st. They were cousins. (40–41) **Ethni,** the *Jeaterai* of *vs.* 21. (42–48) **Ethan,** prob. the *Jeduthun* of 1 Chr. xvi. 42, 43, *etc.*

Singing with the understanding.—We are commanded to sing with the understanding; and yet if we did, four hundred and ninety five out of five hundred pieces of music that are published for singing would have to go to the dirt. I will defy anybody to sing with the understanding the music that is trashily printed and trashily performed, whether it be inarticulate on stringed instruments or whether it be vocalized to words. Music has a relation not simply to sensuous pleasure, which is the lowest kind of pleasure, but to imaginative pleasure, and to pleasure of the understanding as well, which it rises up round about as the atmosphere rises round about the pine trees and the oak trees on the mountain side, washing them clean, and making them stand out in majesty and beauty. Music cleanses the understanding, inspires it, and lifts it into a realm which it would not reach if it were left to itself.—*Beecher.* *Old-time music.*—The carillonus was at one time a common style of church music, particularly in Holland, before the introduction of the organ. The carillon consisted of a great number of bells, hung in the church belfry, forming a complete series or scale of tones and semitones The carillonus, or performer, worked hard. There were pedals communicating with the bells, upon which he played with his feet, while the hands performed upon the upper species of keys, which were formed by projecting sticks wide enough apart to be struck with violence and velocity by either of the hands edgeways, without being liable to hit the adjoining keys or pins. The performer had a thick leather covering for the little finger of each hand, else he could not endure the pain caused by the percussion to the naked hand. The carillon is now out of use, the nearest approach to it being the modern peal of bells.

"There are two things wh. help to make music—melody and harmony. Now, as most of you know, there is melody in music when the different sounds of the same tune follow each other so as to give us pleasure; there is harmony in music when different sounds, instead of following each other, come at the same time so as to give us pleasure."—*C. Kingsley.*

"A good ear for music and a taste for music are two very different things, which are often confounded; and so is comprehending and enjoying every object of sense and sentiment."—*Greville.*

49—53. (49) **Aaron,** *etc.*, comp. Ex. xxx. 7; Le. i. 9.[c] (50–53) **sons of Aaron,** a briefer list, similar to that in *vss.* 3–8. "The line of Eleazar is here traced as far as Ahimaaz, who was active in the days of David (2 Sam. xv. 36). From its place here this appears to be regarded as the legitimate line of high priests. But in fact the line of Eli came into its place for five generations (1 Sam. xiv. 3; xxii. 9, 20), and after Zadok another breach appears to have taken place."—*Murphy.*

office of Aaron, and his line to Ahimaaz

c Also Le. viii. 2; Nu. xviii. 1–7.

B. C. *cir.* 1700, *etc.*

The constant work of atonement.—The word "atonement" in the Old Testament means a "covering over," and "hiding from view;" and it is applied to some sacrifice whose acceptableness covers over and hides from view the unworthiness and transgression of him who brings it, or to some act, such as that of Phinehas, which, because it vindicates the Divine honor, law, and righteousness, is regarded as covering over iniquity, and making possible the pardon of the transgressors. But some changes passed in the connotation of the term, so that the New Testament Greek equivalent became the word "reconciliation," which appears to regard the word as at-one-ment, but does not carry over the idea of covering transgression by a sacrifice or a loyal act. The appointment of Aaron and his sons for this particular work emphasizes the fact that, under the older dispensation, there was constant need for atonement. Every individual needed that it should be made for him again and again, and every year a great public atonement was made for the sins of the people. The reason appears to be this: every fresh act of wilfulness and sin imperilled the standing of the individual and the nation as within the Divine covenant, and brought down upon them all the penalties of the broken covenant—penalties involving even the surrender of life. It would help greatly to clearness of view if we recognized that atonement always bears relation to man's standing before God, and not to man's personal cleanness or cleansing. The constant atonement covered the sin which broke the covenant-relations, and restored, for the individual and the nation, the old covenant-conditions. The daily burnt offering was a daily atonement, or vindicatory act, which covered the people's sin and set them again in full covenant-standing. The private burnt offerings did the same thing for the individual. And the "day of atonement" did it, in a sublime way, as a grand national spectacle, for the due impression of the entire nation.—*Pul. Com.*

"The failure of the mind in old age is often less the result of natural decay than of disuse. Ambition has ceased to operate; contentment brings indolence; indolence, decay of mental power, *ennui*, and sometimes death. Men have been known to die, literally speaking, of disease induced by intellectual vacancy."—*Sir. Benj. Brodie.*

cities of priests and Levites

54—60. (54) **throughout . . coasts.**[a] *R. V.*, "according to their encampments in their borders." **the lot,** *R. V.*, "the first lot," Josh. xxi. 10. (55) **Hebron,** Jos. xxi. 11. (56) **fields,** *etc.*,[b] comp. Jos. xxi. 12. (57) **gave . . Hebron,** *R. V.*, "gave the cities of refuge, Hebron;" *etc.*; the plural "cities" seems to be incorrect, as Hebron, only, was a city of refuge, *cf.* Josh. xxi. 13. **Libnah,** Jos. x. 29–32; xv. 42. **Jattir,** Jos. xv. 48. **Eshtemoa,** Jos. xv. 50. (58) **Hilen,** or *Holon*, Jos. xxi. 15. **Debir,** Jos. xv. 15. (59) **Ashan,** or *Ain*, see Jos. xix. 7; xxi. 16. **Beth-shemesh,** Jos. xv. 10; xxi. 16. (60) **Geba,** Jos. xviii. 24; xxi. 17. **Alemeth,** *Almon* of Jos. xxi. 18. **Anathoth,** Jos. xxi. 18.

a Jos. xxi. 4-12.

b "Originally all Hebron had been given to Caleb as his inheritance. (Jos. xv. 13."—*Spk. Com.*

Man made for a future state.— Canst thou think it worth the while that the Maker of the universe should create a soul, and send it down into the world, on purpose to superintend these trivial affairs—to keep alive a silly piece of well-figured earth while it eats and drinks, to move it to and fro in chase of shadows, to hold it up while others bow the knee and do it homage—as if it had not some higher work to mind in reference to another state? Art thou contented to live long in the world to such purposes? What low, worthless spirit is this that had rather be so employed than in the visions of his Maker's face; that chooses thus to entertain itself on earth rather than partake the effusions of the Divine glory above; that had rather creep with worms than soar with angels; associate with brutes than with the spirits of just men made perfect? Who can solve the phenomenon, or give a rational account why there should be such a creature as man upon the earth, abstracting from the hopes of another world?—*J. Howe.*

vs. 55. Hebron. "The six cities of refuge where the guilty might be instructed and comforted. King James was wont to say that if God did leave him to kill a man by any means, he should think God did not love him."—*Trapp.*

"Really great minds seem to have cast off from their hearts the grave's earth, as well as dissipated the clouds which concealed the heaven from our view, and they thus disclose to themselves and to us a clear and blissful world of everlasting repose."—*Richter.*

61—70. (61) "There is an omission in the text here. For the words *of the family . . Manasseh*, should be read, 'out of the family of the tribe of Ephraim, out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half of the tribe of half Manasseh.' This would be in harmony with the following context (*vss.* 67–70), and with Josh. xxi. 20–26. From these tribes they received ten cities."—*Murphy.* **left,** *i. e.*, to the Levites, *vss.* 61–81 tell of the cities to which Levites were assigned.—*Murphy.* **ten cities,** comp. *vs.* 70; Jos. xxi. 25. (62–66) Comp. Jos. xxi. (64) **gave . . cities,** "the allotment of these towns is not to be understood as if the Levites were their only possessors, but that they received so many houses and such pasture land in the suburbs as they needed.—*Oehler.* (67) **cities of refuge,** Jos. xx. **Shechem,** Jos. xvii. 7. **Gezer,** Jos. x. 33. (68) **Jokmeam,**[c] Jos. xii. 22. **Beth-horon,** Jos. xxi. 22. (69)

c *Kibzaim* in Jos. xxi. 22.

Aijalon, here two names have fallen out: Eltekeh and Gibbethon, Jos. xxi. 23. **Gath-rimmon,** Jos. xix. 45. (70) **Aner,** Jos. xxi. 25. **Bileam,** in Jos. called also *Gath-rimmon.*

B. C. 1700, *etc.*

The social working of the refuge system. — Its influence may be shown in: 1. Its cultivation of a worthier sense of *justice.* 2. Its teaching as to the relation of *motive* to crime, such motive giving the act of crime its serious quality. 3. Its tendency to relieve the individual from the thought of executing his own vengeance. 4. Its claim to have a fixed authority for the settling of all social laws, and their vindication by due punishments. A worthy and strongly enforced legislative system lies at the very foundation of the peaceful order and stable progress of every nation. The element of *personal passion* must be removed if punishment is to be wisely administered; men must be willing to put aside their own avengings if social order is to be secured. Nations need to be very careful to secure purity in the administration of justice. — *Pul. Com.*

"If the history of cities and their influence on their respective territories be deducted from the history of humanity, the narrative remaining would be of no very attractive description." —*Vaughan.*

71—81. (71) **Golan,** De. iv. 43. **Ashtaroth,** comp. *Beeshterah* of Jos. xxi. 27. The full name may be Beth-Ashtaroth.[a] (72) **Kedesh,** comp. *Kishon* of Jos. xxi. 28. *Daberath* takes the place of *Dabareh, Ramoth* of *Jarmuth,* and *Anem* of *Engannim,* Jos. xxi. 28, 29. (74) **Mashal,** or *Mishal.* (75) **Hukok,** or *Helkath.* (76) **Hammon,** or *Hammoth-dor.* **Kirjathaim,** or *Kartan.* (77) **the rest . . were given,** *R. V.,* "Unto the rest *of the Levites,* the Sons of Merari, were given." (78) **other side,** comp. Jos. xxi. 35–39. **Bezer,** *cf.* Deut. iv. 43; Josh. xx. 8. This, also, was one of the three cities of refuge east of the Jordan.

a De. i, 4; Jos. ix. 10; xii. 4; xiii. 12, 31.

The nature of man. — The essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself "I" — ah, what words have we for such things? — is a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals Himself in man. This body, these faculties, this life of ours, is it not all as a vesture for that Unnamed? — "There is but one temple in the universe," says the devout Novalis, "and that is the body of man. Nothing is holier than that high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body!" This sounds much like a mere flourish of rhetoric; but it is not so. If well meditated, it will turn out to be a scientific fact; the expression, in such words as can be had, of the actual truth of the thing. We are the miracle of miracles — the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand it, we know not how to speak of it; but we may feel and know, if we like, that it is verily so. — *Carlyle. Religious culture.* — Excellent and ample provision was made for religious culture. Here we have the cities through which the Levites were distributed. They were to be scattered throughout the land, to be mingled with every tribe, in order that they might *impart religious instruction* to all (Deut. xxxiii. 10; and see 2 Chron. xvii. 9; xxx. 22; xxxv. 3). It was their function to "teach the good knowledge of the Lord," to make known and understood the law of God. The service of Jehovah was to rest on popular intelligence. Ignorance is *not* the mother of devotion; it is the fruitful parent of superstition and folly. Religion builds on knowledge, thrives on intelligence. — *Clarkson.*

"All creature minds, like man's, are fallible. The seraph who in heaven highest stands may fall to ruin deepest." — *Bailey.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1—5. (1) **sons of Issachar,** Ge. xlvi. 13; Nu. xxvi. 23, 24. (2) **number,** *etc.,* when the census was taken (2 Sa. xxiv. 1–9). This number is not given in any record we possess. The writer had sources at his disposal unknown to us. (3) **five,** only four are found in the passage. (4) **by their generations,** the numbers being taken fr. David's census. (5) **fourscore,** *etc.,* a very large proportion of fighting men.

the sons of Issachar

vs. 1. *Jashub* **alias** *Job,* but not Job the patient, as some would have it.

The progress of man. — The sun does not shine brighter than it did on Adam; the ocean is not more grand now than when the old Phœnicians plied it with their oars; the birds do not sing more sweetly now than they did in the bowers of Eden. But how man progresses! Compare England now with what it was when Cæsar landed on its shore; compare the boy Newton with Sir Isaac Newton the astronomer; compare Saul of Tarsus with Paul at Athens. — *Thomas.*

vs. 2. "And yet this tribe, for the generality, were dull, and desirous of peace." — *Trapp.*

6—12. (6) **three,** comp. ch. viii. 1, 2; and Ge. xlvi. 21. (7) these sons of Bela are not elsewhere named. (9) **heads,** *etc., R. V.,* "heads of their fathers'

sons of Benjamin

B. C. 1700, *etc.*

houses." Tribes were divided into clans and these into "fathers' houses," and these into households (*cf.* Josh. vii. 14; and Nu. i. 2, 4, 18, *etc*). It is supposed that tribes sprang from Jacob's sons, clans from his grand-children, and fathers' houses from his great grand-children. — *Oehler.* (12) **Shuppim,** *etc.*, comp. Ge. xlvi. 21; Nu. xxvi. 39, "they may have been adopted into the family of *Ir*." **Hushim,** comp. Ge. xlvi. 23. This seems like an introduction of the family of Dan, wh. has slipped out of the text.

"There is in some men a dispassionate neutrality of mind, which, though it passes for good temper, can neither gratify nor warm us; it is true that these men can only negatively offend; but then it is also true that they cannot positively please."—*Greville.*

Fit to go out. — Blessed are they who are really qualified for any needful work in this weary world! A beautiful character is this — "fit to go out." How many men go out before they are fit — how many go out to preach, to teach, to lead, who have no qualifications for the office which they have assumed! Men should not go out until they are sent; in other words, men should not go out to warfare at their own charges. We must find out what we are fit for, and do that particular work with both hands earnestly. Do not let us foolishly wait under the impression that by some dazzling sign God will point out the specialty of our gift. We must put ourselves into practice, and let revelation come through experience. "Stir up the gift that is in thee." "Put on thy strength." "Awake, awake." "Arise, shine." — *J. Parker.*

sons of Naphtali and Manasseh

13–19. (13) **Bilhah,** the handmaid of Rachel, whose sons were Dan and Naphtali. The children of Dan are not mentioned as, in the time of the chronicler, the tribe had probably disappeared. (15) **Zelophehad,** Nu. xxvi. 33; Jos xvii. 3. **daughters,** Jos xvii. 3–6; Nu. xxvi.; xxvii.; xxxvi. "The paragraph (14–19) is of peculiar interest, as illustrating the freedom and independence with which the sons of Israel moved in that period before the new king arose who knew not Joseph." — *Murphy.*

Daughters of Zelophehad. — Women have little recognized legal or public rights in the East. Woman has no standing apart from her husband, and this makes the lot of the Eastern widow so inexpressibly sad. The name Zelophehad recalls a remarkable exception — a case in which women, having no male protector, succeeded in securing and maintaining their own rights; and the story is detailed in the Scripture as affording important instructive features. This Zelophehad was a descendant of Manasseh, who died during the wilderness wanderings, leaving no sons, only five daughters, who, by the custom of the time, would be treated as unable to inherit his estates. These five daughters appealed to Moses (Numb. xxvii. 1–7), on the ground that their father had not died under any such judgment as disabled his children, and they asked to be authorized to stand as his heirs. The matter was a new and difficult one, and Moses took it directly to God, and by Divine direction established the new rule that when there were no sons the daughters might claim the rights of heirs. A remarkable illustration of the wise adjustment of law in its practical application to new and unanticipated cases. Bishop Wordsworth says: "It seems to have been God's design in the Levitical dispensation to elevate woman from the degradation into which she had fallen, and to prepare her gradually for that state of dignity and grace to which she is now advanced in the gospel by the incarnation of the Son of God, the Seed of the woman."— *Pul. Com.*

"The mind has no horizon; it looks beyond the eye, and seeks for mind in all its sees, or all it sees o'erruling." — *Shakespeare.*

sons of Ephraim

20—29. This passage is full of chronological difficulties that cannot be explained. (20) **sons of Ephraim,** Nu. xxvi. 35, 36. (21) **men of Gath,** *etc.*, settled inhabitants of the district. (22) **mourned,** comp. Ge. xxxvii. 34, 35. (23) **Beriah,** *in evil.* (24) **Beth-horon,** Jos. x. 10. **Uzzen-sherah,** not certainly known, perhaps *Beit-sira.* 3 m. S. W. of nether Beth-horon. (25–27) **Ammihud,** Nu. i. 10. **Non,** or Nun. "The descent of Joshua is only traced fr. these personages here." (28, 29) **their possessions,** Jos. xvi. 1–3.

vs 20. "The Ephraimites were famous for their wealth, power, and prowess; but withal they were noted for being insolent, proud and quarrelsome (Jud. viii. 1, *cf.* xii. 1)." — *Trapp.*

A famous woman. — We know nothing else of Sherah than is recorded in this verse. Whether she did herself build or enlarge and fortify these towns, or whether this was the work of her descendants, is not easy to decide. The fact, in any case, is of interest for us, that her name should be put upon record in this passage, and should be associated with great works. I. A woman may be selected by Providence to fulfil some vast design. History records great feats of feminine valor; for women have defended castles and cities by their heroism, and delivered nations, by personal bravery and by the enthusiastic support they have commanded. Some nations number among their sovereigns queens of singular sagacity and statesmanship. In art and

"Narrow minds think nothing right that is above their own capacity." — *La Rochefoucauld.*

in literature, and even in science, women have, in our own times, won for themselves a high position and a wide renown. II. The work of noble women is especially to build. If not cities, societies and families have again and again been built up in strength and stateliness and serviceableness through feminine wisdom, sympathy, and devotedness. III. A gifted woman's worthiest work is work for God. How many such shine from the pages of inspiration! Sarah, Miriam, Ruth, Hannah, Esther, in the Old Testament; the Marys, Priscilla, Dorcas, Lydia, in the New Testament, may serve as examples. IV. A woman who serves the Lord and leaves an example of piety and usefulness is worthy of being held in lasting remembrance. If the inspired writer thought well to record the name of the builder of Beth-horon, surely the memory of the noble women of our Lord's spiritual kingdom should never fade. — *Pul. Com.*

B. C. 1700, *etc.*

We can all be servants of God wherever our lot is cast; but He gives us different sorts of works, according as He fits us for it and calls us to it. — *George Eliot.*

30—40. (30) **sons of Asher,** Ge. xlvi. 17.[a] (31) **Birzavith,**[b] name of a place, but unknown. (32) **Shomer,** *Shamer*, in *vs.* 34. **Hotham,** *Helem* in *vs.* 35. (33–39) Of all these persons named nothing is known. (40) **the number,** reckoned at David's census. **father's house,** *cf.* note on *vs.* 7.

Military valor formed a large part of ancient virtue. — The history of the ancient peoples, Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, *etc.*, proves this statement with only too monotonous a repetition. The history of the Jews, the ancient people of God, adds one more note of confirmation. We might have supposed it would be otherwise; we might have judged that they would constitute the one exception to the rule. But, so doing, we should have erred. War involves certain most painful incidents, but it is not absolutely and intrinsically wrong. The simple fact that God sanctioned it in many instances, that He commanded His people to engage in it, and that He desired to be inquired of and supplicated in regard to it, distinctly settles that point. 1. It has to be remembered that war does call out the heroic virtues of (1) patient endurance; (2) implicit trust in a faithful leader; (3) courageous daring of utmost danger, and consequent (4) readiness to resign that which is most precious at the call of duty, on behalf of country or in obedience to what seems to be the will of God. 2. It has to be remembered that men have engaged in it without any conscious departure from the obligations they were under to their kind; therefore without any sense of its evil, and therefore without any injury to their conscience and character. The idea that all warfare is positively wrong is modern sentiment. With quite as clear a conscience armies have gone out to battle as merchants have left home to traffic, or travelers to explore, or even missionaries to evangelize. Other thoughts are in our minds, other feeling in our hearts, because we have learned — I. That human life is now to be regarded as a very sacred thing. II. That the worthiest triumphs we can win are those we gain in peaceful contests. — *Pul. Com.*

sons of Asher

a Comp. Nu. xxvi. 44.

b "Meaning *the well of the olive trees.*" — *Gesenius.*

"The sovereign good of man is a mind that subjects all things to itself, and is itself, subject to nothing; such a man's pleasures are modest and reserved, and it may be a question whether he goes to heaven or heaven goes to him; for a good man is influenced by God Himself, and has a kind of divinity within him."—*Seneca.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

B. C. 1700, *etc.*

1—11. (1) **Benjamin,** not the son, but the great-grandson of Jacob. **Aharah,** comp. Ahiram of Nu. xxvi. 38.[c] (2–5) **Addar,** or *Ard*, Ge. xlvi. 21: Nu. xxvi. 40. **Naaman,** Nu. xxvi. 40. (6) **Ehud,** some think the judge of this name is meant.[d] *Spk. Com.* says it is a prob. corruption of the Abihud of *vs.* 3.[e] **Geba,** Jos. xviii. 24, there called *Gaba.*[f] **Manahath,** not identified. See marg. of Ju. xx. 43. (7) **Gera,** the leader of the migration. (8) **sent them away,** a probable reading is, "after he hast sent away (divorced) Hushem and Baara, his wives." (9–11) **Hodesh,** the Moabitish wife, who replaced the divorced ones. The names of some of her sons indicate the Moabite affinity. Mesha was a king of Moab, (2 Ki. iii. 4). Malcham is the name of an idol of Moab (Jer. xlix. 1).

Man a missionary. — Every man is a missionary now and for ever, for good or for evil, whether he intends or designs it or not. He may be a blot, radiating his dark influence outward to the very circumference of society; or he may be a blessing, spreading benediction over the length and breadth of the world, but a blank he cannot be. There are no moral blanks: there are no neutral characters. We are either the sower that sows and corrupts, or the light that splendidly illuminates, and the salt that silently operates; but being dead or alive every man speaks. — *Chalmers.*

sons and chiefs of Benjamin

c Comp. also Ehi of Ge. xlvi 21.

d Ju. iii 15.

e "The names here and in ch. vii. 10 are not the same in the Hebrew." — *Spk. Com.*

f Jos. xxi. 17; 1 Sa. xiii. 3.

B. C. 1700, *etc.*

12—28. (12) **Ono,** near Lydda. Poss. the modern *Kefr' Ana.* **Lod,** *Lydda,* or Diospolis.[a] (13) **Aijalon,**[b] in Joshua's time belonged to Dan. Jos. xix. 42. Afterwards it belonged to Ephraim, 1 Chr. vi. 66–69. Ultimately it was reckoned with Benjamin. (14–28) **dwelt at Jerusalem,** this was not till after the return from captivity.[c]

Manufacture of man. — Many pray to be made "men in Christ Jesus," and think in some miraculous way it will be given to them: but God says, "I will try My child, and see if he is sincere;" and so He lays a burden upon him, and says, "Now stand up under it; for thus you are to grow strong." He sends a provocation, and says to him, "Be patient." He throws him into perplexities, and says, "Where now are thy resources?" If the ambitious ore dreads the furnace, the forge, the anvil, the rasp, and the file, it should never desire to be made a sword. Man is the iron, and God is the smith; and we are always either in the forge or on the anvil. God is shaping us for higher things. — *Beecher.*

[a] Ac. ix. 32.

[b] "Aijalon is the modern *Yalo,* on a long hill, about 14 m. fr. Jerus., on the S. side of a broad fertile valley, called *Merj-Ibn Omeir.*" — *Ayre.*

[c] 1 Chr. ix. 3; Ne. xi. 4; Josh. xviii. 28.

Gibeon

29—32. (29) **Gibeon,**[d] Jos. ix. 3–27, mod. *El Jib.* **father of Gibeon,** *etc.* *R. V.,* "father of Gibeon, Jeiel." *See* ch. ix. 35. (30) **Baal and Nadab,** bet. these it appears that Ner should be inserted.[e] (31) **Zacher,** or Zechariah. Mikloth should close the list. He is introduced in next verse; ch. ix. 37. (32) **Shimeah,** *Shimeam,* ch. ix. 38. **in Jerus.,** *see vs.* 28.

"*These dwelt in Jerusalem*" (*vss.* 28, 32). When the captives returned from Babylon there was a lack of men to populate the sacred city. In the country were inviting fields waiting for cultivation, while in the city was danger to be dared and civic duty to be discharged. So that "the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem" (Neh. xi. 2). The fact that their ancestors dwelt in the city would probably operate as a powerful inducement to lead many to offer themselves as citizens, and these would thus be led to serve their country in a very serious crisis. The knowledge of the honorable position taken by our ancestry is a very lawful motive to obedience and aspiration. We should, indeed, range ourselves on the right side, and do the noblest deeds because our God, our Saviour, summons us to His side and to the service of our race. But there are many subsidiary motives by which we may be impelled. And among these is the consideration of the part and place our fathers took in their day. We may well be inspired by the thought of their fidelity, their courage, their piety, their usefulness. We do well to cherish the ambition to be worthy of our sires, to maintain and magnify an honorable name, not only to be "the children of our Father who is in heaven," but the children of our earthly ancestors who dwelt in the city of God and wrought his work in the world. — *Pul. Com.*

[d] 1 Sa. x. 26; xiii. 2, 15; xv. 34.

[e] Comp. 1 Chr. ix. 36.

"What a chimera is man! what a confused chaos! a professed judge of all things, and yet a feeble worm of the earth! the great depositary and guardian of the truth, and yet a mere huddle of uncertainty! the glory and the scandal of the universe. — *Pascal.*

house of Kish

33—40. (33) **Ner,** *etc.,* comp. genealogy in 1 Sa. ix. 1; xiv. 50, 51. **Kish,** nephew and namesake of Kish in *vs.* 30. Ner had also a son named Abner, 1 Sam. xiv. 51. **Abinadab,** pos. the same as *Ishui.*[f] **Esh-baal,** or *Ish-bosheth.*[g] Saul had nine children, though four only are named here; *cf.* 1 Sam. xxxi. 2; xiv. 49; 2 Sam. xxi. 8. (34) **Merib-baal,** or Mephibosheth.[h] **Micah,** *cf.* 2 Sam. ix. 12. (35–39) **sons,** *etc.,* comp. ch. ix. 41–44. (40) **archers,** *lit. treading the bow:* bending it, by putting the foot on it, wh. is done when the bow is large and strong. — *Gesenius.*

All these sons. — 1. The natural succession of the race. We read of "sons," "children," and "fathers," and "children's children." "One generation passeth away and another generation cometh." "The earth is a stage, persons passing and vanishing before our eyes." 2. The moral connection of the race. Men an honor or dishonor to their own lineage; influenced by their fathers as they are influencing posterity. There are laws of influence and dependence which run through the whole race. Every human being sustains a relation, possesses a right and is endowed with power to subserve the great end. "No man liveth unto himself." — *Hom. Com.*

Enthusiasm of man. — It is not to taste sweet things, but to do noble and true things, and vindicate himself under God's heaven as a God-made man, that the poorest son of Adam dimly longs. Show him the way of doing that, the dullest day-drudge kindles into a hero. They wrong man greatly who say he is to be seduced by ease. Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death, are the allurements that act on the heart of man. Kindle the inner genial life of him, you have a flame that burns up all lower considerations. Not happiness, but something higher; one sees this even in the frivolous classes, with their

[f] 1 Sa. xiv. 49.

[g] 2 Sa. ii. 8.

[h] 2 Sa. ix. 12.

"Great strength as well as skill was requisite in ancient archery, as the bow, wh. was of steel, was bent by treading with the feet, and pulling the string with both hands." — *Jamieson.*

"'See where the giant on the mountain stands, his blood-red tresses deepening in the sun, with death shot glowing in his fiery hands, and eye that scorches all it glares upon.'" *Byron.*

"point of honor" and the like. Not by flattering our appetites; no, by awakening the heroic that slumbers in every heart, can any religion gain followers. — *Carlyle.*

B. C. *cir.* 689.

Personification of war. —

Lastly, stood War, in glittering arms yclad,
With visage grim, stern look, and blackly hued;
In his right hand a naked sword he had,
That to the hilts was all with blood imbrued;
And in his left (that kings and kingdoms rued),
Famine and fire, he held, and there withal,
He razèd towns, and threw down towers and all.
Cities he sack'd and realms (that whilom flower'd
In honor, glory, and rule above the rest)
He overwhelm'd, and all their fame devour'd,
Consumed, destroy'd, wasted and never ceased,
Till he their wealth, their name and all oppress'd;
His face forehew'd with wounds, and by his side
There hung his targe, with gashes deep and wide. — *Sackville.*

"A lively and agreeable man has not only the merit of liveliness and agreeableness himself, but that also of awakening them in others." — *Greville.*

War. — What a fine-looking thing is war! Yet dress it as we may, dress and feather it, daub it with gold, huzza it, and sing swaggering songs about it, what is it, nine times out of ten, but murder in uniform. — *Jerrold.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—9. "This chapter contains two parts. 1-34 gives the inhabitants of Jerusalem in reign of Josiah; 35-44, The Genealogy of Saul." — *Murphy.* **reckoned . . genealogies,** the Hebrew verb is sufficiently satisfied by the rendering *were enrolled* or *were registered.* **book of the kings,** not the books of the Bible that are so called.[a] **who were carried,** *R. V.*, "and Judah was carried away captive. (2) **first inhabitants,** of the return fr. captivity.[b] **the Israelites,** prob. meaning the masses of the people, both fr. the ten tribes and the two. **Nethinims,**[c] *cf.* Ezra viii. 20, the servants of the priests, originally confined to descendants of the Gibeonites (Josh. ix. 27); the title means "dedicated ones." (3) **in Jerus.,** *etc.*, comp. Neh. xi. 4–19. **Ephraim and Manasseh,** comp. ch. xii. 19, and 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. (9) **fathers,** *R. V.*, "all these men were heads of fathers' *houses* by their fathers' houses."

Israel's and Judah's genealogies

a Comp. 2 Chr. xxxiii. 18.

b The first return was under Zerubbabel and Joshua (B. C. 535), then that of Ezra (B. C. 457), and of Nehemiah (B. C. 444).

c A name only used after the exile.

The purpose and cause of the captivity (*vs.* 1). — The human view of the captivity. In searching out the reason, men might point to broken treaties, number and strength of enemy, *etc.* II. The Divine view: "For their transgressions;" their captivity a punishment. III. Sin leads men into captivity.

Early history of man. —

Upon the breast of new created earth
Man walked, and when and wheresoe'er he moved,
Alone or mated, solitude was not.
He heard, upon the wind, the articulate voice
Of God; and angels to his sight appeared,
Crowning the glorious hills of Paradise,
Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
Enkindled by the sun. He sat and talked
With winged messengers, who daily brought,
To his small island in th' ethereal deep,
Tidings of joy and love. From these pure heights
Fell human kind — to banishment condemned,
That flowing years repeal'd not, and distress
And grief spread wide; but man escaped the doom
Of destitution — solitude was not.
Jehovah, formless Power, above all powers,
Single and one, the omnipotent God,
By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
Or cloud of darkness, localized in heaven —
On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark,
Or out of Sion, thundering from His throne

Man was originally created for good, and to do good only; in his new birth, he is re-created on the same principle.

"Man was the highest note in the scale of creation, and when he descended, through all nature there followed a corresponding reduction." — *Trench.*

"Every man is a volume, if you know how to read him." — *W. Ellery Channing.*

B. C. *cir.* 639.

Between the cherubim — in the chosen race
Showered miracles, and ceased not to dispense
Judgments that filled the land from age to age
With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear,
And with amazement smote — thereby to assert
His scorned or unacknowledged sovereignty. — *Wordsworth.*

priests and Levites

10—16. (10, 11) **Azariah,** called by Neh. *Seraiah.* **ruler,** *etc.*, prob. refers to *Ahitub*, ch. vi. 11.[a] (12, 13) **brethren,** *etc.*, comp. Ne. xi. 12–14, where the number given is five hundred and sixty-eight less. (14–16) **Levites,** Ne. xi. 15–18, where many additional details are given.

Very able men. —If responsible posts, influential professions, call for the services of men highly endowed and thoroughly furnished, shall we say that anything is good enough for the work of God? Remembering the honor of serving Him, the difficulties peculiar to His service, let us rather seek to offer to Him the best, There is abundant scope for intellectual vigor, mental acquisitions, tender sympathy, unsparing labors, and all other precious gifts, in the service of our redeeming God. Therefore, the strong and gifted should be especially summoned to enter upon the work of Christ; to come up "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." There is room for others; there is room for all; why not for such? If the temple ministrations offered scope for "very able men," what need is there for wise master-builders, capable pastors, stout-hearted laborers, valiant soldiers, in the work which is dear to the heart of God, and which has been commenced by the grace of the Divine Redeemer! To one and to all we would say, "The Lord has need of you." — *Pul. Com.*

Sir Thomas More, while a prisoner in the tower, would not suffer himself to be trimmed, saying, "There was a controversy between the king and him for his head; and till that was at a happy end he would be at no cost about it." The first work of man should be to settle the controversy between himself and God concerning his soul.

The seraph within man. — Krummacher gives the legend of Adam reposing under a tree, looking up into heaven, and longing for wings that he might soar to the stars. Then a seraph touched him, and a deep sleep fell upon him, and he dreamed; and it seemed to him he flew up into heaven. But when he awoke he found he was still reclining under the tree. Then he said to the seraph, "Behold! I flew up to the vault of the sky: radiant worlds like the sun rushed past me, and still worlds on worlds were beyond. Didst thou indeed guide me yonder?" But the seraph answered, "This tree has overshadowed thee, and thy body has rested on this hill. But, behold, Adam! within thee dwells a seraph, who is able to rise to these glorious worlds, and who, the higher he soareth, bendeth the knee in deeper humility, before Jehovah. Son of earth! prize and guard this seraph, that worldly lusts paralyze not his flight, to chain him to the earth." The seraph spake thus, and disappeared.

porters and gate-keepers

17—26. (17) **porters,** whose duty it was to guard entrances to the temple. (18) **hitherto waited,** or *who to this day waits.*[b] **companies,** *lit. camps,*[c] *R. V.*, "They were porters for the camp of the children of Levi." The eastward gate was that by which the king alone entered (Ezek. xliv. 3). (19) **gates,** *lit.* thresholds, or inner doors of the temple.[d] (20) **Phinehas,** Nu. iii. 32. **in time past,** or "in presence of the Lord."[e] (21) **tabernacle of the congregation,** *R. V.*, "tent of meeting," in all places. (22) **were two hundred,** *etc.*, comp. Neh. xi. 19, where the number is more correctly given as one hundred and seventy-two, or twenty-four for each week (ch. xxvi. 17–18), with four warders for seven weeks in rotation (2 Ki. xi. 5). **reckoned,** registered. **villages,** round Jerus., in which they resided. **seer,** 1 Sa. ix. 9. (24) **four quarters,** 1 Chr. xxvi. 14–16. (25) **after seven days,** a weekly course of Levites and porters as of priests. The change was made at the beginning of each Sabbath (2 Ki. xi. 5). (26) **four chief porters,** these were permanent officials residing in the chambers of the temple,

Porters and door keepers of the house of God. — I. They filled an honorable and important position. II. They were tried men (see *vs.* 18). III. Much of the comfort and order of the worship depend on their duty being well done. IV. In our day, doorkeepers, *etc.*, should respect their work, and be honored for their work's sake.

The king's gate. — This gate was so called because Solomon built it and the rest of the wall on that side, at an extraordinary trouble and expense, raising the foundation four hundred cubits, or seven hundred and twenty-nine feet seven inches from the bottom of the deep valley of Kidron, by means of large stones, twenty cubits, or thirty-six feet five inches long, and six cubits, or ten

[a] "The high priest at time of return under Zerub. was Joshua (Ezr. iii. 2; Hag. i. 1; Zec. iii. 1–8; vi. 11-13.") — *Wordsworth.*

[b] "Whereas Shallum had originally the general superintendence of the gates, a change had been made when the author wrote, and Shallum's charge had become the east gate only."—*Spk. Com.*

[c] "According to the ancient mode of speeeh, in wh. the Levites were regarded as soldiers keeping watch and ward about the palace of Jehovah (Nu. i. 50-53; iv. 3-15)." — *Wordsworth.*

[d] 2 Chr. xxiii. 4.

[e] So LXX. and Vulg.

feet ten inches high, so as to be on an equality with the rest of the surface. When Captain Light visited Jerusalem, in 1814, some of these large stones seem to have been remaining, for when describing the Turkish aga's house, which is built on the spot where the house of Pontius Pilate formerly stood, he says, "What attracted my observation most were three or four layers of immense stones, apparently of the ancient town, forming part of the walls of the palace." The ancients delighted in building with these large kinds of stones, for in the ruins which we have of ancient buildings, they are often to be found of great magnitude. Mr. Wood, in his *Ruins of Palmyra and Balbec*, states that "the stones which compose the sloping wall of the latter are enormous; some are from twenty-eight to thirty-five feet long, and nine feet high. There are three of the following dimensions: fifty-eight feet high, and twelve thick; they are of white granite, with large shining flakes like gypsum." At Bagdad, the gate Al Talism is "now bricked up, in honor of its having been entered in triumph by the Sultan Murad, after his having recovered Bagdad from the Persians and the weak grasp of the unworthy son of the great Abbas. In consequence of this signal event, the portal was instantly closed on the victor having marched through, and from that day has never been reopened. This custom of shutting up any passage that has been peculiarly honored, that it may not be profaned by vulgar footsteps, appears to have prevailed very generally over the East. I found an instance of it at Ispahan, where the Ali Copi gate is, in like manner, held sacred for a similar reason."—*Sir R. R. Porter.*

B. C. *cir.* 639.

"Some lives are forgeries. They give out that they are epistles of Christ, while they are not."—*Arnot.*

"Some must be great. Great officers will have
Great talents. And God gives to ev'ry man
The virtue, temper, understanding, taste,
That lifts him into life, and lets him fall
Just in the niche he was ordained to fill."—*Cowper.*

"Pray and stay are two blessed monosyllables."—*Donne.*

27—34. (27) **round about,** prob. within the temple-courts. **the opening thereof,** lit. *they were over the key.*[a] (28) **by tale,** or number, counting them before and after use. (29, 30) **spices,** *etc.*, various articles required for the service, such as incense, *etc.* (31) **made in the pans,** the minchah, or meat-offering.[b] (32) **shew bread,** Ex. xxv. 30; Lev. xxiv. 5, 6. (33) **free,** *R. V.*, adds "*from other service.*" (34) **throughout their generations,** *i. e.* the position was hereditary.

the singers, etc.

a Ju. iii. 25; Is. xxii 22.

b Le. ii. 5, 6; vi. 14.

Homiletic hints (*vs.* 33).—I. As mercy did not cease to rule either by day or by night, so music did not hush its holy ministry. II. God's praise is constant in heaven, and should be on earth. III. The Lord always deserves to be praised for what He is in Himself, and for His works—especially for redemption. IV. Have we not something to sing about at this moment?—*Spurgeon.*

Calvin, even in his dying illness, would not refrain from his labors; but when his friends endeavored to persuade him to moderate his exertions he replied: "What! shall my Lord come and find me idle?"

Opening the doors.—These actions were simple, mechanical—it might be thought lowly, if not menial. But they were places of trust. It was important that none should be admitted to the holy places but those who had the right of entrance. These men had the purity of the sacred courts at their command; they were trusted to see that these were not profaned by unhallowed feet. When we are trusted by our fellows or by our Master to do anything, whether it be in itself serious or slight, we should feel that we are being honored, and we should put forth all our vigilance, strength, vigor, to prove ourselves worthy of the confidence placed in us. Nothing should make so strong an appeal to our undivided energies as being trusted to see that something is done well in the service of our Saviour.—*Clarkson.*

"He was a man, take him for all in all, I shall not look upon his like again!"—*Shakespeare.*

35—44. This is a repetition of viii. 29–40, given with slight and unimportant variations. (35) **Jehiel,** *see* ch. viii. 29. (36) **Ner,** omitted ch. viii. 30. (37, 38) **and Gedor,** *etc.*, comp. ch. vii. 31, 32. (39–44) **and Ner,** *etc.*, comp. ch. viii. 33–38.

Gibeon, Kish, Saul, etc.

Charm in opening manhood.—There is a charm in opening manhood which has commended itself to the imagination in every age. The undefined hopes and promises of the future—the dawning strength of intellect—the vigorous flow of passion—the very exchange of home ties and protected joys for free and manly pleasures, give to this period an interest and excitement unfelt, perhaps, at any other. It is the beginning of life in the sense of independent and self-supporting action. Hitherto life has been to boys, as to girls, a derivative and independent existence—a sucker from the parent growth—a home discipline of authority and guidance, and communicated impulse. But henceforth it is a transplanted growth of its own—a new and free power of activity—in which the mainspring is no longer authority or law from without, but principle or opinion from within. The shoot which has been nourished under the shelter of the parent stem, and bent according to its inclination, is transferred to the open world, where of its own impulse and character it

"His life was gentle, and the elements so mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, this was a man."—*Shakespeare.*

"The best thing corrupted is worst; an ill man is the worst of all creatures; an ill Christian the worst of all men; an ill professor the

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must take root, and grow into strength or sink into weakness and vice. There is a natural pleasure in such a change. The sense of freedom is always joyful, at least at first. The mere consciousness of awakening powers, and prospective work touches with elation the youthful breast. But to every right-hearted youth this time must also be one of severe trial. Anxiety must greatly dash its pleasure. There must be regrets behind and uncertainties before. The thought of home must excite a pang even in the first moments of freedom. Its glad shelter — its kindly guidance — its very restraints, how dear and tender must they seem in parting! How brightly must they shine in the retrospect as the youth turns from them to the hardened and unfamiliar face of the world! With what a sweet, sadly-cheering pathos must they linger in the memory! And then what chance and hazard is there in his newly gotten freedom! What instincts of warning in its very novelty and dim inexperience! What possibilities of failure as well as of success in the unknown future, as it stretches before him! — *Tulloch.*

"worst of all Christians; an ill minister the worst of all professors." — *Bp. Hall.*

"Man is greater than a world, than systems of worlds; there is more mystery in the union of soul with the physical than in the creation of a universe."—*Henry Giles.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

overthrow and death of Saul

1—7. (1) **Philistines,** *etc.*, this engagement took place on the plain of Jezreel, comp. 1 Sa. xxxi. 1–6; 2 Sa. i. 9, 10. **slain,** or "wounded," a proportion only actually killed. **Gilboa,** 1 Sa. xxviii. 4. (2) **Abinadab,** or Ishui. (3) **hit him,** *etc., R. V.*, "overtook him; and he was distressed by reason of the archers." (4) **abuse me,** he feared a prolonged and violent death. (5) **the sword,** *i. e.* his own, not Saul's. (6) **all his house,** 1 Sam. xxxi. 6 reads "all his men." Probably the body-guard is meant. Not all his *family* perished. (7) **forsook their cities,** comp. 1 Sa. xxxi. 7.

Saul's character.— Saul was not an atheist. He was a religious man in his way. This chapter shows it. Saul calls the Philistines the "uncircumcised ones." Circumcision distinguished him, and he evidently prided himself on it. It had placed him on a pedestal so that he could look on all others and exclaim, "Stand aside; for I am holier than thou." Thus he had the "form of godliness;" but where was the "power?" Was there one iota of what circumcision was intended to represent about him? None. He rested in the ordinance. The meaning of that ordinance had in him no adequate expression. Are there not many now who pride themselves on baptism? But what has baptism in them in its true meaning? Are they dead and buried with Christ? Are they risen with Christ? Are they alive unto God and dead indeed unto sin? Where is the crucifixion of them to the world and the world unto them, which baptism signifies? Alas! they have none of it. They may look with disdain upon the "unbaptized" ones, as Saul did upon the "uncircumcised" ones; but well would it have been for him, and well would it be for them also, if they had never had it.— *Whitfield.*

"O deaf to nature and to heaven's command against thyself to lift the murdering hand! O damn'd despair! to shun the living light, and plunge thy guilty soul in endless night."—*Lucretius.*

the burial of Saul

8—14. (8) **strip,** *etc.*, the armor formed valuable part of the victor's spoils. (9) **stripped,** *etc.*, comp. 1 Sa. xxxi. 9, 10. **and sent into,** *i. e.* sent the head and armor throughout the land. "According to a common custom the objects just named are not repeated."—*Keil.* (10) **of their gods,** in 1 Sa. this reads "of Ashtoreth;" doubtless the famous temple of Venus mentioned by Herodotus. (11) **Jabesh-gilead,**[a] Ju. xxi. 8–14; 1 Sa. xi. 1–11. (12) **body,** *cf.* 1 Sam. xxxi. 10. These bodies had been "fastened to the wall of Beth Shan." **buried their bones,** after burning the bodies, *cf.* 1 Sa. xxxi. 12. Cremation was not usual. But this proves that it was not considered sacrilegious. **oak,** Sam. says *tree.*[b] (13) **for his transgression,** esp. refer. to sin of sparing Amalek.[c] **asking,** *etc.*, consummating his wickedness by turning to witch of Endor. (14) **turned the kingdom,** *etc.*, the reference to Saul is only made as introduction to the reign of David.

[a] 1 Sa. xxxi. 11—13.

[b] 1 Sa. xxxi. 13.

[c] 1 Sa. xv. 1-9.

Tidings sent to the idols (*vs.* 9).— After Saul had fallen on Mount Gilboa, his enemies "stripped him, and took off his head, and sent the tidings to their idols." When the heathen of the present day gain a victory over their enemies, they always take the tidings to their idols. There is the king, and there his general and troops and priests and people marching in triumph to the temple. Then they relate to the gods all their proceedings; how they conquered the foe, and that to them they have come to give the glory. But this practice is had recourse to, also, in the common affairs of life. A man delivered from prison, or any great emergency, always goes to his gods to carry

"Werre at his bygynnyng hath so greet an entre and so large, that every wight may entre when him liketh, and lightly fynde werre; but certes what ende schal falle therof, it is not lightly to nowe. For sothly whan that werre is oones bygonne,

the joyful tidings. Hear them relate the story: Ah! Swamy, you know Muttoo wanted to ruin me; he therefore forged a deed in my name, and tried to get my estates; but I resisted him, and it has just been decided before the court that he is guilty. I am therefore come to praise you, O Swamy!"—*Roberts.* *Familiar spirits* (*vs.* 13).—Lord Byron, when a boy, was warned by a fortuneteller, that he should die in the 37th year of his age. That idea haunted him, and in his last illness, he mentioned it as precluding all hope of his recovery. It repressed, his physician says that energy of spirit so necessary for nature in struggling with disease. He talked of two days of the week as his unlucky days, on which nothing would tempt him to commence any matter of importance; and mentioned as an excuse for indulging such fancies, that his friend Shelley, the poet, had a familiar who warned him that he should perish by drowning, and such was the fate of that highly-gifted but misguided man.—*Whitecross.*

B. C. 1010.

ther is ful many a child unbore of his mooder that schal sterve yong, bycause of thilke werre, or elise lyve in sorwe, and deye in wreechidness; and therefore er that eny werre be bygonne, men moste have gret counsell and gret deliberacioun."—*Chaucer.*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—3. The writer here passes over all that is recorded in 2 Sam. i–iv. (1) **all Israel,** at death of Ishbosheth, *see* 2 Sa. v. 1–3. **all Israel,** *i. e.* the national assembly, composed of Israelites of twenty yrs. old and upwards (Nu. i. 3), to whom leaders and kings were presented for their approval. (2) **moreover,** *etc.*, two things are here urged on Dav., the eye of the people had long been on him, and he was especially called and anointed of Jehovah. (3) **covenant,** as 2 Sa. v. 3. "Some kind of a charter, defining the king's rights, was in existence (1 Sam. x. 25): and later on we find the people demanding a limitation of these rights. 1 Ki. xii. 3 *ff.* The Israelite monarchy was not an absolute and unlimited despotism."—*Kirkpatrick.* **anointed David,** for the third time. He was 30 yrs. old (2 Sa. v. 4).

David made king in Hebron

Israel's commissariat-general (*vs.* 2).—David's commission. I. What it implies. 1. God's care for Israel; 2. God's view of a king's duty; 3. That Israel had not been well fed of late. II. How David discharged it. 1. By securing peace, by victorious wars, he provided for the ingathering of fruits of the earth; 2. By attention to religious affairs he provided for spiritual food of his people; 3. He himself spread a table, in the Bk. of Ps., for the souls of men.

If an angel were sent to find the most perfect man, he would probably not find him composing a body of divinity; but perhaps a cripple in a poorhouse, whom the parish wish dead, but humbled before God, with far lower thoughts of himself than others think of him.

The mission of man.—

How I wish
I could love men! for amid all life's quests
There seems but worthy one — to do men good.
It matters not how long we live, but how.
For as the parts of one manhood while here
We live in every age: we think, and feel,
And feed upon the coming and the gone
As much as on the now time. Man is one:
And he hath one great heart. It is thus we feel,
With a gigantic throb athwart the sea,
Each other's rights and wrongs; thus are we men.
Let us think less of men and more of God.—*Bailey.*

"Man is a central creature between the animals, that is to say, the most perfect form, which unites the traits of all in the most complete epitome."—*Herder.*

4—9. (4) **Jebus,** the ancient name of city when associated with the Jebusites. (5) **castle,** *R. V.* "stronghold." (6) **David said,** only a portion of the narrative given (2 Sa. v. 8) is repeated here. **Joab,** *etc.*, a most important addition to Sam.'s account. (7) **city of David,** or *Zion.* (8) **built the city,** prob. a new town to the north of the old one. **Joab repaired,**[a] or restored the old city of the Jebusites. (9) **Lord of hosts:** a title which occurs often in the times of Samuel and David, but not at all in the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Job, Proverbs, Ezekiel or Daniel. It occurs first in 1 Sa. i. 3, in close connection with the foundation of the monarchy and is probably an ascription of universal sovereignty over hosts earthly and heavenly.

David takes the castle of Zion

[a] 1 Ki. xviii. 30; Ne. iv. 2.

The true freedom of man.—The free man is he who is loyal to the laws of his universe: who in his heart sees and knows, across all contradictions, that injustice cannot befall him here; that, except by sloth and cowardly falsity, evil is not possible here. The first symptom of such a man is not that he resists and rebels, but that he obeys. The essence of all "religion" that was and that will be, is to make men free. Who is he that, in this life-pil-

"Our Heavenly Father, in His boundless goodness, has made His creatures that they should be happy, and in His wisdom has fitted His means to His ends, giving to all of them different qualities and faculties, in using and

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grimage, will consecrate himself, at all hazards, to obey God and God's servants, and to disobey the devil and his? With pious valor this free man walks through the roaring tumults invincibly, the way whither he is bound. To him in the waste Saharas, through the grim solitudes peopled by galvanized corpses and doleful creatures, there is a lodestar; and his path, whatever those of others be, is towards the Eternal. A man well worth consulting, and taking the vote of about matters temporal; and, properly, the only kind of man. — *Carlyle.*

developing which, according to His prescription, they find that happiness which He has intended for them."— *Prince Albert.*

David's mighty men

10—14. (10) **chief,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 8–39. **mighty men,** or heroes. **strengthened,** *R. V.*, "shewed themselves strong." "*strenuously assisted* with all Israel in making David king." (11) **Hachmonite,**[a] *R. V.*, "the son of a Hachmonite." **captains,** *R. V.*, "thirty." (12) **three mighties,** the third being *Shammah.*[b] (13) **Pas-dammim,** or *Ephes-dammim.*[c] The spot or boundary of blood; it was the scene of frequent conflicts with the Philistines. Here David slew Goliath. **to battle,** here several verses are omitted. *cf.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 9–11. **barley,** *lentils* in 2 Sa. xxiii. 11.

David's mighty men (*vs.* 10). — I. Their history in relation to themselves. Their purpose and work to make David king, "according to the word of the Lord." For this they fought, not thinking of self. II. The lesson of their history for us. Our great work to maintain the throne of our King — David's royal Son.

The mighty men. — The worthies whose deeds are here recorded were rendering a not unimportant service to their race. The reign of David had a certain serious bearing on the whole plan of Providence. It was, perhaps, an essential link in the whole redemptive chain. In this light the exploits of these heroes, who helped to place David in regal power and to sustain him on the throne of Israel, formed a contribution to the work of God and the redemption of man. The tendency of our nature is to overestimate such brilliant feats as those of this chapter. But it is possible, by a reaction of thought, to underestimate them, and even to deny them a place in the account of honorable service. Physical prowess has served and yet may serve the cause of truth, righteousness, wisdom. Now, in these Christian times, it is (1) by moral rather than by physical courage; (2) in obscurity rather than in distinction; (3) with the sword of the spirit rather than with the sword of steel, that we are to win victories and render service to our Lord. — *Clarkson. A brave boy.* — In the war with France, previous to the Revolution, an English drummer, not more than fifteen years of age, having wandered from his camp too near the French lines, was seized and brought before the French commander. On being asked who he was by the general, he answered, "A drummer in the English service." This not gaining credit, a drum was sent for, and he was desired to beat a couple of marches, which he accordingly did. The Frenchman's suspicion being, however, not quite removed, he desired the drummer to beat a retreat. "A retreat, sir?" replied the youthful Briton; "I don't know what that is." This answer so pleased the French officer that he dismissed the drummer, and wrote to his general, commending his spirited behavior. — *Percy Anec.*

a 1 Chr. xxvii. 2.

b 2 Sa. xxiii. 11.

c 1 Sa. xvii. 1.

"There are but three classes of men: *the retrograde*, *the stationary*, and *the progressive*." — *Lavater.*

"The warrior's name would be a name abhorr'd, and every nation that should lift again its hand against a brother, on its forehead should wear for evermore the curse of Cain." — *Longfellow.*

"A man is like a bit of Labrador spar, which has no lustre as you turn it in your hand, until you come to a particular angle, then it shows deep and beautiful colors." — *Emerson.*

the well at the gate of Bethlehem

15—19. (15) **of the thirty,** mentioned in *vs.* 11 and numerated in *vss.* 26–40. **went down,** comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 13–17. **Adullam,** 1 Sa. xxii. 1; the traditional site S. E. of Bethlehem is untenable. It was a royal city of the Canaanites 10 miles N. W. of Hebron. **Rephaim,** 2 Sa. v. 17–25.[d] (16) **in the hold,** some kind of fortress was so called. (17) **the well,** according to tradition, was half a mile N. E. of Bethlehem. But the well "at the gate" cannot be identified. (18) **brake through,** a remarkable feat of chivalry and devotion, revealing the great hold David had on his soldiers, as well as their courage. **poured it out,** an illustration of the nature which so endeared David to his followers. The act was a libation, offering to God this water made sacred by the heroism that obtained it. (19) **drink the blood,** water which has been obtained at the peril of life. Comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 17.[e]

Water. — Eastern people are great connoisseurs in the taste of water. They drink very little else, except coffee without sugar, so they learn to distinguish the peculiar quality of water from different springs. Van Lennep tells us that there are in Constantinople shops in which nothing but water is sold, the price of a glass varying in accordance with the reputation of the spring whence it is brought. A steamer regularly plies between the capital and the island of

d 2 Sa. xxiii. 13; 1 Chr. xiv. 9-16; Is. xvii. 5.

e "In 2 Sa. it is literally, 'blood of men going with their souls or lives,' *i. e.* putting their lives in their hands to fetch it." — *Wordsworth.*

"There were three mightiest; there may be a countless host of mighties, and yet the very

Marmora, seventy-five miles off, in order to supply the Sultan's seraglio with the water of a celebrated spring. The actual excellence of the water from the "well of Bethlehem" may partly accout for David's longing to drink of it; but there were probably also home yearnings in his heart. — *From Biblical things not generally known. A hero.* — The illustrious champion of the Gothic ages, Du Guesclin, Lord High Constable of France, possessed a person by no means favored by nature. He said of himself when he was very young, "I am indeed very ugly; I shall never be a favorite with the ladies; but I trust I shall make myself feared by the enemies of my sovereign." From his earliest youth he breathed nothing but battles and feats of activity. "There never was a more unlucky boy in the world," said his mother, "than my son. He is always wounded in some way or other; his face is always full of scars; he is constantly beating, and being beaten." In the times in which Du Guesclin lived, the nobility were often assembled to fêtes to the ladies. His father and many other courtiers published a tournament, to which they invited all the accomplished cavaliers in France and England. Young Du Guesclin observed with great pleasure the preparations that were making for the tournament, when his father, in consideration of his very early years, ordered him to stay in his chateau, and on no account whatever to follow him to Rennes. Soon after he was set out, young Du Guesclin quitted the castle in disguise, and placed himself among the spectators of this brilliant ceremony. Observing, however, a relation of his, who had retired from the engagement, unhorsed, he followed him to the inn, and with tears in his eyes entreated him to lend him his horse and armor. Having, with some difficulty, effected his purpose, he performed such wonders at the tournament, that the prize was adjudged him; this he offered to the chevalier who had accoutred him, for the honorable distinction which he obtained. This, however, the latter refused, and brought the young hero to his father, who embraced him amidst the applause of the spectators. — *Percy Anec.*

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poorest woman who seeks to touch the hem of the Saviour's garment, may receive power to go forward and heal and comfort others." — *J. Parker.*

"Look not alone for your relations in your own house or in your own sphere. The blood of Christ is stronger for relationship than blood of father or mother. Look above you. All there are yours. Go down even to the bottom of society. All below you are judgement-day brothers; and God's eternity is on them and you alike." — *Beecher.*

20—25. (20) **Abishai,** nephew of David, *cf.* 2 Sam. x. 10, 14; xviii. 2; 1 Sam. xxvi. 8; 2 Sam. xxi. 17. **chief of the three,** just mentioned, who did this feat. (21) **more honourable,** as being the leader in the enterprise. **first three,** those mentioned in *vs.* 12. (22) **Benaiah,** comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 20–23. **many acts,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "mighty deeds," he slew the two sons of Ariel of Moab, 2 Sam. viii. 2. **in a snowy day,**[a] *R. V.*, "in time of snow," that is in the winter, the lions having taken refuge in a pit or well, 1 Sa. xvii. 34–37. (23) **five cubits,** seven feet six inches. **weaver's beam,** comp. 1 Sa. xvii. 7; 2 Sa. xxi. 19. (24) **the three mighties,** *i. e.*, the second three. (25) **honourable among,** *R. V.*, "more honourable than." **his guard,** his bodyguard, this involved personal attendance on David,[b] 2 Sam. xxvii. 6.

Abishai and Benaiah

[a] "From this we learn that lions abounded in the land in the time of David; that they retreated into pits, and that they had snowy days even in Palestine." — *Thompson.*

[b] *Gesenius* prefers the rendering. "Took him into his privy-council," 2 Sa. viii. 18, xx. 23; 1 Ki. i. 38.

A valiant man. — A beautiful expression is this, "a valiant man." This is what the church needs now, both in the pulpit and in the pew. This is no time for indifference, timidity, self-consideration, or cowardice. To his credit or discredit be it said, the devil is valiant enough. He plants his evil places at the corners of the streets; he is up first in the morning and last at night; he studies the tastes of the people, and accommodates himself to them; though a leader, he is yet a follower; there is no man, how low or how high soever, whose peculiarities he does not study with a view to his corruption and overthrow. How is it that the church will operate but in one direction, forgetting the breadth of human life, and the multitudinousness of its necessity? The church is apt to confine its valor to one line or to one point. It does not follow the sinner, tracking his every step, passing with him from chamber to chamber, pleading with him, wrestling with him, and giving him to feel that he will not be let go until he has answered the great appeals of heaven. Is it enough to build a sanctuary and to say that the people may come to it if they please? — *J. Parker. Money wasted in war.* — Give me the money that has been spent in war, and I will purchase every foot of land on the globe. I will clothe every man, woman and child in an attire that kings and queens might be proud of. I will build a school-house upon every hillside and in every valley over the habitable earth. I will supply that schoolhouse with a competent teacher; I will build an academy in every town, and endow it; a college in every state, and fill it with able professors; I will crown every hill with a church consecrated to the promulgation of the gospel of peace; I will support in its pulpit an able teacher of righteousness, so that on every Sabbath morning the chime on one hill shall answer to the chime

"Courage mounteth with occasion" — *Shakespeare*

The most grand and magnificent procession the ancients ever beheld was a Roman triumph. After a decisive battle gained the most illustrious captives in war, with their wives and children, were led in fetters before the general's chariot, through the public streets of Rome, scaffolds being everywhere erected, and the public places crowded to behold the sight.

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on another around the earth's broad circumference; and the voice of prayer and the song of praise shall ascend like the smoke of a universal holocaust to heaven. — *Stebbins.*

the valiant men of the armies

26—33. These verses correspond to 2 Sa. xxiii. 24–31, and seem to be a list of "the thirty" referred to in *vs.* 15, together with some others; 37 in Samuel and 40 in Chronicles, in all. The names vary. (26) **Asahel,** 2 Sa. ii. 18–32.[a] (27) **Harorite,** or *Harodite*; poss. fr. the spring *Harod.* **Pelonite,** or *Paltite.*[b] (28) **Tekoite,** of *Tekoa,* 2 Sa. xiv. 2. **Antothite,** native of *Anathoth,* Jos. xxi. 18. (29) **Sibbecai,** in Sam. he is called *Mebunnai.* **Ilai,** in Sam. called *Zalmon.* (30) **Netophathite,** of Netophah, a place near Bethlehem, poss. modern *Beit-Nettif.*[c] **Heled,** or *Heleb.* (31) **Pirathonite,** of *Pirathon,* Ju. xii. 15. (32) **Gaash,** Jos. xxiv. 30. **Arbathite,** native of the Arabah. (33) **Baharumite,** comp. 2 Sa. xxiii. 31; xvi. 5.

A wise king chooses brave men for captains. — He did so because he recognized the validity of the principle we have just been considering. His valor infused itself into the captains; theirs would be infused into the men. In war an army wants brave leaders, not figure-heads. "Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their room," said the sensible military critics of Benhadad, who had made his first invasion of Israel with thirty-two kings as leaders of his troops. But it is not only in military matters, but in all others that courage is wanted. From the teacher of a Sunday school to a prime minister, from a minister of religion to a town councilor, whoever is at the head of his fellows should be brave; wise as well, but brave. Prudence without some daring and enterprise will so shrink from difficulties and risks that it will take ofttimes the most dangerous course of all — doing nothing. There is always at hand, available for whoever can use it, abundance of power to work reforms, to render needed service to mankind, if only there be leaders for it. Are you in a position of influence of any sort, in church or state, with few or many? Remember that David would have none but heroic men for leaders, and if you have not courage to lead men forward, you should give place to those who have. Happy the village church, the Sunday school, the school board, the town council, the land, whose leaders have brave hearts that do not slacken with languor or shrink from danger! With such leading, the community, like Israel, will find safety, prosperity, blessing, in richer measure than languid hearts ever dare to dream of. — *Glover.*

34—41. (34) **sons of,** the name of some warrior seems to have fallen out here.[d] (35–38) **Joel the brother,** *etc.*, comp. in 2 Sa. xxiii. 36 *Igal,* the son of Nathan. (39–41) **Uriah,** 2 Sa. xi. 3. The names in this and succeeding verses are added to the list given in Samuel.

Uriah the Hittite (*vs.* 41.). — Foreigners resident in the country were permitted to serve in the Jewish armies, and they sometimes rose to a very high rank: for both Uriah and Ittai, who seem to have held principal commands in the armies of David, were aboriginal Canaanites. But in succeeding ages the kings of Judah, affecting to imitate the policy of the surrounding potentates, or distrusting the omnipotent protection of Jehovah, occasionally hired large bodies of foreign troops to fight their battles, who, like mercenaries of later times, after expelling the invaders, sometimes turned their arms against their employers, and ravaged the country which they came to protect. — *Paxton.* *Attraction of bravery.* — If God has made you a kingly spirit you need not be over-solicitous about the recognition of your claims. He whom God makes to be master is master by a law of gravitation, and finds his level as naturally as material things find theirs. Impatience to reach your throne only delays it. *Be still,* and if God means you to rule, there is nothing more certain than that you will. Meanwhile, as perhaps you have not that part to play, attach yourself as a learner and a follower to him whom you find better and wiser than yourself, and, sitting at his feet, you will, in the practice of obedience, learn the secret of command. David not only attracts, however, but *elevates.* Beneath the kindling inspiration of his valor all hearts grow brave. Courage seems so easy and fear so shameful that, with him as leader, each man is twice, ay, sometimes many times himself. A Bruce, a Cromwell, a Nelson, or a Wellington, will never lack brave following. "As iron sharpeth iron, so does a man the countenance of his friend." Valor in one makes many valiant. King Arthur had his knights of the Round Table, and David had his,

a 2 Sa. iii. 27, 30; xxxiii. 24; 1 Chr. xxvii. 7.

b 2 Sa. xxiii. 26; 1 Chr. xxvii. 10.

c Ezr. ii. 22; Ne. vii. 26.

"We make ourselves more injuries than are offered to us; they many times pass for wrongs in our own thoughts that were never meant so by the heart of him that speaketh. The apprehension of wrong hurts more than the sharpest part of the wrong done." — *Feltham.*

If we stand in the openings of the present moment, with all of the length and breadth of our faculties unselfishly adjusted to what it reveals, we are in the best condition to receive what God is always ready to communicate." — *T. C. Upham.*

d "Perhaps the most prob. conjecture is, that the 'Beni Hashem' of Chron. and the 'Beni Jashem' of Sam. alike conceal some single name of a man wh. cannot now be recovered." — *Spk. Com.*

"He is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man."—*Shakespeare.*

"The best hearts, Trim, are ever the bravest, replied my uncle Toby."—*Sterne.*

and all brave men have theirs. Such a fact is worthy of notice, for we are apt to think evil a stronger thing than good; the fact being that good is the most omnipotent thing on earth, kindling similar goodness in others' lives. Be brave and good, and you will not long be without companions. —*Pul. Com.*

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42—47. (42) **thirty with him,** whose names are not given, and over whom he was captain. (43–47) **Mithnite,** of unknown place called *Methin.* Other unknown places are indicated by the terms *Tizite* and *Mahavite.* **Mesobaite,** *R. V.*, "Mezobaite," a puzzling name. It may be misprint for "for Zobah," *cf.* 2 Sa. xxiii. 36.

"A brave man is clear in his discourse, and keeps close to truth." —*Aristotle.*

Mark of bravery. — An unlucky private in one of the New York regiments was wounded in the Battle of Bull Run; and his father arrived at the hospital just as the surgeon was removing the ball from the back of his shoulder. The boy lay with his face downward on the pallet. "Ah, my poor son," said, the father, mournfully, "I am very sorry; but it's a bad *place* to be hit in — thus in the back." The sufferer turned over, bared his breast, and pointing to the opening above the armpit, exclaimed, "Father, here's where the ball went in." *Bravery in death.* — At the defeat of Romagnans. Bonivet, wounded, and not able to serve any longer, gave the command of the army up to Bayard, who, as usual, performed prodigies of valor; until he was wounded by a musket shot, which broke the vertebræ of his back. He then caused himself to be helped off his horse, and to be placed at the foot of a tree, "that, at least," said he, "I may die facing the enemy." — *Percy Anec. Prince Eugene on war.* — "The thirst of renown sometimes insinuates itself into our councils, under the garb of national honor. It dwells on imaginary insults; it suggests harsh and abusive language; the people go on from one thing to another, till they put an end to the lives of half a million of men. A military man becomes so sick of bloody scenes in war, that in peace he is averse to recommence them. I wish that the first minister who is called to decide on peace and war had only seen actual service."

"War,—the trade of barbarians, and the art of bringing the greatest physical force to bear on a single point."—*Napoleon.*

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

David's friends at Ziklag

This chapter supplements Samuel, giving lists of those who joined David while Saul was king (*vss.* 1–22) and those who came to Hebron to make David king (*vss.* 23–37). **1—7.** (1) **Ziklag,** 1 Sa. xxvii. 6. **close,**[a] he remained in Ziklag a year and four months, 1 Sam. xxvii.–xxx. (2) **bows,** comp. 1 Chr. viii. 40; 2 Chr. xiv. 8. **and the left,** Ju. iii. 15; xx. 16. **Saul's brethren,** some of Saul's own tribe casting in their lot with David. *Cf.* ch. xi. 12. Eleazer *vs.* 29, Ilai, and *vs.* 31, Ithai. (3) **Azmaveth,** ch. xi. 33. (4) **Gederathite,** Jos. xv. 36. (5) **Haruphite,** of a place not known. (6) **Korhites,** of some place in Benj. (7) **Gedor,** name of three different places.

[a] "While he was still shut out fr. the presence of Saul."—*Bertheau.*

Both hands (*vs.* 2). — I. Some men are, morally, left-handed. Do good and right things; but awkwardly. II. Some who are right-handed are, after all, only single-handed: can do right things, but only one way. III. These men could use equally well both the right hand and the left, and each hand helped the other.

These came to David. — The good and the great draw others after them; they lighten and lift up all who are within the reach of their influence. They are so many living centres of beneficent activity. Let a man of energetic and upright character be appointed to a position of trust and authority, and all who serve under him become, as it were, conscious of an increase of power. — *Smiles. The wish of a good man.* — I would rather, when I am laid in the grave, that some one in his manhood should stand over me and say, "There lies one who was a real friend to me, and privately warned me of the dangers of the young; no one knew it, but he aided me in time of need; I owe what I am to him." Or would rather have some widow, with choking utterance, telling her children, "There is your friend and mine; he visited me in my affliction, and found you, my son, an employer, and you, my daughter, a happy home in a virtuous family." I would rather that such persons should stand at my grave, than to have erected over it the most beautiful sculptured monument of Parian or Italian marble. The heart's broken utterance of reflections of past kindness, and the tears of gratefnl memory shed upon the grave, are more valuable in my estimation than the most costly cenotaph ever reared. — *Sharpe.*

Thoreau used to say that the most serene and happy-looking men that he knew were often not men of leisure, as one might think, but very diligent workers. This steady sailing is not because there is a smooth summer sea before the voyager, but because there is such a strong, firm hand upon the tiller.

B. C. *cir.* 1020.

the Gadites who aided David

8—14. (8) **separated themselves,** *i. e.* from Saul, and the rest of their tribe who followed Saul. **hold,** prob. *Adullam.* 1 Sa. xxii. 5. (14) **over an hundred,**[a] *R. V.*, "equal to an hundred" in military valor and ability. **over a thousand,** *R. V.*, "(equal to) a thousand."

Separated men (*vs.* 8). — Consider what they left. Home, family, estate. II. For whom they did this. David, God's anointed. III. When they did this. When David was in danger and distress. IV. David remembered them in the days of his prosperity. How our King will reward His followers.

The Gadites. — Like gathers to like — the brave to the brave, the good to the good. It is human nature at its best which recognizes and rejoices in superiority. Homage and obedience should be freely rendered where they are justly claimed and truly deserved. Observe the qualities and exploits of these sons of Gad who gathered to David and offered him their swords. They were men of might, bold as lions, swift as eagles; men skilled in the use of their weapons, apt for war, brave in danger, "good at need;" men whose deeds were in the lips of a nation, memorable and unforgotten. We may discern in the qualities of these valiant Gadites the qualities which (*mutatis mutandis*) should characterize Christians as the soldiers of Christ and combatants in the "holy war." — *Pul. Com.*

[a] "Prob. the true meaning is, a little one of them was equal to a hundred and a great one to a thousand."—*Wordsworth.*

"What a man is in private duties, that he is in the sight of God, and no more."—*Owen.*

men of Judah and Benjamin who aided David

15—22. (15) **first month,** spring-time. **overflown,** in the rainy season an immense body of water rushes down to the Dead Sea, and makes crossing dangerous. Jos. iii. 15. **put . . west,** reference is to Saul's guard that watched on either bank of the river the passage of the ford. (16) **and Judah,** so the company mentioned *vss.* 3-7 seems to have been a mixed one, not consisting of pure Benjamites. (17) **peaceably,** being Benj. he naturally suspected that they were of the party of Saul. (18) **spirit came upon,** Heb. "clothed." That is the Holy Spirit encompassed and took possession of Amasai. The usual O. T. idea as against the N. T. idea of the *indwelling* Spirit, Nu. xi. 25; Judges xiv. 6, 19. **Amasai,** some think same as Amasa, David's nephew, and as a Judahite he came forward to speak for the party. (19) **with the Phil.,** *see* 1 Sa. xxix. 1–11. (20) **to Ziklag,** when the Phil. sent him back. (21) **band of the rovers,** 1 Sa. xxx. 1, 2. (22) **host of God,** *i. e.* an invincible multitude.[b]

Evidences of Amasai's sincerity. — I. The promptness of the answer. II. Its unqualified frankness. III. The absence of the slightest appearance of feeling offended. IV. The discrimination in the selection of one word used in this reply — Peace. V. The heart and earnestness thrown into the reply. VI. The piety and right, sound practical theology thrown into it. — *Pul. Com.*

Suspicion. — Many of the supreme facts of our present life, if not all of them, bring us very near indeed to those of our spiritual "unseen" life. But even far within these limits human hearts ask large things of one another, and invoke an immensity of trust and repose, an immensity of trust not unfrequently where it is little recognized, little honored. One walks out with his life in his hand and a weight on his heart almost intolerable, to meet another whose mirth it may be to make mischief, and to hear his sentence and receive his destiny to all human intents from light lip and unthinking heart. This sobers human trust and checks the luxuriant growth of mutual confidence, and justifies David when he prefers to express, rather than seem to disdain, his already hard-bought experience of human compassions and "tender mercies," and finally, sometimes turns the action of suspicion toward men into the virtue of deeper trust toward God. — *Pul. Com.*

[b] Jon. iii. 3.

"He that does not know those things which are of use and necessity for him to know, is but an ignorant man, whatever he may know beside." — *Tillotson.*

"Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, pompous in the grave."—*Sir T. Browne.*

David's army at Hebron

23—28. (23) **the bands,** *R. V.*, "the heads of them," a more detailed account of the assembly noticed in xi. 1–3. (24) **children of Judah,** the enumeration begins with the two southern tribes and proceeds northward. (25) **Simeon,** included within territories of Judah. (26) **of Levi,** not said to be warriors. (27) **Jehoiada,** not high priest,[c] but leader of the warriors of house of Aaron.[d] (28) **Zadok,** the subsequent high priest.[e] His family was very powerful at the time of David's elevation, containing twenty-two "heads of families."

The hearts of all men are in God's hands. — When the proper time came for the promise made to David to be fulfilled, no efforts were needed to secure the throne. One difficulty after another faded away. One section after another of the people came to offer their allegiance. And the signs of God's

[c] 1 Sa. xxiii. 9.

[d] Perhaps father of Benaiah, see 1 Chr. xi. 22.

[e] 2 Sa. viii. 17; 1 Ki. i. 8.

gracious moving of men's hearts towards David in due time were seen, in the devotion of themselves and their wealth and property to his service. The men of might came, and offered him their weapons, their skill, and their lives. The men of understanding came, and offered him their counsel and powers of rule and magistracy. The men of wealth came, and offered abundant provisions for the host thus gathering round David (*vs.* 40). Compare the consecration of property in the early Pentecostal days. Often in life we are made to feel that the circumstances of life are in God's hands, and we recognize His wonder-working in the removal of our difficulties and the opening of our path; but even when we seem to be hindered by the action of our fellow-men, we do not see that their hearts are in God's hands, and that, in answer to our prayer and in fulfilment of His purposes, He can move men's feelings and sway them as He may please. Yet this is the fuller and truer view of life; until we can worthily realize this we do not truly say, "Our times are in thy hands." "He maketh the wrath of man praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He can restrain."—*Pul. Com.*

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"Men who have always thrust obstacles aside come to think their power invincible, and to make themselves a battering-ram against fate and circumstances. And when God comes down to oppose them, at first they try to wrestle with Him but they limp all their life after, like Jacob of old: for God never wrestles with a man without throwing him."—*Beecher.*

29—34. (29) **had kept ward,** *R. V.*, "had kept their allegiance to," hence the smallness of the number. (31) **expressed,** *etc.*, either full lists being furnished with them: or this number was deputed by the rest of the tribe to represent them (32) **understanding,**[a] a unique expression; this tribe called "a strong ass" in Gen. xlix. 14, has somehow become pre-eminent in political wisdom. (33) **fifty thousand,** the largest number from any one tribe. **keep rank,** *R. V.*, "order the battle array." **double heart,** Heb. "without a heart and a heart," *i. e.*, they were stable and trusty. (34) **with shield and spear,** men constituting the rank and file.

[a] Heb. *binah*, moral and political prudence and wisdom.

The propriety of considering times and circumstances.—From the character here given of the men of Issachar we shall take occasion to show—I. That our conduct must often be affected by times and circumstances of whatever nature. 1. Civil; 2. Social; 3. Personal. II. How far it may be properly affected by them in the concerns of religion. 1. That we may attend to times, *etc.*, is certain (exam. of Christ and Apostles); 2. But how far is not easy to determine. III. What there is in the times, *etc.*, of the present day to affect our conduct. Application: suggest a caution or two. 1. Guard against yielding to any corrupt bias; 2. The future judgment will be according to motives; 3. Seek for wisdom that is profitable to direct.—*C. Simeon.*

"Happy are those that knowing in their births they are subject to uncertain changes, are still prepared and arm'd for either fortune: a rare principle, and with much labor learn'd in wisdom's school."—*Massinger.*

The need of forethought.—

When we mean to build,
We first survey the plot, then draw the model·
And when we see the figure of the house,
Then must we rate the cost of the erection:
Which if we find outweighs ability,
What do we then but draw anew the model
In fewer offices; or, at least, desist
To build at all? Much more in this great work
(Which is, almost, to pluck a kingdom down,
And set another up) should we survey
The plot of situation, and the model;
Consent upon a sure foundation;
Question surveyors; know our own estate,
How able such a work to undergo,
To weigh against his opposite; or else
We fortify in paper and in figures,
Using the names of men instead of men:
Like one who draws the model of a house
Beyond his power to build it; who, half through,
Gives o'er, and leaves his part-created cost
A naked subject to the weeping clouds,
And waste for churlish winter's tyranny.—*Shakespeare.*

"There is a wicked inclination in most people to suppose an old man decayed in his intellects. If a young or middle-aged man, when leaving a company, does not recollect where he laid his hat, it is nothing; but if the same inattention is discovered in an old man, people will shrug up their shoulders, and say, "His memory is going."—*Johnson.*

35—40. (35) **expert in war,** *R. V.*, "that could set the battle in array." (37) **on the other,** or *from* the other. (38) **perfect,** or sincere. (39) **eating,** a great coronation feast being prepared. (40) **nigh them,** "the meaning is that not only the "brethren" of Judah and of the nearer neighborhood of Hebron joined to entertain and to show hospitality to the

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immense throngs of visitors, but that others did so in everwidening circles, even as far as the remoter Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali." **joy in Israel,**[a] "the joy must have been largely enhanced by the national consciousness of divided rule coming to an end, and of the cloud and frown of the Divine countenance having cleared mercifully away. All now could join to show loyalty and to feel it towards one king, of whom they had reason to believe that he was the chosen of God as of themselves."

Under discipline (*vs.* 38).—I. In this condensed summary of qualities, *etc.*, only particulars of first importance are enumerated. This keeping rank, then, of consequence. II. What keeping rank involves. 1. Obedience to authority: 2. Regard to the general pace of the whole; 3. Mutual help. III. The importance of keeping rank in church life and action.

Joy is Israel.—Joy in the Lord is strength, positive actual power for ministry. It creates around us the most favorable atmosphere for evoking our resources; raises our entire nature to the highest pitch of energy, and gives unwonted elasticity and capacity of tension to all our faculties. When the heart is brimming over with gladness, labor is acceptable, opposition helpful, duty a delight, and responsibility a privilege.— *Hom. Com.* *Employment of oxen in the East* (*vs.* 40).—We see from this that oxen were used as beasts of burden. This kind of service is one which, in the East, they are still often required to perform, and they do it well, although in their usual deliberate and quiet way. At present, in different parts of Asia, they are more or less employed for riding, for burden and for draught. In Western Asia we have frequently seen them ridden by women, children, and old or infirm people of the poorer (but not absolutely the poorest) classes, in removals and journeys to a town or village distant from their own.— *Kitto.*

a Neh. viii. 10.

"Agriculture is the most certain source of strength, wealth, and independence. Commerce flourishes by circumstances precarious, contingent, transitory, almost as liable to change as the winds and waves that waft it to our shores. She may well be termed the younger sister, for, in all emergencies, she looks to agriculture, both for defense and for supply."—*Cotton.*

"Given a consecrated and undivided heart; given an army animated by such a heart, and the enemy will flee away, and the host of God will bring to Zion banners inscribed with victory."

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

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the ark brought from Kirjath-jearim

This chapter is parallel to 2 Sa. vi. 1–11. **1—4.** Peculiar to Chronicles. (1) **consulted,** this early reference to the ark indicates the Levitical tone of these Books of Chronicles. The term used suggests that some kind of advisory council had been established.[b] (2) **the congregation,** described in *vs.* 1. **left,** *etc.* Dav. wanted everybody to be interested in the matter. **and with . . suburbs,** *R. V.*, "with whom the priests are in their cities that have suburbs." (3) **bring again,** fr. Kirjath-jearim to Zion. **enquired not at it,** *R. V.*, "sought not unto it." The only seeming exception is 1 Sa. xiv. 18, where the Sept. says ephod instead of ark. "The ark, after being restored by the Philistines, continued for a long time an object of fear, not of worship."—*Oehler.* (4) **was right,** they saw the importance of Dav.'s proposal.

David's first council.—I. Of whom it was composed. A fair representation of the whole. II. The subject for discussion, not how shall we plan the campaign, but shall we bring back the ark? III. The ground on which this was urged. The mind of God had not been considered in the past, *vs.* 3. IV. A unanimous vote, *vs.* 4. They all agreed that it should be done, but did not sufficiently consider how it should be accomplished.

Public worship.—Religion has its private spheres. It is strictly an individual and personal thing. Men cannot be saved in masses; the regenerating grace of God only reaches them one by one. But while we see this with the utmost distinctness, we must also admit that religion has its public spheres, and that these are properly a care and anxiety to all sincere and earnest men. We are not to "forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Our Lord gave us his own example of reverent sharing in public worship. With much suggestiveness the evangelist says, "Jesus, as his custom was, went into the synagogue" (Luke iv. 16). The apostles afford the example of sharing together in worship and work. And the best men in every age have fully recognized both the duty and the moral value of public religion. It has been left to our times of luxurious self-indulgence to find excuses for attendance at the sanctuaries, which too often grows into entire neglect of all public means of grace. Bishop Wordsworth notices, in ver. 3, that "David, in his charitable spirit towards the memory of the departed king, does not say that Saul, being possessed by an evil spirit, became indifferent and careless to religion, and was given over to a reprobate mind; but he speaks in general terms, and takes a share of the blame to himself: 'We troubled ourselves little about the ark in the days of Saul.' Here is a happy example of mildness and charity, joined with piety and zeal."

b For hints of such an arrangement before this, comp. Nu. xxxi 14; 1 Sa. viii. 12; xvii. 18; 1 Chr. xii. 20; and for further hints of Dav.'s arrangement, 1 Chr. xv. 25; xxvi. 26; xxviii 1.

"We must love men, ere to us they will seem worthy of our love."—*Shakespeare.*

"A man who has tested with profound enjoyment the pleasure of agreeable society will eat with a greater appetite than he who rode horseback for two hours. An amusing lecture is as useful for health as exercise of the body."—*Kant.*

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5—8. (5) **all Israel,** in Sam. "all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand." (2 Sa. vi. 1.) **from Shihor,**[a] *R. V.*, "from Shihor *the brook* of Egypt," commentators seem agreed that this is a small stream flowing into the Mediterranean, wh. was recognized as the S. boundary of Palestine. **Hemath,** or *Hamath*, defile bet. mountain ranges of Syria, on the north. The passage means—"from the South to the North." Nu. xxxiv. 8. (6) **Baalah,** Jos xv. 9. **whose,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "which is called by the Name," *i. e.* the name which might not be pronounced. In late Jewish writings "The Name" is used to signify God. (7) **Abinadab,** 2 Sa. vi. 3. (8) **played,** musical instruments, as signs of great joy. Comp. 2 Sa. vi. 5. **with singing,** on this occasion, at some time, was undoubtedly composed and sung Ps. xxiv.—*Oehler.*

the ark brought out house of Abinadab

a Comp. Nu. xxxiv. 5; Jos. xv. 4, 47; 1 Ki. viii. 65; 2 Ki. xxiv. 7; 2 Chr. vii. 8.

Imperfect methods (*vs.* 7).—I. The end to be attained was a good one. II. In the hurry to secure it the proper method was overlooked. III. The error in choice of means delayed the accomplishment of the end.

Festive joy.—"The festival," says Dean Stanley, "was one which exactly corresponded to what in the Middle Ages would have been 'the Feast of the Translation' of some great relic, by which a new city or a new church was to be glorified. Long sleepless nights had David passed in thinking of it (Ps. cxxxii. 4), as St. Louis of the transport of the Crown of Thorns to the Royal Chapel of Paris." Such joy is natural and becoming, pleasing to men and acceptable to God.—*Hom. Com.* *The city of forests* (*vs.* 6).—David, alluding to this event in Ps. cxxxii., says, "Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah." He got tidings of it at the place of his own birth; and accordingly it is added, "We found it in the fields of the wood." Kirjath-jearim, the city of forests—for that the name signifies—answers exactly to the situation thus poetically described; and the difference between the two modes of designating the place is precisely that which might be expected to distinguish the style of the historian from the style of the poet. Its present Arabic name of Kuriet-el-Enab means the city of grapes—only a very slight modification of its old Scripture designation, and equally suggestive of fertility and fruitfulnes.—*Buchanan.*

The new heavens and the new earth are for renewed men.

"I have found by experience that they who have spent all their lives in cities, contract not only an effeminacy of habit, but of thinking."—*Goldsmith.*

9—14. (9) **Chidon,** called *Nachon*, 2 Sa. vi. 6. **stumbled,** bec. the descent was steep and dangerous, or tempted by the grain on the floor.—*Murphy.* (10) **put his hand,**[b] the ark was not to be touched, and it would not have needed this touch if, in obedience to the law, it had been carried by poles on the priests' shoulders. (11) **displeased,** better *grieved;* not intending to say that he was *angry* at God. **made a breach,** *R. V.*, "broken forth upon," *cf.* Ex. xix. 22, 24. (12) **afraid,** with a godly fear that made him henceforth more anxious to know the Divine will. (13) **Gittite,** 2 Sa. vi. 10. He was a Levite of the family of the Korahites, a descendant of Kohath (1 Chr. xxvi. 1, 4–8. Num. xvi. 1.), to whom the charge of the ark was given. Hence, probably, the choice. (14) **blessed,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. vi. 11.

Uzza killed for touching the ark

b Nu. iv. 15.

Perez-uzza (*vs.* 11).—I. The principle enforced—that the end does not justify the means. Right things should be secured in the right way. II. This principle may be applied in all departments of life—social, intellectual, political, religious. Zeal that is not according to knowledge. III. Good things are often marred by bad methods. The fury of party and sectarian zeal often defers the worthy ends they aim at.

Luther tells of a nobleman at Vienna who made a great supper, and, in the midst of his mirth, exclaimed, "If God will leave me this world to live and enjoy my pleasure therein for a thousand years, then let Him take His heaven to Himself!" This man spoke what many men think.

Good men may be much perplexed at Divine disposals.—We read that David was "displeased" (*vs.* 11), and also that he was "afraid" (*vs.* 12). We also often find ourselves both perplexed and alarmed at the dealings of God with us. God's way is often "in the sea, his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known." He is sometimes "terrible in his doings toward the children of men." Why he lets the assassin do his deadly work so well, the storm wreck the vessel which is carrying missionaries to their post, the father of the family catch the fatal fever, the irreplaceable minister perish in the railway accident, etc., we do not know and cannot think. Our hearts are saddened, perplexed, troubled, awed. Let us feel that we are but very little children trying to understand a Divine Father, whose wisdom and love *must* be unfathomably deep, must go down far lower than our poor plummet will sound. "Blessed are they who do not see, and yet believe." We "walk by faith, not by sight."—*Clarkson.*

"He that calls a man ungrateful sums up all the evil that a man can be guilty of."—*Swift.*

"Duties not performed according to the right order are but the half of the service we owe to God, and the worse half too."—*T. Boston.*

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CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

This chapter is parallel to 2 Sam. v. 11–25. **1—7.** (1) **Hiram,** 2 Sa. v. 11.[a] (2) **because of his people Israel,** *R. V.*, "for his people Israel's sake." (3) **more wives,** comp. 1 Sa. xxv. 42–44; 2 Sa. v. 13; 1 Chr. iii. 9. (4–7) **Now . . Eliphalet,** comp. other lists.[b]

"*David perceived that the Lord had confirmed him.*" — He had shown much statesmanlike ability since he had been made king, and might have been, as we all are, under the temptation to attribute his success to his own sagacity. But he did not yield to the enemy if thus assailed. He let his prosperity direct his thoughts to him from whom cometh down every good gift. So also shall we, if the spirit of Christ be in us. We shall let all things speak to us of the Father, of his presence with us, his mindfulness of us, his love toward us, his wisdom in all his dealing with us. And we shall not permit our prosperity to do that which it has a tendency to do — elevate us in our own esteem, and hide the Divine Author, of all our mercies from the view of our soul. We shall see that it, with all other experiences, turns our thoughts in reverential love to him. — *Pul. Com.*

The relation of a wife. —

A wife's a man's best piece; who till he marries
Wants making up; she is the shrine to which
Nature doth send us forth on pilgrimage;
She was a scion taken from that tree,
Into which if she has no second grafting
The world can have no fruit: she is man's
Arithmetic, which teaches him to number
And multiply himself in his own children.
She is the good man's paradise, and the bad's
First step to heaven; a treasure which, who wants,
Cannot be trusted to posterity,
Nor pay his own debts; she's a golden sentence
Writ by our Maker, which the angels may
Discourse of, only men know how to use. — *Shirley.*

8—12. (8) **to seek David,**[c] attempting, by a bold stroke, to crush him before his power was consolidated. (9) **spread themselves,** *R. V.*, "made a raid." **Rephaim,** prob. a little S. W. of Jerus. (10) **enquired,** *etc.*, thro' the high priest. By this act at the beginning Dav. designed to give a tone to his reign. (11) **broken . . waters,** *R. V.*, "God hath broken mine enemies by mine hand, like the breach of waters." Probably his army had swept down on the Philistines like a mountain torrent. **Baal-perazim,** 2 Sa. v. 20; Is. xxviii. 21. (12) **gods,** images carried on expeditions, and into battle fields, to insure victory, even as the Israelites brought out the ark.[d]

Baal-perazim (*vs.* 11). — I. A battle begun with inquiry of God, *vs.* 10. II. A battle resulting in victory by the help of God. III. A battle ending with destruction of idols for the honor of God. IV. A battle so begun and finished did not lead to presumption on the part of the victors.

Shall I go up? — The English ambassador to the court of Prussia sat at a table of Frederick the Great, then meditating a war whose sinews were to be mainly formed of English subsidies. Round the table sat infidel French wits, and they and the king made merry over decadent superstitions, the follies of the ancient faith. Suddenly the talk changed to war. Said the ambassador, "England would, by the help of God, stand by Prussia." "Ah!" said the infidel Frederick, "I did not know you had an ally of that name," and the infidel wits smirked applause. "So, please your Majesty," was the swift retort, "He is the only ally to whom we do not send subsidies." — *Baxendale.*

The battle field. —

And silence was upon that fatal field,
Save when, to nature's anguish forced to yield,
Some fallen soldier heaved a broken sigh
For his far home, and turn'd him round to die;
Or when the wailing voice of woman told
That her long weary search was not in vain,

David's wives

a "Elsewhere in Chron. he is always called *Huram* (2 Chr. ii. 3, 11; viii. 18; ix. 10, 21), and this is the Masoretic reading in the present passage." — *Spk. Com.*

b 2 Sa. v. 14–16; 1 Chr. iii. 5–9.

It was reckoned a crime among the Romans to be without a friend. "Friends," says one, "are to be inventoried as well as goods."

battle of Baal-perazim

c "Their hostility arose both fr. a belief that his patriotism would lead him, ere long, to wipe out the national dishonor at Gilboa, and by fear that, in any invasion of their country, his thorough knowledge of their weak points would give him superior advantages."—*Jamieson*

2 Sa. v. 17–25.

d Comp. 1 Sa. iv. 4–11; 2 Sa. v. 21.

He does not force allegiance. He waits for it. The crown of our own individual love and loyalty must be offered by our own hands."—*F. R. Havergal.*

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And she had found the bosom, stiff and cold,
Where her soft clustering curls had often lain.
'Twas one of these that burst upon my ear
While watching on that field: the wind-harp's tone
Was not more mournful nor more sweetly clear
Than was the sound of that sad woman's moan.
Through the dim twilight I beheld a form,
Her dark brow clouded with grief's passionate storm,
And on her breast an infant calmly slept,
Which she would pause to gaze on; and again,
With bitterness renew'd, she loudly wept,
And call'd on its dead father — but in vain. — *Hon. Mrs. Norton.*

13—17. (13) **in the valley,** 2 Sam. v. 22 has "in the valley of Rephaim." (14) **not up,** *i. e.* directly meeting them; but come on them by stratagem: get round upon their rear. **mulberry trees,** *R. V.*, margin gives balsam trees. The name is not certain, the word occurring only here and in the parallel. (15) **sound of going,** *R. V.*, "sound of marching." (16) **Gibeon,** now *Yefa*, in country of Judah.[a] **Gazer,** *R. V. Gezer*, a royal city of the Canaanites, Josh. xii. 12, assigned to the Kohathite Levites, Josh. xxi. 21. (17) **fame of David,** as a warrior.

Victory through obedience (*vs.* 16). — I. Conquest of self precedes conquest of enemies. David so ruled his spirit that, though victorious, he would not follow up victory but with Divine permission. II. Conquest of self leads to conquest of enemies. David, having confidence in God, surrendered himself to His leadership, and was led on from victory to victory.

The scene of the battle. — Wearying very soon with what we could not understand — the ceremonies in the church of the Holy Sepulchre — we mounted and set off for Bethlehem. Rising out of the valley of Gihon at the point, I presume, where the boundary-line between Judah and Benjamin passed from the valley of Hinnom into the plain of Rephaim, we stopped a while to allow our guide to point out the precise spot where the Philistines had their camp when David "fetched a compass, and came upon them over against the mulberry trees." The plain itself is stony and uneven, and declines rapidly toward the west. — *Thomson.* *The fear* which God brings upon men is a religious fear. The nations did not fear David simply because he was a great soldier, but because there was behind him a mysterious force which nothing could resist. Religion is not only a mystery; it is a power. When men observe what this power can do in us, and when what they see is great, pure, and noble, they will begin to think that our religion is the higher reason, and respect it even where they cannot understand it. — *J. Parker.*

battle of Gibeon

a "The line fr. this to Gazer was intersected by the roads wh. led fr. Judah to the cities of the Phil., and to recover possession of it, therefore, as was effected by this decisive battle, was equivalent to setting free the whole mountains of Judah as far as their most westerly slope."—*Bertheau.*

"What infernal being, all powerful in mischief, fills the bosom of man with such insatiable rage for war! Robbery, blood, butchery, desolation, confound without distinction everything sacred and profane."—*Erasmus.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

David prepares a place for the ark

The first twenty-five verses of this chapter have no parallel. **1—10.** (1) **houses,** ch. xi. 8; reference may be to the separate houses round his palace built for the accommodation of his wives and their families. **a tent,** a new one; it is singular that he did not remove the old one fr. Gibeon.[b] (2) **None ought,** distinct recognition of the Levites as a class and their function as God's servants. Nu. iv. 15.[c] (3) **to bring up,** *etc.*, it is three months since the previous attempt to bring up the ark. (4) **children of Aaron,** priests as disting. fr. Levites. (5–10) **Kohath,** this family was specially appointed to carry the ark. **Elizaphan,** Ex. vi. 16–22. **Hebron,** Ex. vi. 18.

Worship due to God. — The Emperor Augustus hearing that a gentleman of Rome, notwithstanding a great burden of debt wherewith he was oppressed, slept quietly and took his ease, desired to buy the bed that he lodged on, remarking that it seemed to him a wonderful bed whereon a man could sleep that was so deeply involved. If we thought of our daily obligations to our God, could we lie down to sleep or rest in peace without having rendered to him the tribute of our praise, and so discharged to that extent the obligation to worship him?

b "I cannot conceive why Dav., who knew the law, and was zealous for it, did not either bring the ark to Gibeon, or bring the tabernacle to Zion."—*M. Henry.* 1 Chr. xvi. 39; 2 Chr. i. 3.

c Nu. i. 50; vii. 9; x. 17; Ex. xi. 13. Lev. viii.

the ark brought from house of Obed-edom

11—16. (11) **the priests,** 2 Sa. viii. 17.[d] (12) **chief of the fathers,** *R. V.*, "heads of the fathers' houses." **sanctify yourselves,** according to Mosiac

d "Zadok is put first as being of

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the line of Phinehas. . . . He was prob. connected with the service of the tabernacle at Gibeon."— *Wordsworth.*

requirements before engaging in any solemn service.[a] (13) **a breach,** ch. xiii. 11. **due order,** *i. e.* by carrying on shoulders of Levites. (14) **to bring up,** fitting themselves for the work. (15) **staves,** *etc.*, Ex. xxv. 14. (16) **singers,** *etc.*, word is used to include musicians.[b]

God is omniscient. — What would you say if, wherever you turned, whatever you were doing, whatever thinking, whether in public or private, with a confidential friend, telling your secrets, or alone planning them, if, I say, you saw an eye constantly fixed on you, from whose watching, though you strove ever so much, you could never escape; and even if you closed your own eye to avoid, you still fancied that to get rid of was impossible — that it could perceive your every thought? The supposition is awful enough. There is such an Eye, though the business and struggles of the world too often prevent us from considering this awful truth. In crowds we are too much interrupted, in the pursuit of self-interest we are too much perverted, in camps we are struggling for life and death, in courts we see none but the eye of a human sovereign; nevertheless, the Divine Eye is always upon us, and when we least think of it, is noting all, and, whatever we may think of it, will remember all. — *De Vere. Reverence.*— Without adopting strained ideas of sacramental virtue, we too may learn this lesson. Sanctuaries, sacraments, Bibles, *etc.*, because of their sacred associations and suggestions, properly demand reverent treatment. Only shallow and self-satisfied natures fail in reference. A worthy sense of the infinite glory of the Unseen, Eternal, and Divine, gains fitting expression in the reverent touch of all earth-symbols that bring the Eternal near. There may be danger of stopping with the symbol, even as heathen stopped with the idol; but the fact that danger lies in excess does not relieve us from the claims of the symbolic, as set within wise limitations. There is danger of overdoing forms. But there is also danger of an undue indifference to forms; and this kind of danger is seriously imperiling to some important features of the religious life. They who would sincerely honor God must not be unmindful of the reverence that is due to His ark.— *R. Tuck.*

[a] Le xl. 44; Nu. xi. 18; 2 Chr. xxix. 5. See also Ge. xxxv. 2; Ex. xx 10, 15.

[b] "Singing had long been recognized as appropriate to religious ceremonies (Ex. xv. 21; Ju. v. 1; 1 Chr. xiii. 8); but this is the first occasion on wh. we find the duty of conducting musical services expressly laid on the Levites. Hitherto music seems to have been chiefly cultivated in the 'schools of the prophets.'"— *Spk. Com.*

17—24. (17) **Heman,** and Ethan are among the wise men with whom Solomon is compared (I Ki. iv. 31). (18) **second degree,** either subordinate leaders, or forming the second choir. **porters,** this word applies only to Obed-edom and Jeiel (or Jehiah), *vs.* 24. (19) **So the singers,** *etc.*, this is the first occasion on which David gave instructions with respect to music in public worship, in which the service of song was added to instrumental music (*cf.* ch. xvi.). **cymbals,** instruments of percussion, producing a clanging sound. (20) **psalteries,** small kinds of harp, poss. represented by mod. *banjo,* or guitar. **on Alamoth,** *R. V.*, "set to Alamoth" (*cf.* Ps. xlvi., title in *R. V.* Polychrome Bible translates "with Elamite instruments."), prob. signifies a *treble* voice, fr. *almah,* a maiden, *Gesenius.* (21) **Sheminith** appears to be derived fr. *shemonah,* eight, and to signify the lowest or bass voice.[c] **on the Sheminith to excel,** *R. V.* "set to the Sheminith, to lead." (*cf.* Ps. vi., title in *R. V.* Polychr. Bible transl. "in the eighth mode or key.") (22) **for song . . about the song,** margin "for (about the) carriage."[d] (23) **doorkeepers,** *see vs.* 24. (24) **blow,** making joyous blasts, not music.

the order of the procession

[c] Marg. is, "on the eighth to oversee."

[d] "Probably the marg. reading is to be preferred, and the meaning is that Dav. appointed a person to oversee the bearing or carrying of the ark to insure that Mosaic conditions were observed"— *See Wordsworth.*

The power of music. — Sultan Amurath, a prince notorious for his cruelty, laid siege to Bagdad; and, on taking it, gave orders for putting thirty thousand Persians to death, notwithstanding they had submitted and laid down their arms. Among the number of the victims was a musician, who entreated the officer to whom the execution of the Sultan's order was entrusted to spare him for a moment, that he might speak to the author of the dreadful decree. The officer consented, and he was brought before Amurath, who permitted him to exhibit a specimen of his art. Like the musician in Homer, he took up a kind of psaltery, which resembles a lyre, and has six strings on each side, and accompanied it with his voice. He sung the capture of Bagdad and the triumph of Amurath. The pathetic tones and exulting sounds which he drew from the instrument, joined to the alternative plaintiveness and boldness of his strains, rendered the prince unable to restrain the softer emotions of his soul. He even suffered him to proceed, until, overpowered with harmony, he melted into tears of pity, and repented of his cruelty. In consideration of the musician's abilities, he not only directed his people to spare those among the prisoners who yet remained alive, but also to give the instant liberty. — *K. Arvine.*

"Can any mortal mixture of earth's mold breathe such divine, enchanting ravishment? Sure something holy lodges in that breast, and with these raptures moves the vocal air to testify his hidden residence."— *Milton.*

"Music is the only sensual gratification which mankind may indulge in to excess without injury to their moral or religious feelings."— *Addison.*

25—29. (25) **went,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. vi. 12, 13.[a] (26) **God helped,** 2 Sa. vi. 13, in contrast with what had occurred previously. Now His benediction, not His wrath, is with them. (27) **robe,** the mantle.[b] **the song,** or burden. **ephod,**[c] was distinctively a high-priest's garment (Ex. xxviii. 4–12), but worn by Sam'l (1 Sa. ii. 18, 28), and here by David as religious leader of the people. (28) **cornet,** named for the first time. (29) **David dancing,** a customary and natural oriental expression of great gladness. In the school of the Prophets David had doubtless been accustomed to it. It was here condemned by Michal, but not apparently by God.

Michal's contempt. — One only incident tarnished its brightness. Michal, his wife, in the proud—we may almost say conservative spirit of the older dynasty, not without a thought of her father's fallen house (2 Sa. vi. 21), poured forth her contemptuous reproach on the king who had descended to the dances and songs of the Levitical procession. He, in reply, vowed an eternal separation, marking the intense solemnity which he attached to the festival. — *Stanley.* *The Duke of Norfolk,* seeing Sir Thomas More, when he was Lord Chancellor, sitting in the choir in his parish church, singing the service, said, "Fie, fie, my lord! the Lord Chancellor of England a parish priest, and a paltry singing man! You dishonor the king!" "No, my lord," replied Sir Thomas, "it is no shame for the king if his servant serve his Sovereign and Saviour, who is the King of kings." — *Whitecross.*

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David danced before the ark

a 1 Ki. viii. 1.

b Ex. xxviii. 4; xxix. 5; 1 Sa. ii. 19; xv. 27.

c 1 Sa. ii. 18, 28.

"Worldly hearts see nothing in actions of zeal but folly and madness."—*Hall.*

"O God, who art the truth, make me one with Thee in everlasting charity."

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

1—6. (1) **in the midst,** or middle. Dav. did but take care of the ark until its proper resting place in the temple was provided. **burnt sacrifices,** for atonement. **peace offerings,** in thanks for reconciliation effected. (2) **blessed,**[d] again performing a priestly act as the head of the theocratic nation. (3) **dealt,** *etc.*, these were the remains of his extensive thank-offerings.[e] **flagon of wine,** *R. V.*, "cake of raisins," 2 Sa. vi. 18. (4) **record,** *R. V.*, "celebrate."[f] (5) **Asaph,** "was chief at the tabernacle of David (vi. 39). His second, Zechariah, with Jeiel (or Jaaziel, xv. 18) and seven others, form a company of nine, who played, six on lutes, and three on harps, while Asaph kept time with cymbals (xv. 19–21). — *Murphy.* (6) **trumpets,** ch. xv. 24.

Love to God and man. — Devotion to God will lead us to think of man. When God blesses us we feel that we should distribute to others. A glad heart will open a wide hand. David's generosity was on a large scale. 1. Suitable in variety. "Bread," "flesh," and "wine." In the house of God a table spread with boundless variety. 2. Universal in application. *Women,* a recognized place in the assembly, or not forgotten in their homes. Not merely to great men, but "he dealt among all the people, even among the whole multitude of Israel" (2 Sam. vi. 19). In that day the people fared well. "That they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor" (Ezra ix. 22). — *Hom. Com.*

Music designed to prepare for heaven. — I am persuaded that music is designed to prepare for heaven, to educate for the choral enjoyment of Paradise, to form the mind to virtue and devotion, and to charm away evil and sanctify the heart to God. A Christian musician is one who has a harp in his affections, which he daily tunes to the notes of the angelic host, and with which he makes melody in his heart to the Lord. Does he strike the chord with his hands? it is to bid lute and harp awake to the glory of God. The hand, the tongue, and the ear form a kind of triple chord not to be broken. Bring music to this test, and your vocal hours will not be spent in vain. The instruction of your childhood will supply you through life with a fountain of pleasure, drawn from the true source of legitimate recreation. Sing the songs of Zion, and, amidst the vibrations of the air, may true prayer and praise ascend to heaven, and enter into the ears of the Lord God of our salvation; and then will the harmonious combination be complete. — *Legh Richmond.*

Influence of music. — The diffusion of a taste of music, and the increasing elevation of its character, may be regarded as a national blessing. The tendency of music is to soften and purify the mind. The cultivation of a musical taste furnishes to the rich a refined and intellectual pursuit, which excludes the indulgence of frivolous and vicious amusements, and to the poor a relaxation from toil more attractive than the haunts of intemperance. All music of an elevated character is calculated to produce such effects: but it is to sacred

the ark lodged in the tent

d 2 Sa. vi. 18; comp. 1 Ki. viii. 14, 15.

e Comp. 2 Chr. vii. 8, 9, 10.

f Comp. titles of Ps. xxxviii. and lxx.

"The meaning of song goes deep. Who is there that, in logical words, can express the effect music has on us? A kind of inarticulate unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that!"—*Carlyle.*

"The sweetest music is not the peal of marriage-bells, nor tender descants in moonlight woods, nor trumpet-notes of victory; it is the soul's welcome to victory. God grant that, when we die, there may not come booming to our ear the dreadful sound,

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'Depart!' but may we hear stealing upon the air the mellow chime of all the celestial bells, saying, 'Come, come, come, ye blessed: enter ye into the joy of your Lord.'"—*Beecher.*

music, above all, that they are to be ascribed. In the densely peopled manufacturing districts of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Derbyshire, music is cultivated among the working classes to an extent unparalleled in any other part of the kingdom. Every town has its choral society, supported by the amateurs of the place and its neighborhood, where the sacred works of Handel, and the more modern masters, are performed with precision and effect by a vocal and instrumental orchestra, consisting of mechanics and work-people; and every village church has its occasional holiday oratorio, where a well-chosen and well-performed selection of sacred music is listened to by a decent and attentive audience of the same class as the performers, mingled with their employers and their families. Hence the practice of this music is an ordinary domestic and social recreation among the working classes of these districts; and its influence is of the most salutary kind.—*Hogarth.*

David's psalm of thanksgiving

7—11. (7) **delivered,** *etc., R. V.,* "Then on that day did David first ordain to give thanks unto the Lord, by the hand of Asaph, and his brethren." Ref. is not to this psalm, but to the definite appointment of Asaph, *etc.,* to musical duties fr. the very day of the return of the ark.[a] The psalm contained in the foll. verses is a composite one, and represents a *service* rather than a *psalm.*[b] (8) **people,** *R. V.,* "peoples," here, and in many places, meaning "all nations." Important as indicating the universal nature of Hebrew religion. The psalmist exhorts them to make known among the nations the doings of Jehovah. (9) **psalms,** *R. V.,* "praises." (10) **holy name,** the name that was hidden from the heathen and too sacred to be uttered even by the Hebrew.

David's thanksgiving at the carrying up of the ark. — We behold religion in its full exercise. Consider — I. The general frame of mind that it requires. 1. That God should be the supreme object of regard; 2. This is truly rational religion. II. The particular duties it enjoins. 1. To thank the Lord for all past mercies; 2. To pray to Him for all future blessings; 3. To glory in Him as our God and portion; 4. To be always mindful of His covenant. — *Simeon.*

Seeking God. — To seek His face is to desire His presence, smile, and favor consciously enjoyed. First we seek Him, then His strength, then His face; from the personal reverence we pass on to the imparted power, and then to the conscious favor. This seeking must never cease; the more we know the more we seek to know. Finding Him, we must "our minds inflame to seek Him more and more." He seeks spiritual worshippers, and spiritual worshippers seek Him; they are therefore sure to meet face to face ere long. — *Spurgeon.*

Universality of praise. — Praise is the religious exercise — the one religious exercise — of heaven. Angels are offering it ceaselessly, resting not night or day. Saints are offering it ceaselessly in Paradise. Nature in her every district is offering it ceaselessly. From the heavens, which declare the glory of God and the firmament which showeth His handiwork, down to the dewdrop which sparkles with the colors of the rainbow, and the lark, who tunes her cheerful carol as she salutes the rising sun, the whole creation sends up one grand chorus of praise to the throne of God. — *Goulburn.*

a "We learn nothing from this passage as to the order in wh. Dav. composed or published his psalms."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The whole of it will be found, with very slight variations, in Ps. xcvi. cv. 1-15; cvi. 47, 48.

"Music once admitted to the soul, becomes a sort of spirit and never dies. It wanders perturbedly through the halls and galleries of the memory, and is often heard again, distinct and living as when it first displaced the wavelets of the air."—*E. B. Lytton.*

c Ge. xii. 1-3.

12—15. (12) **works . . judgments,** all of this, as is shown by what follows, refers to the experience in Egypt. (13) **Israel,** in later times the patriarch Jacob was regarded as founder of the race. **his chosen,** refers to the people, they are to remember because they are God's chosen. (14) **our God,** peculiarly the God of the Hebrew, but also — "His judgments are in all the earth." (15) **covenant,**[c] made with Abraham.

"Remembrance wakes with all her busy train, swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain."—*Goldsmith.*

Subjects of remembrance. — Marvellous works God has done, and wonderful judgments (words) God has uttered. Or — 1. God's faithfulness. "He hath remembered His covenant." (Ps. cv. 8.) 2. Our mindfulness of this faithfulness. "Remember" (*vs.* 12), "Be mindful" (*vs.* 15). "If the Lord keeps His promise in memory, surely we ought not to forget the wonderful manner in which He performs it. To us it should be matter of deepest joy, that never in any instance has the Lord been unmindful of His covenant engagement, nor will He be so, world without end. O that we were as mindful of them as He is!"—*Spurgeon.*

It is related of Beza, one of the reformers, that when he was old and could not recollect the names of persons and things he had heard but a few minutes before, he could remember and repeat the

Praise. — The following passage from a sermon of the great Florentine preacher, Savonarola, refers directly to prayer, but it is equally applicable to

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praise: — "In prayer, a man may be attending to the words, and this is a thing of a wholly material nature; he may be attending the sense of the words, and this is rather study than prayer; and lastly, his whole thoughts may be directed to God, and this alone is true prayer. It is unnecessary to be considering either sentences or language — the mind must be elevated above self, and must be wholly absorbed in the thought of God. Arrived at this state the true believer forgets the world and its wants; he has attained almost a foreshadow of celestial happiness. To this state of elevation the ignorant may arrive as easily as the learned. It even frequently happens that he who repeats a psalm without understanding its words utters a much more holy prayer than the learned man who can explain its meaning."

Epistles of St. Paul which he had committed to memory when he was young.

16–19. (16) **oath unto Isaac,** Ge. xxvi. 2–5. (17) **confirmed,** *etc.*, Ge. xxviii. 13–15. **everlasting,** enduring, unchanging. (18) **land of Canaan,** Ge. xv. 18–21. (19) **few,** Ge. xxxiv. 30. **strangers,** *R. V.*, "sojourners."

The disinterestedness of praise. — Praise is the only employment in which self finds no part. In praise we go out of ourselves, and think only of Him to whom we offer it. It is the most purely disinterested of all services. It is gratitude without solicitation, acknowledgment without petition. Prayer is the overflowing expression of our wants, praise of our affection; prayer is the language of the destitute, praise of the redeemed sinner. If the angelic spirits offer their praise exempt from our mixture of infirmity and alloy, yet we have a motive for gratitude unknown even to the angels; they are unfallen and holy beings — they cannot say, as we can, "Worthy the Lamb for He was slain for us!" Prayer is the child of faith, praise of love: prayer is prospective; praise takes in, in its wide range, enjoyment of present, remembrance of past, and anticipation of future blessings: prayer points the only way to heaven; praise is already there. — *H. More.*

"Young people say 'Thanks' now, not 'Thank you.' The phrase is of respectable parentage, having descended from classic languages, and being used by our best writers. It occurs fifty-five times in Shakespeare, and four times in the English Bible."— *Good Words.*

20–22. (20) **nation . . people,** the former denotes the mass as bound together by a common origin, language, country, descent: the latter as united under one government. — *Delitsch.* (21) **reproved kings,**[a] *e. g.* Pharaoh, and Abimelech. (22) **mine anointed,** Abr. as called, and set apart by God. **prophets,** patriots regarded as men to whom God had spoken and witnesses for God in their age.

[a] Ge. xii. 17; xx. 18; xxvi. 1, 2.

God's protection. — 1. God's people may often be removed. 2. They can never be injured. 3. God's property in them will never be renounced. — *Spurgeon.*

The benefits of praise. — All the benefit which ariseth out of this duty redounds to us, and none to God. His glory is infinite, and eternally the same: there is and can be no accession unto that by all our praises. When a glass reflecteth the brightness of the sun, there is but an acknowledgment of what was, not any addition of what was not. When an excellent orator makes a panegyrical oration in praise of some honorable person, he does not infuse any dram of worth into the person, but only setteth forth and declareth that which is unto others. A curious picture praiseth a beautiful face, not by adding beauty to it, but by representing that which was in it before. The window, which lets in light into a house, does not benefit the light, but the house into which the light shineth; so our praising of God doth serve to quicken, comfort, and refresh ourselves, who have interest in so good a God; or to edify and encourage our brethren, that they may be ambitious to serve so honorable a master: but they add no glory or lustre to God at all. — *Bp. Reynolds.*

The singing God's praise, with the spirit and the understanding, always, with the Divine blessing, leaves a precious influence upon those who hear it.

"No ashes are lighter than those of incense, and few things burn out sooner." — *Landor.*

23–27. (23) **Sing,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. xcvi. 1. (24) **heathen,** *R. V.*, "nations;" tell the whole world of the glory of Jehovah, a missionary command. (25) **feared,** not the fear of dread, but of reverence, and of love. **above all gods,** (Ps. xcvi. 5), a very common expression, seeming to mean, not that these other gods have inferior power, but that He is mightier than they all even claimed to be. (26) **people,** *R. V.*, "peoples," *i. e.*, other nations. **idols,** marg. "things of nought." This proves that the writer does not hold tribal ideas of gods. **made the heavens,** which are spread over all the nations. (27) **his place,** or sanctuary.[b]

[b] Ps. xcvi. 6.

Anthem of praise. — It is said that, when the sun is going out of sight, the pious Swiss herdsman of the Alps takes his alpine horn, and shouts loudly through it, "Praise ye the Lord!" Then a brother herdsman on some distant

"The word rendered praise primarily signifies the *irradiation* of a luminous body. The high ambition of a penitent soul is that of becoming a reflector, from which the glories of the Sun of Righteousness may be more widely diffused on the world of men and angels." *Salter.*

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slope takes up the echo, "Praise the Lord!" Soon another answers, still higher up the mountains, till hill shouts to hill, and peak echoes to peak, the sublime anthem of praise to the Lord of all.

a Mal. iii. 8-10.

28—31. (28) **Give,** "we go into God's courts to *give* rather than to get. This is the principle of all true prayer, ascription rather than petition."—*Perowne.* **kindreds,** generations and families. (29) **an offering,** the usual accompaniment of public worship.[a] **before him,** comp. Ps. xcvi. 8 (references to the temple are not suitable to this occasion). **beauty of holiness,** *with reverence and thanksgiving:*[b] marg. reads, "in holy array" and so the parallel passage in Ps. xcvi. 9. It means worship with solemnity and whatever lends impressiveness and attractiveness to the worship. (30) **Fear,** *R. V.*, "tremble," recognizing His greatness and perfection. **stable,** comp. Ps. xcvi. 10.

b So Syriac.

"Purity is the white linen of the Lord's choristers," says Spurgeon, "righteousness is the comely garment of his priests, holiness is the royal apparel of his servitors."

The claims of God to the worship and homage of His creatures (*vs.* 29).—What I have to demonstrate is—I. That God is entitled to the homage of His creatures, and claims it as proper and right. II. That these claims are made upon *us*, His intelligent creatures. It will therefore be necessary to show that we are capable of knowing God to all the extent necessary to excite in our minds the feelings of awe, reverence, and admiration, since these are essential to homage and worship. Also to prove that such claims are not only reasonable, but founded in justice and right. III. That the worship and homage required is such, that it not only does not degrade, but elevates the man that pays it; that it is not the hard requirement of despotism, but the righteous claim of infinite excellence; not the service of flattery and servility, but the free-will offering of a discerning and admiring mind.—*T. Robinson.*

"The psalmist speaks of singing to the name of the Lord, blessing, extolling, thanksgiving, exalting. Just as the stem which is full of sap throws out many branches, so the believer who is full of a spirit of praise will give vent to it in many different forms."—*P. B. Power.*

Helps to praise.—The sailors give a cheery cry as they weigh anchor; the ploughman whistles in the morning as he drives his team; the milkmaid sings her rustic song as she sets about her early task; when soldiers are leaving friends behind them they do not march out to the tune of the "Dead March in Saul," but to the quick notes of some lively air. A praising spirit would do for us all that their songs and music do for them; and if only we could determine to praise the Lord, we should surmount many a difficulty which our low spirits never would have been equal to, and we should do double the work which can be done if the heart be languid in its beatings, if we be crushed and trodden down in soul. As the evil spirit in Saul yielded in olden time to the influence of the harp of the son of Jesse, so would the spirit of melancholy often take flight from us if only we would take up the song of praise.—*P. B. Power.*

c Jos. xxiv. 16-24.

32—36. (32) **fulness thereof,** a striking poetic repres. of the sea: a peculiarity wh. only the poetic soul would notice. (33) **trees of the wood,** with poss. allusion to *Kirjath-jearim*, "the city of woods," where the ark had rested. (34) **good,** Ps. cvii. 1. This verse is a liturgical formula used in Jeremiah's time (xxxiii. 11), and later (1 Macc. iv. 24); (*cf.* Ps. cvi. 1). (35) **heathen,** *R. V.*, "nations." *cf.* this verse and next with Ps. cvi. 47-48, written after the exile. (36) **Amen,**[c] the share of the congregation in the musical service seems to have been generally limited to saying "Amen," and praising the Lord, which latter refers to such expressions as "Hallelujah," "Give thanks unto the Lord," and the like (comp. Jer. xxxiii. 11; 2 Ch. v. 13; vii. 3, 6; Ezra iii. 11). On festal occasions, however, and processions, the people sang psalms (Is. xxx. 29; Ps. lxviii. 26.—*Oehler.* Comp. Ps. lxxii. 19.

It was the law, in some of the old monasteries, that the chanting of praise should never be interrupted, and that one choir of monks should relieve another in the holy service.

Rejoice.—1 Joy in heaven. "Let the heavens be glad." 2. Joy in earth. "Let the earth rejoice." 3. Joy in which all creatures shall participate. "The sea, no more troubled over shipwrecked mariners, and rehearsing grief of widows and orphans, shall adopt a cheerful note." The fields shall rejoice in culture, abundant harvests, and freedom from repine. The trees of the wood no longer sheltering horrid cruelty, shall "sing out at the presence" of God in the retirement and devotion of men." These verses are full of comprehensive beauty and power. They present the gathering together of everything under the confessed dominion of the reign of Christ. Things in heaven, as well as things on earth, rejoice together in the acknowledged blessing of the Lord of peace. The psalm is throughout a very sweet strain of millennial prophecy.—*Arthur Pridham.*

"Praise is the rent we owe to God; and the larger the farm the greater the rent."—*Bowes.*

"The Lord has many fine farms from which He receives but little rent. Thanksgiving is a good thing; thanksliving is better."—*P. Henry.*

Daily duties.—Every day has its work. We must see to it that there are no arrears in our Christian service. He who leaves over from one day to

another what he ought to have done on the first will find his life crowded and confused. Discipline is the very soul of religion. We do not grow in grace by fits and starts, by doing two days' work in one, or by showing our great skill and energy in the discharge of arrears; we grow little by little, line by line, almost imperceptibly, and only at the end do we see how minute has been the process, how detailed the whole exercise through which the mind has passed. David himself had his detailed work to attend to; we read in the forty-third verse, "David returned to bless his house." We cannot always live in public; it is true that we have tent-work to do, temple-work, sanctuary-work, great public and philanthropic appeals to respond to, but when all that which is external or public has been done, every man must bless his own home, make his own children glad, make his own hearthstone as bright as he possibly can, and fill his own house with music and gladness. —*J. Parker.*

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"A line of praises is worth a leaf of prayer; and an hour of praises is worth a day of fasting and mourning." —*J. Livingston.*

"Thy love has been a shower: the return but a dew-drop, and that dew-drop stained with sin." — *Evans.*

37—43. (37) **left there,** this verse marks the establishment by David of a regular and ordered ministry of song and worship, in addition to the priestly services. (38) **their brethren,** this is not grammatical, and suggests that a name must have fallen out of the text. (39) **Zadok,** (*cf.* 2 Sam. viii. 17.) there were for awhile two high priests, Zadok with the tabernacle at Gibeon and Abiathar in the sacred tent in which was the ark at Jerusalem, (2 Sam. xv. 24–29; xix. 11; xx. 25); but Zadok alone remained faithful to David and was made sole high priest, 1 Ki. i. 8, 44; ii. 35. **Gibeon,** 1 Ki. iii. 4. (40) **morning and evening,** Ex. xxix. 38.[a] (41) **with them,** *i. e.* with Zadok and his sons, *vs.* 39.[b] (42) **Heman and Jeduthan,** not in the Sept. and probably repeated here by mistake. **porters,** *lit. for the gate.* (43) **people,** *etc.* 2 Sa. vi. 19, 20.

David appoints priests, etc.

[a] **Nu. xxviii. 3, 6.**

David's attention to his household (*vs.* 43). — Personal religion was exemplified by David — I. By the work in which he had been engaged. 1. It was a glorious work; 2. It had been performed in a manner most acceptable to God. II. By the work to which he returned. He returned to bless his house, that is — 1. To obtain blessing for them by his prayers; 2. To render himself a blessing by his conduct. — *Simeon.*

[b] **Ezr. iii. 11; 2 Chr. v. 13; vii. 3.**

The Old and the New Testament (*vs.* 39). — No object can well be more dull and meaningless than the stained window of an ancient church, as long as you stand without and look toward a dark interior; but when you stand within the temple, and look through that window upon the light of heaven, the still, solemn forms that lie in it start into loveliness. We often meet a verse in the pages of the Old-Testament Scriptures very like those works of art. The beauty of holiness is in it, — put into it by the Spirit from the first, — and yet its beauty was not fully seen until the Sun of Righteousness arose, and the Israel of God, no longer kept in the outer court, entered into the rent veil, and, from the holy of holies, looked through the ancient record on an illumined heaven. — *Arnott.*

The fireside is a school of infinite importance: it is important because it is universal, and because the education it bestows, being woven in with the woof of childhood, gives form and color to the whole texture of life.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

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This chapter is parallel with 2 Sa. vii. **1—5.** (1) **to Nathan,**[c] the time when David made this resolution is uncertain. In Sam'l it is added when "the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies," which would imply that it was after the wars recorded in ch. xviii. For Nathan, *cf.* 2 Sa. xii. 1; *ff.* 1 Ki. i. 22; *ff. etc.* **curtains,** as of tent. (2) **Do,** *etc.*, an answer given without Divine guidance. (3) **word . . came,** notice the clear distinction between Nathan's own judgment and the decision of God given through Nathan. A clear case of inspiration changing the man's thought. This caused by a vision; *cf. vs.* 15. (4) **David my servant,** a title used by Jehovah only for leaders chosen for some great work. Its use takes away from the sense of rebuke in the words that follow. His work was not to build temples. (5) **house,** permanent resting-place. **tent to tent,** comp. 2 Sa. vii. 6.

David proposes to build a temple

[c] **2 Sa. xii. 1-25; 1 Ki. i. 8-45; 2 Chr. ix. 29; xxix. 25; Ps. li. title.**

Real religion commands homage. — Though religion in its ordinary mode of exhibition commands but little respect, when it rises to the sublime, and is perceived to tincture and pervade the whole character, it seldom fails to draw forth the homage of mankind. The most hardened impiety and daring profligacy will find it difficult to despise the man who manifestly appears to walk with God, whose whole system of life is evidently influenced and directed by the power of the world to come. The ridicule cast on religious characters is

"I venerate the man whose heart is warm, whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life coincident, exhibit lucid proof that he is honest in the sacred cause." — *Cowper.*

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not always directed towards their religion, but more often, perhaps, to the little it performs, contrasted with the loftiness of its pretensions; a ridicule which derives its force from the very sublimity of the principles which the profession of piety assumes. — *Robert Hall.*

God refuses to permit this

6—10. (6) **spake I,** *etc.*, however proper the desire was, God declares that it was man's desire for Him, not His own desire for Himself. Comp. the demand for a king.[a] **judges,** in 2 Sa. vii. 7 it is "*tribes.*" (7) **sheepcote,**[b] or fold. David's idea may have been "Now that I have done all these things I will build a House for God." But Jehovah rebukes it by saying, I have accomplished all this, not you. "I took you from the sheepcote" *etc.* (8) **have . . name,** *R. V.*, "will make thee a name," the Lord continues to state what He will do for David. (9) **a place,** a fixed, settled kingdom. Still it is the Lord, not David, who is to do this. (10) **an house,** moreover, the Lord will perpetuate his family, and raise up a descendant to David, by whom the temple shall be built. The whole passage seems to mean "this is the Lord's business, not man's."

a 1 Sa. viii. 4, 5.

b "Those low, flat buildings out on the sheltered side of the valley are sheepfolds. This is defended by a wide stone wall, covered all around with sharp thorns, wh. the prowling wolf will rarely attempt to scale."—*Thomson.*

Build thee a house.—How often God does for His servants what they desire to do for Him! David desired to build the Lord a house, and the Lord built him a house. When God's servants are not accepted one way, they are another. Neither do they take it ill that the Lord puts them off from the work upon which they had set their desires; but they learn His will, bow before it, and praise Him for it. David went in and sat before the Lord, and offered prayer, for he felt moved in heart, so that he could not do otherwise. When the Lord promises, we should supplicate: His giving times should create for us special asking times. — *Spurgeon. God's care.* — God tells David that from "the sheepcote" to his present "house of cedars" He had been with him, He had been training him, He had been evoking good out of all evil, for him personally and for all his people Israel. He had not been living, working, suffering, rejoicing, anguished with fear and cruelty, buoyant with hope and victory, for nothing, nor for a spasmodic, theatric, sensational display, nor for a mockery of collapse at last. No; it was to make him a name, and a great name, and a name divinely and historically through all time worth having — a model ruler, a model king, and a blessing to his people Israel. All the while, from the first breathing of David's name to this present, David had been drawn through a career which, all appearances notwithstanding, had been tributary to Divine results. What firmness, what confidence, what glory, is it to any life that can embrace this creed, and that believes it with the heart! — *Pul. Com.*

"A man can even here be with God, so long as he bears God within him; and a man must not so much prepare himself for eternity, as plant eternity in himself; eternity, serene, pure, full of depth, full of light, and of all else." — *Richter.*

"He who would look with contempt upon the farmer's pursuit is not worthy the name of a man.—*Beecher.*

God promises the temple shall be built by Solomon

11—15. (11) **thy seed,** indefinitely, one of thy sons. (12) **an house,** or temple. (13) **his father,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. vii. 14, 15, observing what is here omitted. "This choice of the house of David for the foundation of the Messianic idea in its strictest sense." Comp. Ps. lxxxix. 27 *ff.* **as I took,** *etc.*, alluding to Saul. (14) **mine house,** *etc.*, expresses the Divine idea of the union of kingship with Divine rulership. (15) **vision,** *see vs.* 3.

"Measure not men by Sundays, without regarding what they do all the week after. — *Fuller.*

The purpose of God concerning Solomon. — In the Divine communication made to David through the Prophet Nathan, there is a tone of very tender consideration, and an evident desire to solace and comfort the aged servant of God, whose request it was found necessary to refuse. In one way the desire of his heart could be met. He should have an immortality in his descendants and in his dynasty. He should live on in his son, and accomplish even his purpose concerning the temple. And he may have, before he dies, the comforting assurance that God's purposes were set upon his son, and the Divine favor would overshadow his reign. Those gracious Divine purposes are indicated in these verses. Man's brief life on the earth, which so seldom permits him to accomplish any great thing, would be very painful to him were it not for the hope he cherishes that he will live on in his children, and by them his great life-work may win completion. We cannot bear to think that death cuts off our influence and spoils our work. Man can scarcely say a thing that hurts him more in the saying than this, "My purposes are broken off." — *R. Tuck.*

"Is that a death-bed where a Christian dies? Yes; but not his— "'tis Death itself that dies. — *Coleridge.*

David's prayer and thanksgiving

16—19. (16) **sat before,** prob. before the ark within the tabernacle. **Who am I,** the message has been rightly understood. **Lord God,** *i. e.* "Jehovah Elohim," the most august title, recognizing the sovereign God, and cor-

responds to "David my servant." (17) **estate,** *etc.*, comp. note on 2 Sa. vii. 19. (18) **honour,** *R. V.*, "concerning the honour which is done to thy servant." **for thou knowest,** he relies on the Divine power to read what the life cannot express. (19) **servant's sake,** comp. 2 Sa. vii. 21.

Oriental ceremony. (*vs.* 16). — The ceremonial of the Orientals does not end with the introduction of persons to one another, but continues during the whole visit. The most scrupulous attention is paid by all parties to the established tokens of respect; the posture of the body, the parts of the room, and other circumstances, are all regulated by custom, to whose imperious dictates they have implicitly submitted from the remotest antiquity. One of the postures by which a person testifies his respect for a superior is by sitting upon his heels, which is considered as a token of great humility. In this manner, says Dr. Pocock, resting on their hams, sat the attendants of the English consul, when he waited on the caia of the pacha of Tripoli. It was in this humble posture, probably, that David, the king of Israel, sat before the Lord in the sanctuary, when he blessed Him for His gracious promise concerning his family; half sitting and half kneeling, so as to rest the body upon the heels. This entirely removes the ground of perplexity, which some expositors have felt, in their attempts to elicit a meaning from the phrase, sitting before the Lord, at once consistent with the majesty of Jehovah, and the humility of the worshipper; for this attitude expressed among the Orientals the deepest humility, and, by consequence, was every way becoming a worshipper of the true God.— *Paxton.*

20–24. (20) **beside thee,** Ex. xx. 3. **heard,** he appeals from his own experience to the traditions of God's past dealings. (21) **redeemed,** *etc.*, Ex. xv., *i. e.* what other nation has been delivered by its deity as Israel has been? (22) **their God,** in special covenant relations. (23) **thing,** *etc.*, declared by Nathan. (24) **Let,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "and let thy name be established and magnified forever, saying."[a] **God of . . God to,** *i. e.* not only is worshipped as God, but has shown Himself to be God.

God's relation to His people (*vs.* 24).— Let us, for the illustrating of these words, consider — I. The relation which God bears to His people, 1. He has chosen them out of the world, which lieth in wickedness; 2. He has given Himself to them in a peculiar way; 3. He avows that relation to them before the whole universe. II. Inquire what, under that relation, we may expect at His hands. 1. The care of His providence; 2. The communications of His grace; 3. The manifestations of His love; 4. The possession of His glory. III. What, under that relation, He is entitled to expect from us. 1. That we "be a people to Him;" 2. That we give ourselves to Him, as He has given Himself to us. Conclude with two proposals: — (1) That we, at this very hour, accept Jehovah as our God; (2). That we now consecrate ourselves to Him as His people.— *Simeon.*

Trust in God.— Wesley, preaching at Doncaster, said, a poor Romanist woman, having broken her crucifix, went to her priest, frequently crying out, "Now I have broken my crucifix, I have nothing to trust in but the great God." Wesley, exclaimed, "What a mercy she had a great God to trust in!" A Romanist present was powerfully affected. "The great God to trust in" touched his heart. He was very deeply convinced of his need of salvation, joined the Methodist society, and became an ornament to religion.

25–27. (25) **told thy servant,** *lit.* "uncovered the ear of" — as when one lifts the locks to whisper a secret into the ear. **a house,** family or dynasty. (26) **thou art God,** in 2 Sa. vii. 28 is added "and thy words be true." (27) **let it please,** *R. V.*, "it hath pleased thee," *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. vii. 29.

Living on a promise.— A lady gives the following statement: "I went just before Christmas to see a young friend, who, although surrounded by all the luxuries which wealth can give, was languishing with disease. As words were spoken of the beautiful gifts which devoted friends were expecting to make her, she said with great earnestness, 'There is only one thing which I want; if I have that I shall care for nothing else.' 'What is that gift for which you long?' I inquired. She said, 'I want my father to give me a promise that he will take me South; then I shall escape the cold, and I know I shall get well. Oh how I should live on that promise! The hours and the days would pass so quickly, I should forget all my weariness and pain.' I thought: Dear girl, your father may give you his promise, and not be able to

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"God is a good creditor; he never seeks back the principa sum, and indeed puts up with a poor annual rent."—*J. Brown.*

"No man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, pure, and good, without the world being the better for it, without somebody being helped and comforted by the very existence of that goodness."— *Phillips Brooks.*

"When love begins to sicken and decay it useth and enforceth ceremony."— *Shakespeare.*

[a] "The Lord of hosts, the God whom Israel worships, is indeed by His kindness and care a God to Israel."— *Spk. Com.*

True religion shows its influence in every part of our conduct; it is like the sap of a living tree, which penetrates the most distant boughs.

"I believe we cannot live better than in seeking to become better, nor more agreeably than having a clear conscience."— *Socrates.*

"Seeming devotion does but gild the knave, that's neither faithful, honest, just, nor brave, but where religion does with virtue join, it makes a hero like an angel shine."— *Waller.*

"Piety is a kind of modesty. It makes us cast down our

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keep it; he may be snatched away by death, or riches may take to themselves wings and fly away. But you could 'live on your father's promise;' and how unwilling I am to live on the words of promise which my Father in heaven gives! He whose word cannot be broken, whose promise cannot fail! Then came to mind the sweet words of Dr. Hamilton, written many years ago: 'One single promise of Jesus Christ accredited in the heart, unites the soul to God. The graft has taken, and the soul abides as a branch in the vine.'"

thoughts, just as modesty makes us cast down our eyes in presence of whatever is forbidden."—*Joubert.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

David's wars

This chapter is parallel to 2 Sa. viii. 1-18, Time not known. **1—8.** (1) **smote,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. viii. 1. **Gath,**[a] Jos. xi. 22. The "mother" or capital city of Philistia. **her towns,** surrounding and dependent villages. *Lit. her daughters.* (2) **Moab,** 2 Sa. viii. 2. (3) **Hadarezer,** 2 Sa. viii. 3. (4) **houghed,** cut the sinews of the ham. **an hundred,** *R. V.*, "for an hundred," *i. e.* "he saved horses for an hundred chariots." (5) **Syrians,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. viii. 5. (6) **gifts,** or tribute. **preserved,** *R. V.*, "gave victory to." (7) **shields of gold,** probably borne by the body-guard of the king. (8) **Tibhath and . . Chun,** comp. Beta and Berothai of 2 Sa. viii. 8, prob. other names of the same towns.

Houghed.—The reason of this mutilation was that, horses being forbidden by the Mosaic constitution to the Hebrews, both in war and in agriculture, it was of no use to keep them; and their neighbors placing much dependence on cavalry, but having, for want of native breed, to procure them by purchase, the greatest damage that could be done to such enemies was to render their horses unservicable in war (*cf.* Gen. xlix. 6; Josh. xi. 6–9).—*Jamieson.*

a *Porter* identifies with the conspicuous hill called *Tell-es-Safieh.*

Thomson identifies with Eleutheropolis, now *Beit Jibrin.*

Tou sends tribute; Edom subdued

9—13. (9) **Tou,** the Toi of 2 Sa. viii. 9. **Hamath,** one of the kingdoms tributary to Solomon, *cf.* 1 Ki. iv. 24; 2 Chr. viii. 4; also Amos vi. 2; 2 Ki. xix. 13; 2 Ki. xiv. 28. (10) **Hadoram,** or *Joram.* **to enquire . . congratulate him,** *R. V.*, "to salute him and to bless him." (11) **dedicated,** as materials for the proposed temple. (12) **Abishai,**[b] the honor of this is ascribed to Dav. 2 Sa. viii. 13. **Edomites,** called the Syrians in the Bk. of Sam. (13) **garrisons,** to keep the country in subjection. **preserved,** *R. V.*, "gave victory to;" *cf.* 1 Ki. xi. 15–16.

"*Dedicated.*"—This is the first instance of a practice uniformly followed by David, of reserving, after defraying expenses and bestowing suitable rewards upon his soldiers, the remainder of the spoil taken in war, to accumulate for the grand project of his life—the erection of a national temple at Jerusalem.

b "Abishai was the principal instrument in the conquest of Edom; it was, however, ascribed to Joab, as generalissimo of the forces (1 Ki. xi. 15, 16), and to David as the king under whose auspices the war was carried on.

David's chief officers

14—17. (14) **executed,** made wise rulings and enforced justice. He was a vigorous and just ruler. (15) **the host,** or army. **recorder,** chronicler, historian and adviser to the king, *cf.* 2 Ki. xviii. 18, 37; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8. (16) **Abimelech,** or *Ahimelech.*[c] **Shavsha,** or Seraiah.[d] (17) **chief,** heads or princes; chief officers in the palace.

David's officers were eminent men.—The most eminent of the age composed his cabinet. The commander-in-chief, clever, courageous, and renowned for military achievements. Faithful to the king, not always to principle. The chancellor correctly published royal decrees and registered events in the State archives. The body-guard round the king and priests before the altar, each in his place and work, gave influence to the reign, and felt honored in the service. Thus David's rule not only associated with military prowess, but poetic genius and personal piety. Remarkable for men of rank and administrative ability, and did more for Israel than Charlemagne did for Europe or Alfred for England.—*Hom. Com.*

c "It would seem that we ought to read Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech (1 Sa. xxii. 20)."—*Spk. Com.*

d 2 Sa. viii. 17.

"The English laws punish vice; the Chinese laws do more, they reward virtue."—*Goldsmith.*

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

David's messengers to Ammon ill-treated

This chapter is parallel with 2 Sa. x. **1—5.** (1) **after this,** a formula not indicating strict chronological sequence, *cf.* ch. xviii. 1; 2 Sa. viii. 1; x. i., *etc.* **Nahash,** 1 Sa. xi. 1; 2 Sa. x. 1. (2) **shewed kindness,**[e] this was prob. during Dav.'s exile, Nahash being an enemy of Saul's. **comfort him,** he sent ambassadors with messages of condolence. (3) **to search,** *etc.*, as spies, to prepare the way for the seizure of the country. (4) **shaved,** *comp.* 2 Sa. x. 4, which says "shaved off the one half of their beards." **sent them**

e "A Jewish tradition relates that on the slaughter

away, these men were ambassadors, who, by the laws of all nations are entitled to courtesy. To treat them so was to insult David and his nation. (5) **at Jericho,**[a] selected as being a border city.

Homiletic hints. — Gratitude not absorbed by death (*vs.* 2). Kind and seasonable expressions of sympathy (*vs.* 2). Ungenerous suspicions, betrayals of character (*vs.* 3). Intended kindnesses disgracefully recompensed (*vs.* 4). Thoughtful consideration for the respect of others (*vs.* 5).

David's messengers. — They were treated with the greatest indignity. Shaving their beards and shortening their garments, a double insult in the East, where long beards and long garments are badges of honor. Many Orientals would rather die than lose their beards, and Turks used to regard beardless Europeans as runaway slaves. — *Hom. Com.* *The power of kindness.* — I remember once a valued friend of mine, a barrister, now passed away, who spent his Sundays in visiting a hospital. He told me that on one occasion he sat down by the bedside of one of the very poorest, the most ignorant, and, without using the word in any offensive manner, one of the very lowest men he had ever seen in his life — a man whose English, had it been taken down, would have been the most complete and perfect dislocation of the Queen's English that he ever heard. No word seemed to be in its right place. It seemed as if that which should have been a jointed and vertebrated sentence had been separated at every joint, and thrown together anyhow. My friend was a man of the most tender spirit — a man whose tender spirit radiated from one of the most striking faces I ever saw; and I can well understand how he looked when he sat down by that poor man's bed. He began first, as all should who visit the sick, to break ground on temporal matters, to sympathize with them on that which they can understand so well — their bodily sufferings — to show that we are not indifferent to what they are suffering as men; and then after speaking a few kind words, he was proceeding to say something further for his Master, whom he so dearly loved, when he saw the man's face begin to work convulsively. The muscles quivered, and at last, lifting up the sheet, and drawing down his head, he threw the sheet over his face, burst into a violent flood of tears and sobbed aloud. My friend wisely waited till this storm of grief was passed, and then the poor fellow emerged from under the clothes, his face bearing the traces of tears that had flowed down it. When he was able to speak, my friend asked him — "What is it that has so touched you? I hope that I have not said anything that was painful to you. What can have moved you so much?" And as well as the man could sob out, he sobbed out these words: "Sir, you are the first man that ever spoke a kind word to me since I was born, and I can't stand it." — *Champneys.*

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of Dav.'s family by the neighboring king of Moab, the one of his brothers who escaped found shelter with Nahash."— *Stanley.*

a Jos. v. 10, 13; vi. 1, *etc.*

"How unsuitable is it for us, who live only by kindness, to be unkind."— *Edwards.*

"Sweet as refreshing dews or summer showers to the longparching thirst of drooping flowers; grateful as fanning gales to fainting swains; and soft as trickling balm to bleeding pains, are thy kind words."— *Gay.*

"There was an officer in the city of Rome who was appointed to have his doors always open, in order to receive any Roman citizen who applied to him for help. Just so the ear of the Lord Jesus is ever open to the cry of all who want grace and mercy."— *Ryle.*

6–9. (6) **odious.**[b] **thousand,** estimated at a million dollars and upward for the hire of mercenaries![c] **Mesopotamia,** Heb. *Aram-naharaim:*[d] Syria of the two rivers. (7) **hired . . chariots,** probably this is the sum of all kinds of troops, of which the chariots were chief; *cf.* 2 Sa. x. 6. **Medeba,** mod. *Mâdeba,* near Heshbon. Nu. xxi. 30; Jos. xiii. 16. (8) **sent Joab,** to relieve the city. This was the object of the first campaign. (9) **in array,** 2 Sa. x. 9. **in the field,** so hemming Joab in. The kings mentioned here are the Syrian allies.

One false step leads on another. — I. Here is a war, like many others, commenced by the evil-doer. II. Here is a war that might have been avoided by an ample and honorable apology. III. Here is a war that ended disastrously for the ill-doers.

False steps. — One sin always leads to another, and the insult of Hanun's princes led on to a bloody war. No doubt the inconsiderate act of Hanun to David's messengers was regretted shortly after it was committed. But it was too late. A little time sufficed to make the princes of Hanun aware that sooner or later there would be a terrible reprisal. David felt the indignity keenly. Yet the retribution did not proceed from him, but from those who had so grossly insulted him. This is invariably the case. A dread of retribution and a guilty conscience go together. The inconsiderate act of a moment, it is foreseen, will lead to consequences which must be averted; and so another is resolved on, and then follows a collapse or utter ruin. Thus it was here. The consequence of a momentary impulse are the destruction and ruin of a kingdom and nation. — *Pul. Com.* *Warriors* (*vs.* 7, *comp.* 1 Sa. x. 6). — In the first text the children of Ammon are said to have hired 32,000 chariots, which

Ammon hires Syria to war with David

b "One universal feeling of indignation was roused throughout Israel, and all classes supported the king in his determination to avenge this unprovoked insult on the Heb. nation." — *Jamieson.*

c For practice of hiring mercenary troops, *see* 1 Ki. xv. 18-20; 2 Ki. vii. 6; 2 Chr. xxv. 6.

d Aram-beth-Rehob, 2 Sa. x. 6.

"That king shall best govern his realm, that reigneth over his

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people as a father doth over his children."—*Agesilaus.*

seems an incredible number. However, the original is a collective noun, meaning *cavalry* or *riders*. Then the meaning is, they hired 32,000 auxiliaries, who usually were mounted on chariots or horses, but who sometimes fought on foot, which makes it agree with the latter text, in which the Syrian auxiliaries are stated to amount exactly to 32,000, besides 1,000 whom they hired of the king of Maachah, and who very likely were footmen.

Joab defeats Ammon and Syria

a 1 Chr. xviii. 12.

10—15. (10) **choice,** "Joab found himself between the Ammonites at the city gate and the sons of Aram in the field, and arrayed his choice troops against Aram, the stronger force and the rest against Ammon. The gate appears to be that of Medeba."—*Murphy.* (11) **Abishai,** 2 Sa. ii. 18.[a] (12) **Syrians,** these mercenary troops, who were well armed, warlike, and fresh for the battle. (13) **good courage,** this inspiring address indicates the faith and piety of the commander. **the cities of our God,** the nation belonged to Jehovah, its cities and its people were His. They were fighting to keep His possessions from falling into the hands of the heathen. Therefore they could trust in His help. (14) **drew nigh,** prob. getting the advantage of attack. (15) **into the city,** *i. e.* took refuge behind its walls. **Joab came,** not being prepared to storm the city nor to undertake a long siege.

"Not parties, but principles. Let us be of no party but God's party, and use all other agencies as we use railroad cars, traveling upon one train as far as it will take us in the right direction, and then leaving it for another."—*Beecher.*

The Christian call to arms (vs. 13). — I. The enemies by which the peace and prosperity of our homes are threatened. 1. Ungodly pleasures; 2. Injudicious reading; 3. Sinful fashions; 4. Worldly conformity. II. The spirit in which these enemies are to be met. 1. Exalted courage; 2. Self-denying patriotism; 3. Humble reliance upon God.

"The noblest motive is the public good."—*Virgil.*

Need of our common brotherhood. — The race of mankind would perish, did they cease to aid each other. From the time that the mother binds the child's head, till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the death-damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help. All, therefore, that need aid, have a right to ask it from their fellow-mortals; no one who holds the power of granting, can refuse it without guilt. — *Sir. W. Scott.*

"To think well is the way to act rightly."—*Paley.*

Help of God. — Mr. Oncken told me that he was summoned before the burgomaster of Hamburg, who bade him cease from holding religious meetings. "Do you see that little finger?" cried he. "As long as I can move that finger I will put down the Baptists." "Yes," said Oncken, "I see your little finger, and I also see a great arm which *you* cannot see. As long as the great arm of God is lifted on our behalf, your little finger will have no terror for us."—*Spurgeon.*

the Syrians become subject to David

16—19. (16) **beyond the river,** the Euphrates. Hadarezer now sends for his troops beyond the Euphrates and renews the attack. (17) **upon them,** *comp.* 2 Sa. x. 17; came to *Helam.* This is the better reading but the place Helam is unknown. (18) **slew,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. x. 18. The general opinion is that neither account is correct. Perhaps best would be "700 chariots," according to Sam'l, and "40,000 footmen" as Chronicles. (19) **servants,** par. acc't reads, "when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer"

"Every misery that I miss is a new mercy."

"Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge."—*Shakespeare.*

Humiliation. — Syrians from three places hired and headed by powerful men, fought with chariots, cavalry, and infantry. A vigorous attack was made, and they fled, "as often happens," says Bp. Patrick, "with those that fight for pay alone, without respect to the cause." 1. Defeat most humiliating. Syrians first fled and the Ammonites soon followed, without fighting at all. They retreated to the city, but stone walls are no defense without stone hearts. 2. Defeat most complete. The commander was killed, thousands were slain. Vassal princes submitted to David, and the Syrian nation forsook their allies, and became tributary to Israel. — *Hom. Com.*

"An obstinate man does not hold opinions, they hold him."—*Pope.*

"Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong."—*Dryden.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

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conquest of Ammon

The contents of this chapter are scattered through the text of Samuel in various places. **1—3.** (1) **kings go out,** *see* 2 Sa. xi. 1. **wasted,** or ravaged, destroying the dwellings and growing and stored crops. **Rabbah,**[b] 2 Sa. xi. 1. The chronicler omits the story of Bathsheba which occurs at this point in 2 Samuel. How long this siege lasted we cannot tell. Possibly more than a year. (2) **took the crown,** 2 Sa. xii. 30. **a talent,** more than 100 lbs. Evidently not to be worn long! (3) **cut them,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. xii. 31. David probably treated them as they treated Jewish prisoners, according to the

[b] "The metropolis of Ammon, De. iii. 11; Jos. xiii. 25. In later times it received the name Philadelphia fr. Ptolemy Philadel-

custom, "eye for an eye," *etc.* *Cf.* 1 Sa. xi. 1–2; Amos i. 13. And such barbarity has characterized war down to recent times.

An incorruptible crown. — A French officer who was a prisoner upon his parol at Reading met with a Bible: he read it, and was so impressed with its contents, that he was convinced of the folly of sceptical principles and of the truth of Christianity, and resolved to become a Protestant. When his gay associates rallied him for taking so serious a turn, he said in his vindication, "I have done no more than my old school-fellow Bernadotte, who has become a Lutheran." "Yes; but he became so," said his associates, "to obtain a crown." "My motive," said the Christian officer, "is the same; we only differ as to the place. The object of Bernadotte is to obtain a crown in Sweden; mine is to obtain a crown in heaven."

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phus. Called Ammân now. There are extensive ruins in an elevated valley on the banks of the stream Moiet Ammân." — *Ayre.*

4—8. (4) **Gezer,** called *Gob* in 2 Sa. xxi. 19.[a] **Sibbechai,** ch. xi. 29. **Sippai,** or *Saph.*[b] **they,** *etc.*, *i. e.* the Philistines. (5) **Elhanan,** 2 Sa. xxi. 19; *see* 1 Chr. xi. 26. **Lahmi,** *see* 2 Sa. xxi. 19, noticing words in italics. (6) **Gath,** Jos. xi. 22. **man,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. xxi. 20. (7) **Shimea,** 1 Sa. xvi. 9. (8) **the giant,** *Rapha*, *see* marg. 2 Sa. xxi. 18–22.

giants of Philistia killed

Noted giants.— *Emperor Maximen,* A. D. 35, 8-ft. 6-in., used his wife's bracelet as a thumb ring. *Gabara,* an Arabian, described by Pliny, 9-ft. 9-in. *John Middleton,* born at Hale, in Lancashire, in 1578, called "The Child of Hale," 9-ft. 3-in. *Patrick Cotter,* the famous Irish giant, born 1761, 8-ft. 7-in., shoe 17-in. long. *Big Sam,* porter to the Prince of Wales — George IV.— near 8-ft. There is a skeleton in the Museum of Trin. Col., Dublin, 8-ft. 6-in. That of *O'Brien,* in Museum of College of Surgeons of England, is 8-ft. 2-in. Another, in Museum in Bonn, 8-ft. The body was in each case from 2 to 3 in. longer. Thus O'Brien measured 8-ft. 4-in. after death. *A lesson to conquerors.* — When Edward the Confessor had entered England from Normandy to recover the kingdom, and was ready to give the Danes battle, one of his captains assured him of victory, adding, "We will not leave one Dane alive." To which Edward replied, "God forbid that the kingdom should be recovered for me, who am but one man, by the death of thousands. No: I will rather lead a private life, unstained by the blood of my fellow men, than be a king by such a sacrifice." Upon which he broke up his camp, and again retired to Normandy, until he was restored to his throne without bloodshed." *Percy Anec.*

a "As Gezer occurs frequently, whereas we nowhere else hear of Gob, it is prob. that Gezer is the right reading."— *Spk. Com.* Jos. x. 33; xii. 12; 2 Sa. v. 25.

b 2 Sa. xxi. 18.

When Thomas Hooker was dying, one present said to him: "You are going to receive the reward of your labors." He replied, "I am going to receive mercy."

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

David numbers Israel

2 Sa. xxiv. 1–25 is parallel with this ch. and adds some details. **1—4.** (1) **Satan,**[c] *the adversary,* not "the Lord" as in account in Samuel. This passage shows clearly an idea of Satan which we meet in Job and Zechariah, as "an angel of crafty and hostile disposition toward the covenant people and all who fear God, seeking to deprive them of the favor of God, but only permitted to act as His instrument."— *Oehler. Comp.* 2 Sa. xxiv. 1. **provoked,**[d] *R. V.*, "moved," that is tempted, or persuaded. The motive was probably the desire to raise additional taxes; or get more workmen for the public enterprises he had in mind. "The project involved a breach of his theocratic relations." — *Geikie.* (2) **number Israel,** to do this was not in itself wrong. (3) **servants,** "the king counts them as his servants; but the Lord regards them as His, and therefore resents this numeration." — *Murphy.* (4) **went throughout,** 2 Sa. xxiv. 4–8.

c Job. i. 7; Zech. iii. 1.

"It is alleged by some critics that this introduction of Satan is an evidence of a later date than is commonly assigned to the Chronicles."— *Wordsworth.*

Practical advice.— One day, as an ancient king of Tartary was riding with his officers of state, they met a dervish crying aloud, "To him that will give me a hundred dinars, I will give a piece of good advice." The king, attracted by this strange declaration, stopped and said to the dervish," What advice is this that you offer for a hundred dinars?" "Sire," replied the dervish, "I shall be most thankful to tell you, as soon as you order the money to be paid me." The king, expecting to hear something extraordinary, ordered the money to be given to the dervish at once. On receiving which, he said, "Sire, my advice is, begin nothing without considering what the end may be." The officers of the state, smiling at what they thought ridiculous advice, looked at the king, who they expected would be so enraged at this insult as to order the dervish to be severely punished. The king, seeing the amusement and surprise which this advice had occasioned, said, "I see nothing to laugh at in the advise of this dervish, but, on the contrary, I am persuaded that if it were

d "This attempt to take the census was not unnaturally suggested by the increase of his power, but it implied a confidence and pride alien to the spirit inculcated on the kings of the chosen people." — *Stanley.*

"Counsel and conversation is a good second education, improves all the

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more frequently practiced men would escape many calamities. Indeed, so convinced am I of the wisdom of this maxim, that I shall have it engraved on my plate, and written on the walls of my palace, so that it may be ever before me." The king, having thanked the dervish for his advice, proceeded towards his palace; and on his arrival, he ordered the chief bey to see that the maxim was engraved on his plate, and on the walls of his palace. — *Lady M. W. Montague.*

virtue and corrects all the vice of the former, and of nature itself.—*Clarendon.*

David confesses his sin

5—8. (5) **Joab,** took nine months and twenty days to make this census. It was only in a time of peace that this was possible. Peace and prosperity brought to David his greatest temptations. **sum,** comp. the number given in Samuel. No satisfactory explanation of the discrepancy has been suggested. (6) **Levi,** according to the precedent given, Nu. i. 47–49.[a] (7) **smote Israel,** notice that 2 Sa. xxiv. 1 says that it was because "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel" that David was led to commit this sin. Not David only, therefore, but Israel, suffered the penalty. (8) In Sam'l the penitence precedes the uniting. *Vs.* 7 is probably a summary of what is narrated after *vs.* 8. **have sinned,** *etc.*, penitence and confession were not permitted to remove penalty.[b]

a "The omission of Benj must be ascribed to a determination on the part of Joab to frustrate the king's intention, whereby he might hope to avert God's wrath from the people." — *Spk. Com.*

Confession of sin. — This language may be regarded as a model of sincerely uttered confession. 1. It was offered to God. "David said unto God." So in Ps. li., "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." Not against society, not against the state; but against the Searcher of hearts and the Judge of all. 2. It was a taking to himself of the guilt. "I have sinned." Instead of laying the blame upon another, the king accepted it for himself. It is a sad thing when men take excuses into the presence of God. 3. David had a just sense of the heinousness of his sin. He felt that he had sinned greatly. It was not in his view a light thing of which he had been guilty. How can we, as Christians, regard sin as a light matter, when we remember that sin brought our holy Saviour, the Lord of Glory, to the ignominious cross? 4. The folly of sin was very apparent to David's mind when he poured out his soul in contrite confessions before the Lord. "I have done very foolishly." — *Thomson.*

"As in the order followed, Judah and Benj. were the *last tribes* to be taken. Dav may have come to a better mind before it was completed." — *Wordsworth* and *Jamieson.*

Practical advice. — Some time after this occurrence (*see last illustration*), one of the nobles of the court, a proud, ambitious man, resolved to destroy the king, and place himself on the throne. In order to accomplish his diabolical purpose, he secured the confidence of one of the king's surgeons, to whom he gave a poisoned lancet, saying, "If you will bleed the king with this lancet, I will give you ten thousand pieces of gold; and, when I ascend the throne you shall be my vizier." This base surgeon, dazzled by such brilliant prospects, wickedly assented to the proposal. An opportunity of effecting his evil design soon occurred. The king sent for this man to bleed him: he put the poisoned lancet into a side pocket, and hastened into the king's presence. The arm was tied, and the fatal lancet was about to be plunged into the vein, when suddenly the surgeon's eye read this maxim at the bottom of the basin — "Begin nothing without considering what the end may be." He immediately paused, as he thought within himself, "If I bleed the king with this lancet, he will die, and I shall be seized and put to a cruel death; then of what use will all the gold in the world be to me?" Then, returning the lancet to his pocket, he drew forth another. The king, observing this, and perceiving that he was much embarrassed, asked why he changed his lancet so suddenly. He stated that the point was broken: but the king, doubting his statement, commanded him to show it. This so agitated him that the king felt assured all was not right. He said, "There is treachery in this: tell me instantly what it means, or your head shall be severed from your body." The surgeon, trembling with fear, promised to relate all to the king, if he would only pardon his guilt. The king assented, and the surgeon related the whole matter, and acknowledged that had it not been for the words in the basin, he should have used the fatal lancet. The king summoned his court, and ordered the traitor to be executed. Then, turning to his officers of state, he said, "You now see that the advice of the dervish, at which you laughed, is most valuable: it has saved my life. Search out this dervish, that I may amply reward him for his wise maxim." — *Lady Montague*

b 2 Sa. xxiv. 10.

"If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching." — *Shakespeare.*

Gad, the seer, reproves David

9—13. (9) **Gad,** (1 Sa. xxii. 5; 2 Sa. xxiv. 11), was undoubtedly David's confidential counselor from the time of his wanderings, but his position was not official, as is shown by the omission of all names of prophets from the lists of

officers in reigns of David and Solomon. Even the high priest was a royal functionary, but the prophetic office maintained its independence. Gad probably wrote the narrative before us. (10) **choose,** his choice would indicate what was really the attitude of his mind. (12) **three years',** comp. seven years of 2 Sa. xxiv. 13. Each of these punishments involved a reduction of the population, wh. would make the new census quite worthless. Famine, sword and pestilence, *cf.* Ezek. xiv. 21; Deut. xxviii. 21–25; Rev. vi. 4–8. **advise thyself,** *R. V.*, "consider." (13) **great strait,**[a] very difficult to decide. **of the Lord,** the decision of a man who had abundantly experienced the Divine mercy, and in spite of his blunders and sins was a true child of God.

David's falling into the hand of God (*vs.* 13). — Regard David's exclamation — I. As indicating what is a natural tendency in all souls, trust. II. As revealing the true spirit of Life, trust in God. 1. His preference was right; 2. It was expedient. Trust in man — (*a*) Destroys freedom; (*b*) Degrades the character; (*c*) Issues in disappointment. III. As foreshadowing the inevitable doom of all. In one of two ways we must fall into God's hands. 1. Voluntarily, by the influences of grace; or, 2. Compulsorily, by the forces of justice. — *Homilist.*

In the hand of God. — The whole world is in the hand of God, let us be thankful. The whole past is under His review; let us leave it with the assurance that His judgment is righteous. The whole future is under His control; let us pass into it with the steadiness, the quietness and the majesty of those who know that all the resources of God are placed at the disposal of all who put their whole trust in His wisdom and love. We can talk but inadequately about these things now; poor are our best notions about the goodness of the Divine rule and the blessedness of falling into the Divine hands. Not until we reach heaven can we fully know how good a thing it is to have given up our whole heart and life to the keeping and direction of our heavenly Father. — *J. Parker.* *Danger of beginnings.* — For hundreds of years the north of Holland has been threatened with submersion by the Northern ocean. Ramparts have been raised along the whole coast, in the form of massive embankments, to keep the water out. Walking within this lofty embankment, you hear the sea roar and rave without, high above your head. In seasons of storm, the waves have been blown in upon the ramparts higher and higher, until they surged in over the top, washed an opening through a hole which a handful of earth might have stopped, and soon tore it into an immense break, through which "Old Ocean" deluged half a kingdom. At first a child might have stopped the leak; now millions cannot arrest the break, or rescue the grassy meadows from their watery desolation. Whenever the storm arises, and the waves approach the top, the alarm-bell is rung in every city and hamlet far and near; multitudes rush to the rescue, to raise the walls by means of wicker-work and loam. It is a symbol of the human heart.

14–17. (14) **pestilence,** the peculiar form of it is not known.[b] (15) **sent an angel,** "Angels are God's ministers in temporal judgment now as well as in final judgment hereafter."—*Kirkpatrick.* (Comp. Ex. xii. 23. Ps. lxxviii. 49; 2 Ki. xix. 35, *etc.*) **repented him,**[c] now regrets his action, but, for the penitence of man, mitigates or brings to an end the punishment which would otherwise have followed. In Nu. xxiii. 19; 1 Sa. xv. 29 we are taught that God does not repent. Scripture "boldly states the two truths and leaves conscience to harmonize them," *vs.* 8. **Ornan,** also called *Araunah*, *Aranyah*, and *Haornah*. (16) **saw the angel,** as in a vision. **the elders,**[d] not only the king but the people repent, and the punishment is stayed. The king was not alone guilty though he humbly confessed the sin as his only, *cf.* 2 Sa. xxiv. 1. **sackcloth,** Ge. xxxvii. 34. (17) **sheep,** creature often treated as emblem of innocence.

David and Israel (*vs.* 17). — Wisdom of David's act, *vs.* 13. God's hand safest to hold the rod — hand of King, Master, Father. I. The progressive course of sin. 1. Temptation, *vs.* 1; 2. Transgression, *vs.* 2; 3. Punishment, *vss.* 10–12. II. The progressive course of reconciliation. 1. The messenger, *vs.* 9; 2. Conviction, *vs.* 8; 3. Penitence, *vs.* 16; 4. Acceptance, *vss.* 18, 26, 27; 5. Praise, *vs.* 24. III. Underlying truths. 1. Though tempted, sin is man's own act; 2. Our sin affects others; 3. Though sin be pardoned, it leaves terrible scars behind. — *R. Berry.*

David's confession (*vs.* 17). — David, when he numbered the people, though it is expressed that Satan provoked him thereunto, and though David probably

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a 2 Sa. xxiv. 14.

"Nothing is less sincere than our method of asking and of giving advice. He who asks advice would seem to have a respectful deference for the opinion of his friend, whilst yet he only aims at getting his own approved of, and his friend responsible for his conduct. On the other hand, he who gives it repays the confidence supposed to be placed in him by a seemingly disinterested zeal, whilst he seldom means anything by the advice he gives but his own interest or reputation."—*Rochefoucauld.*

"They fall deepest into hell who fall backwards into hell. None so near heaven as those that are convinced of sin: none so near hell as those who have quenched conviction."—*Bunyan.*

Punishment.—"He that would be safe from the acts of evil must wisely avoid the occasions."—*Bp. Hall.*

God smites Israel with a pestilence

b "It can hardly be doubted that one of these pestilences must have been that fatal sickness wh. has even to our own time especially ravaged Egypt and the East, and wh. formerly visited Western Europe; *the* plague described as virulent typhus, in the highest degree contagious, and accompanied with extreme debility."—*Ayre.*

c Ge. vi. 6; Ex. xxxii. 14; 2 Sa. xxiv. 16; Jer. xxvi. 19.

d No mention is made of their pres-

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might be sensible of his temptation, yet he never accused the devil, but took all the guilt upon himself. Good reason! Satan hath no impulsive power; he may strike fire till he be weary (if his malice can be weary), except man's corruption brings the tinder, the match cannot be lighted. — *J. Fuller. Insidious influence of sin.* — What used to be called a death-ring was often employed in the Italian states three or four hundred years ago. If a man hated another, and desired to murder him, he would present him with one of them. In the inside was a drop of deadly poison, and a very small hole, out of which it would not make its way except it was squeezed. When the poor man was wearing it the murderer would come and shake his hand violently, the lion's claw would give his finger a scratch, and in a few hours he was a dead man. One of these rings retained its destructive power sufficiently to imperil human life for nearly four hundred years. A person who put it on was saved only by great skill on the part of his physician, and by the strongest medicines. How like this poison is to sin! You commit a sin now, and for the present forget it; and perhaps ten or twelve years hence the wound you then, so to speak, gave yourself, may break out again, and that more dangerously than ever. And the greatest danger of all is lest the thoughts of sins committed, and the pleasure we had in committing them, should come back upon us in the hour of death, or appear against us in the day of judgment.

ence in 2 Sa. xxiv. 16, 17.

"To one capable of appreciating moral beauty, sin is discord, disorder, deformity; horrible is a boy growing into a villain, or a full-grown villain maturing into a devil; beautiful a youth rising up to virtuous manhood, or a man ripening into an angel of God. As a mansion forsaken of man and occupied with serpents and wild beasts, so, to a pure eye is a sinful soul." — *Thomson.*

David told to set up an altar

18—22. (18) **threshing-floor,** here (*vs.* 15) the plague had been stayed. It was a place, therefore of peculiar sanctity. Here David built an altar, and later here was the site of Solomon's temple. (20) **Ornan,** the narrative reverts to what actually occurred at the threshing-floor. This is not narrated in Samuel. **hid themselves,** the vision being an overwhelming one. (21) **bowed himself,**[a] the event that had occurred, as well as respect for David, explains the attitude and actions of Ornan. (22) **full price,** David would not devote to God that which cost him little or nothing.

Honesty in high life. — Some years ago it was proposed to the Duke of Wellington to purchase a farm in the neighborhood of Strathfieldsaye, which lay contiguous to his estate, and was therefore a valuable acquisition, to which he assented. When the purchase was completed, his steward congratulated him upon having had such a bargain, as the seller was in difficulties and forced to part with it. "What do you mean by a bargain?" said the duke. The other replied, "It was valued at £1,100, and we have got it for £800." "In that case," said the duke, "you will please to carry the extra £300 to the late owner, and never talk to me of cheap land again." — *Raikes.*

a He was possibly the last of the Jebusite kings.

"He who freely praises what he means to purchase, and he who enumerates the faults of what he means to sell, may set up a partnership with honesty." — *Lavater.*

David buys the threshing-floor of Ornan

23—27. (23) **Take it to thee,** comp. Ge. xxiii. 11-15. Ornan sympathizes with the desire of David and is willing to offer the sacrifice freely. (24) **wh. is thine,** it must be David's offering for himself and his people. Therefore he could not accept the gift. (25) **for the place,** the whole hill top.[b] The amount[c] given in 2 Sa. xxiv. 24 is different. (26) **by fire,** as Ju. vi. 21, or 1 Ki. xviii. 38.[c] God thereby appropriates the offering. Comp. Lev. ix. 24. The offerings in temple and tabernacle were always lit from the fire which first came down from heaven and was not permitted to go out.

A cheap religion no religion at all (*vs.* 24). — True religion is — I. Spirituality in contradistinction to formalism. II. Enthusiasm in contradistinction to prudence. III. Nobility in contradistinction to meanness. IV. Progress in contradistinction to stationariness. V. Reality in contradistinction to falseness. — *Homilist.*

Business. — Kindness will dictate much in carrying on business which law cannot take cognizance of. It will preserve from the wretched practice of exclusive dealing, of punishing a man for his religion or politics by withholding custom; of making commerce the instrument of bigotry and exclusiveness, a practice which all condemn when they suffer from it, and all approve when they are advantaged by it. It will teach us to give a tender consideration to the cases of others, to treat inferiors with courtesy and gentleness, to pay respect to those whose circumstances make them apt to suspect unkindness not to make a vigorous exaction of mere rights, to allow for unavoidable causes, and by studious care smooth the path of honest poverty. — *A. J. Morris.* *Uprightness.* — The late Charles Grant, Esq., a leading member of the court of East India directors, was for a long time the commercial resident in Malta; where, in addition to a liberal salary, he received a considerable

b "Not only the threshing-floor, for the site of the altar, but the whole homestead and its precincts, for the site of the future temple." — *Wordsworth.*

c See also Ge. iv. 4; 2 Ki. i. 12; 2 Chr. vii. 1

"The devil is too cunning to startle men with temptations to great crimes at first, but if he can tempt them to leave off their prayers, to take God's name in vain, to drink, to swear, and to speak of the vices

commission on all the articles purchased by him for the company. On making up his accounts at the end of two or three successive years, he found the sum due to him was very great, and that he was making a large fortune very rapidly. Possessing the most scrupulous integrity, he sent all his books down to the governor-general in Calcutta, and begged that they might be very carefully examined, as he was making money so fast that he suspected he was not getting it honestly, though he could discover no error in his accounts. The governor-general, says the Bengalee newspaper from whence these facts are derived, returned the books to him unexamined, and begged him to be quite at ease on the subject, adding, that he wished all the servants of the honorable company were equally scrupulous.

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of others with pleasure, he will soon tempt them to crimes of a damning nature." — *Bp. Wilson.*

"A bargain is sometimes as unmerciful as a robbery." — *Nicholls.*

28—30. (28) **David saw,** by the fire that had come down. **sacrificed there,** *i. e.* continued to do so thereafter. (29) **Gibeon,**[a] 8 miles N. W. of Jerus. (30) **afraid,** the manifestation of God at the floor of Ornan made him fear to sacrifice elsewhere lest he should so displease God.[b]

David sacrifices on the altar

Man the organ both of the evil and the good (*vs.* 27, *ff.*). — In this chap. we have man in two aspects. I. Bringing tremendous evils on the earth. 1. Satanic influence interferes not with personal responsibility; 2. One man's sin entails misery on thousands; 3. God has agents at hand to execute His judgments. II. Through God, arresting these evils. By the spirit of prayerfulness. 1. Profound contrition for sin; 2. Trust in God; 3. Atoning, self-sacrificing benevolence. Learn: — (1) The solemnity of human life; (2) The ruinous and restorative dispositions in man. — *Homilist.*

a 1 Ki. iii. 4; 1 Chr. xvi. 39; 2 Chr. i. 3.

Worship. — Solemn indeed ought every religious exercise to be; it should heighten the whole level of the mind, and bring to a finer pitch of harmony the action of all the powers of the soul. If we have left the altar in any other frame of mind than this, then our service there has been a vain oblation. When men go down from the house of God, their whole spirit should be marked by reverence, tenderness, submission, and a complete desire to obey and fulfill every tittle of the word of God. By this sign shall men know that they have offered acceptable worship. — *J. Parker. Answer to prayer consecrating the place of prayer.* — It is noted that David felt the threshing-floor to have become a sacred place, precisely because there he had gained the answer to his prayer. A similar feeling is illustrated in the case of the patriarchs. Abraham erected his altars where the sign of the Divine favor came to him; and Jacob raised his pillow-stone as a pillar, and consecrated his place of vision; Bethel, the house of God. We may recognize instances of the same kind in our own religious experiences. Certain places are, to our feeling, peculiarly sacred, and we know that they have gained their sacredness out of prayer-times, wrestling scenes, and gracious Divine responses. It appears that David had received answer to his prayer under two symbols. (1) By the descending of heavenly fire for the consuming of his sacrifice, and (2) by the sight of the angel reverently and obediently putting the great plague-sword back into its scabbard (*vss.* 26. 27). These outward signs did but assure the fact of God's gracious answer, and should not be thought of as necessary to the answer, or we may find difficulty in realizing that nowadays God answers our prayers, and gives us of the answer an inward witness and not an outward sign. — *Pul. Com.*

b "Or, David, knowing that by sacrifice on this altar he had caused the angel to stay his hand, was afraid to transfer his offerings elsewhere, lest the angel should resume his task, and pestilence again break out."— *Spk. Com.*

None of this statement is found in 2 Sa. xxiv. 25.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

This and the following chapters are peculiar to Chronicles. **1—5.** (1) **said** this verse belongs with *vss.* 28–30 of preceding chapter and gives the conclusion of David from the foregoing events. (2) **strangers,** the Hebrews had hitherto been a race of soldiers. Masons and mechanics had come into the land from abroad to ply their trade. These, now, David assembles.[c] (3) **joinings,** *R. V.*, "couplings." **Sidonians,** *etc.*, *see* 1 Ki. v. 1, 15–25; 1 Chr. xiv. 1; 2 Chr. ii. 16. One reason why Tyre and the Phenicians were so friendly to David was that by his conquests he had gained control of the trade routes to Arabia and the East. Therefore they sent these gifts to David. But this was the beginning of Phenician influences that were harmful to Hebrew life (*cf. Geikie*). (5) **tender,**[d] ch. xxix. 1; 1 Ki. iii. 7. **magnifical,** *magnificent.*

David prepares for the future temple

c 1 Ki. v. 17, 18.

d "Sol.'s exact age at this time is uncertain, but it cannot have been more than twenty-four or

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twenty-five; it may have been as little as fourteen or fifteen." — *Spk. Com.*

"How profitable it would be if every young life could say, My life is to be exceeding magnifical; it is to be a life of intelligence, purity, beneficence, holy activity in all blessed service: I will therefore now make preparations for it."—*Parker.*

Provision for the future (*vs.* 5).— From these words we gather — I. That fathers should do their utmost to make their sons' work in the service of God easy. The materials they may supply are — 1. The incentive of a good example; 2. A Christian education; 3. A knowledge of the world's need. II. That the church of the present should make provision for the work of the church in the future. III. That in making this provision we should be influenced by two things. 1. A consideration of the present weakness of the church — money and men; 2. Of the greatness of the work to be done. Learn: — If we cannot build the temple we may at least gather materials. The explorations of travelers, compiling of dictionaries, translation of Scriptures, *etc.*, are materials collected now for the aid of future builders.

Willingness to do what we may when we are forbidden to do what we would.— For reasons sufficiently defined God did not allow David to build his temple; and David received the Divine refusal in a right spirit. It might have crushed him, and led him to feel that he could do nothing; but he nobly decided that if he might not actually build, he would gather the materials for building, and make all necessary preparations. Too, often, when a man's particular plans are hindered, he throws up Christian work altogether. We there commend the really beautiful example of the pious David. — *Pul. Com.*

David charges Solomon to build the temple

6—10. (6) **called for,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. ii. 1-3. (7) **my mind,** *R. V.*, "my heart," 2 Sa. vii. 1-17. (8) **shed blood,**[a] 1 Ki. v. 3: 1 Chr. xxviii. 3. (9) **a man of rest,** after David comes Solomon, after Elijah comes Elisha, after John the Baptist comes Jesus Christ. There is a time for each kind of service in God's kingdom. **Solomon,** peaceful, or peaceable; he is also called *Jedidiah. beloved of Jehovah.*[b] **give peace,** notice that God is to be the source of this peace. Not Solomon by reason of his superior wisdom. 1 Ki. iv. 20-23, v. 4. (10) **my son,** in an especial manner, under peculiar care and guidance; a gracious promise to David as well as to Solomon.

The predicted son (*vs.* 9). — I. Son of David, — so was Christ. II. A man of rest, — so was Christ. III. The giver of peace, — so was Christ. IV. He had a significant name, — so has Jesus Christ. V. He was a glorious king, — so is Christ. IV. His great work was the building of the temple, — so is the work of Christ.

A man may will more than he can perform. —Distinguish carefully between willing or seriously purposing, and mere wishing. A man's sentimental wishes mean nothing, and cannot stand in place of right deeds; but a man's definite plans and purposes may be as true expressions of character and righteousness as actual deeds could be; and so God may say, "Thou didst well that it was in thine heart." One of the gravest troubles to the earnest man is the impossibility of carrying into effect one-half of what he can purpose and desire to do. The artist has his visions of more and better pictures than he can ever paint. The Christian resolves upon nobler works than he will ever accomplish, and a nobler life than he will ever live. From this common fact an important argument for man's immortality may be drawn. There must be the larger sphere in which man may find the room which he vainly seeks here. — *Pul. Com.*

[a] 2 Sa. viii. 2, 5; x; 18; xii. 31; 1 Ki. xi. 16.

[b] 2 Sa. xii. 25.

"If we would amend the world we should mend ourselves, and teach our children to be not what we are, but what they should be." — *W. Penn.*

David exhorts Solomon to obey God.

11—16. (11) **be with thee,** *lit. shall be with thee.* (12) **wisdom,**[c] *see* Sol.'s prayer, 1 Ki. iii. 5-15. **keep the law,** this the one condition of prosperity for all Israelites. (13) **strong,** *etc.*, De. xxxi 6, 8; Jos. i. 6, 7. (14) **my trouble,** so characterizing his reign, as full of anxieties and troubles. **hundred . . silver,** taking the usual idea of the talent, this would amount to more than four hundred million dollars. Such enormous accumulations can be paralleled from heathen records of treasure taken in wars. But it is to be remembered that nearly all the numbers given in Chronicles are larger than those of parallel accounts. (15) **cunning,** *i. e.* skilful.[d] (16) **be doing,** this charge was given just before David's death.

Consecration of property. — All the accumulation of David's life is here consecrated to God. Thus should it be in the life of every true Christian. His money, his talents, his time, his opportunities, are all the Lord's, and are to be consecrated to His service. "Ye are bought with a price." The Christian is in one sense the poorest man in the world, for all he has belongs to the Lord; yet he is the wealthiest, because God Himself is his. We have no right to take a walk without it is the Lord's will, nor spend a penny unless as He would have us do it. When a man becomes the Lord's, everything he

[c] Ps. lxxii. 1.

[d] Ge. xxv. 27; Ex. xxxviii. 23; 1 Sa xvi. 16, 18; 1 Chr. xxv. 7; Ps. cxxxvii. 5.

"They have spent their lives in heaping up colossal piles of treasure, which stand, at the end, like the pyramids, in the desert sands, holding only the dust of kings." — *Beecher.*

possessed passes over to Him who has bought him.— *F. Whitfield. Making the way plain for our successors* (*vss.* 6–16). — Nothing is more hateful than the spirit of "*apres moi le deluge.*" (After me the deluge.) No worthy Christian workman will be content unless, like David, as he considers who and what are to come after him, he feels a devout thankfulness that he has made a plain path for his successors, in which they may walk in peace, honor, and usefulness.— *Clarkson.*

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"As riches and favor forsake a man, we discover him to be a fool; but nobody could find it out in his prosperity."— *Bruyere.*

David exhorts the princes to aid Solomon

17—19. (17) **princes,** members of the court, including David's other sons. (18) **God with you,** His promises have been fulfilled. He has accomplished now what He began in the Exodus and foretold by Moses. Therefore build to Him this place for His worship. **mine hand,** as the agent God used, but the glory David wholly gives to the Lord.[a] (19) **set your heart,** make this your purpose and your effort. **the holy vessels,** those used in the service of the tabernacle.

Seeking after God (*vs.* 19). — I. The occasion on which this injunction was given. II. The injunction itself. 1. The great object of our life; 2. In what way we are to prosecute it. And now — (1) Avail yourselves of the opportunities afforded for public usefulness; (2) Begin with a surrender of your whole souls to God.— *C. Simeon.*

Holy vessels. — In all heathen temples there are numerous vessels of brass, silver, and gold, which are especially holy. Those, however, of the highest castes may be allowed to touch, and even borrow them for certain purposes. Thus, a native gentleman, who is going to give a feast, borrows the large cauldron for the purpose of boiling the rice; should his daughter be about to be married, he has the loan of the silver salvers, plates, and even jewels; which, however, must all be purified by incense and other ceremonies when returned to the temple. "The ark" finds a striking illustration in the *keadagam* of the Hindoos — a model of which may be seen in the house of the Royal Asiatic Society. In it are placed the idols, and other sacred symbols, which are carried on men's shoulders.— *Roberts.*

a Comp. Jos. xxii. 4.

"It is quite deplorable to see how many rational creatures, or, at least, who are thought so, mistake suffering for sanctity, and think a sad face and a gloomy habit of mind propitious offerings to that Deity whose works are all light and lustre and harmony and loveliness."— *Lady Morgan.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD

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David makes Solomon king of Israel

This chapter is devoted to an account of the Levitical order, its distribution and services. **1—6.** (1) **full of days,** comp. Ge. xxv. 8; xxxv. 29; the account of coronation of Sol. is given, 1 Ki. i. 33–39. (2) **gathered,**[b] comp. ch. xxviii. 1. (3) **and upward,** to age of fifty.[c] **man by man,** *i. e.* reckoning the men only. (4) **set forward,** *R. V.*, "oversee." **officers,** *etc.*, as De. xvi. 18; "subordinate officials employed partly in administration of justice, partly in maintenance of civil order and military discipline and to enforce the mandates of their superiors."— *Driver.* (5) **porters,** *i. e.* watchmen, or doorkeepers; really they acted as policemen or park-keepers now. (6) **courses,** to take regular turns. **among,** *R. V.*, "according to."

b "All important measures relating to the public interest were submitted for consideration to a general assembly of the representatives of the tribes."— *Jamieson.*

c Nu. iv. 3. 47. 1 Chr xxvi. 20; 2 Chr. xix. 8.

Full of days (*vs.* 1). — I. An instructive view of life; full of — not years — but days. Life built up of small portions of time. Men make small account of a day. II. A suggestive picture of old age. As a portrait is made up of minute touches, so old age is the result — in its character, memory, hopes — of each day's work.

The beauty of old age. — The eye of age looks meek into my heart! the voice of age echoes mournfully through it! the hoary head and palsied hand of age plead irresistibly for its sympathies! I venerate old age; and I love not the man who can look without emotion upon the sunset of life, when the dusk of evening begins to gather over the watery eye, and the shadows of twilight grow broader and deeper upon the understanding.— *Longfellow.*

"A great statesman has said there are only two happy days in the life of a cabinet minister, the day on which he takes office and the day on which he leaves it."— *Parker.*

sons of Levi — course of Gershon

7—11. (7) **Gershonites,** Ex. vi. 16. **Laadan,** called *Libni*, ch. vi. 17.[d] (9) **sons of Shimei,** there seem to have been *two Shimeis*, the first a descendant of Laadan. **chief of the fathers,** *R. V.*, "heads of the fathers' *houses.*" (10) **Zina,** marg. *Zizah.* (11) **not many sons,** "a certain number of heads were requisite to obtain the rank of a clan or fathers' house." *Cf.* note on vii. 9.— *Oehler.*

d Ex. vi. 17; Nu iii. 18.

"God's names are not mere appellations, signs by which men are

The meaning of order. — What is this wonderful enchanter called order? What, exactly, do we mean by it? If we look into it more narrowly, we shall find that it implies the separation, division, and distribution of things accord-

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known one from another; they are characters, they are credentials, they are approbations."—*Parker.*

"Order is heaven's first law."—*Pope.*

"The order of the eternal manifests itself in the sun which rises and the heavens which fall."—*Jens Baggesen.*

ing to their qualities, in certain definite, well-calculated times and spaces. Number and measure are the essence of it. The sands of the desert cannot be numbered, at least not by us; relatively to our faculties they are mere chaos; but the soldiers of a well-ordered army, arranged in rank and file, can be numbered, and their thousands told with as much ease as the units of a small sum, if only the arrangements be completed. So then order consists in dividing a confused multitude of individual elements into groups that bear a natural resemblance to one another in kind, in number and in measure. A squad of full-grown soldiers, five in front and three in depth, like the band of the old Greek chorus, is perfect order; each unit being like the other, and the whole being composed of parts that bear a definite relation of equality or proportion to the whole; the many under the controlling power of order have become one, and with that unity have acquired a distinct character, and are capable of answering a definite purpose.—*Blackie.*

course of Kohath

a Ex. xxx. 7; Nu. xvi. 40; De. xxi. 5; 1 Sa. ii. 28.

For times in wh. Moses is called the "Man of God," see De. xxxiii. 1; Jos. xiv. 6; 2 Chr. xxx. 16; Ezr. iii. 2.

"He who has no taste for order will be often wrong in his judgment, and seldom considerate in his actions."—*Lavater.*

12—20. (12) **Kohath,** Ex. vi. 16. (13) **Aaron,** "Aaron's two sons form two houses that are not mentioned here, as they come out very distinctly in the following chapter. **that he should sanctify,**[a] rather, "to sanctify him as most holy — him and his sons forever." The office of the priest is threefold — first, to make atonement (offer the fire-offering); second, to minister to God for man; third, to bless man for God. These are the functions of a mediator."—*Murphy.* (14) **Moses,** Ex. ii. 22. **man of God,** a title applied to Moses, David and once to Shemaiah (1 Ki. xii. 22). (15) **sons of,** Ex. xviii. 3, 4. (15–17) **the chief,** first, and only one. (18–20) **Shelomith the chief,** first-born, so head of tribe.

Order in the Divine government.—When we consider how exact care is taken in well-ordered secular governments, not only that things be done which the affairs of the government require, but that they be done regularly and in the way which is prescribed and set; if there be any beauty and comeliness in order, where should we more expect to find it than in the Divine government, and in the conduct and management of he affairs of the supreme and celestial kingdom.—*Howe.*

course of Merari

b Comp. Nu. iii. 20, 1 Chr. vi. 19; but see 1 Chr. xxiv. 26.

c Nu. xxxvi. 6.

"Order gave each thing view."—*Shakespeare.*

"Order, thou eye of action."—*Aaron Hill.*

21—23. (21) **Merari,** Ex. vi. 16.[b] (22) **brethren,** or kinsmen, as was arranged by the law.[c] (23) **Mushi,** *vs.* 21.

Universal order.—

Order is heaven's first law—a glorious law,
Seen in those pure and beauteous isles of light,
That come and go, as circling months fulfil
Their high behest. Nor less on earth discern'd
'Mid rocks snow clad, or wastes of herbless sand,
Throughout all climes, beneath all varying skies,
Fixing for e'en the smallest flower that blooms,
Its place of growth.

the office of the sons of Levi

"One very common error misleads the opinion of mankind, that, universally, authority is pleasant, submission painful. In the general course of human affairs, the very reverse of this comes nearer to the truth. Command is anxiety, obedience, ease."—*Paley.*

"It is only by labor that thought can be made

24—27. (24) **polls,** as *vs.* 3. **twenty years,** comp. *vs.* 3: it had been thirty years (Nu. iv. 3), but younger men now admitted because the labor of the office would henceforth be easier, *vss.* 25, 26. (25) **that they may dwell,** *R. V.*, "and He dwelleth," the temple is to be His permanent abode. This a reason why younger men would be able to serve Him. (26) **carry,** bec. their wanderings were now over, and the ark was to find its rest. (27) **by the last words,** explaining the change noticed *vs.* 24, and declaring it a final arrangement of David's, made near the close of his life.

The rest of the people of God (*vs.* 25). — I. In the mysterious polity of the people of Israel, spiritual and temporal blessings were so closely allied, that the same language might naturally be employed to signify either. II. Hence David hinted at profound truths than lie on the surface of his words. III. It becomes us to secure the great blessing — the rest that remaineth — as the chief object of existence. IV. Rest and peace must fall on a Christian spirit. —*A. Butler.*

Service the road to honor. — When the Spartan king advanced against the enemy, he had always with him some one that had been crowned in the public games of Greece. And they tell us, that a Lacedæmonian, when large sums were offered him on condition that he would not enter the Olympic

lists, refused them. Having with much difficulty thrown his antagonists in wrestling, one put this question to him, "Spartan, what will you get by this victory?" He answered with a smile, "I shall have the honor to fight foremost in the ranks of my prince." The honor which appertains to office in the Church of God lies mainly in this — that the man who is set apart for such service has the privilege of being first in holiness of example, abundance of liberality, patience of long suffering, zeal in effort, and self-sacrifice in service. Thou gracious King of kings, if Thou hast made me a minister or deacon in Thy church, enable me to be foremost in every good word and work, shunning no sacrifice, and shrinking from no suffering. — *Spurgeon.*

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healthy, and only by thought that labor can be made happy: and the two cannot be separated with impunity."— *Ruskin.*

28—32. (28) **their office,** *etc.*, Heb. "their station was at the hand of the sons of Aaron." While the services were of a higher nature, they were more numerous and varied than formerly. In the primitive simplicity of the wilderness, the worshiper was wont to kill the victim, flay and cut it in pieces and wash the inwards and legs. But now all the services were performed by the Levites or the Nethinim (ix. 2). Other offices were performed in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things. — *Murphy.* (29) **shewbread,** *etc.*, Le. vi. 21, *etc.* **measure,** or measuring work: proper quantities were fixed by law.[a] (30) **every morning,** at the morning service. (31) **offer,** properly assist in offering. (32) **keep the charge,** *see* Nu. xviii. 3–5.[b]

[a] Ex. xxix. 40; xxx. 23, 24; Le. vi. 20; xxiii. 13; Nu. xv. 4–10.

[b] Nu. iii. 5–9.

Daily praise (*vs.* 30). — Praise is a great privilege. One began a prayer with the words, "We thank Thee that we *may* praise Thee." II. Praise is a universal duty. Who is there who has not something for which to praise Him who makes the sun shine on the evil and on the good? III. Daily praise should be offered for daily mercies. 1. In the morning for the blessings of the night; 2. In the evening for the mercies of the day. IV. Hereafter there will be no morning or evening praise, but praise forever. The praises of earth prepare for the praise of heaven.

"Prayer has a right to the word 'ineffable.' It is an hour of outpourings which words cannot express — of that interior speech which we do not articulate, even when we employ it."—*Swetchine.*

Instruments and praise.— In order to the high result intended, the music of religion must be religious. There must be a distinction of sounds. As this language is given for the heart, it becomes a first principle that it must be of the heart, else it is an unknown tongue. And so true is this, that nothing really can fulfil the idea of religious music which is not the breathing of true love and worship. Even instruments without life will not speak the true notes of power unless the touch of faith is on them, and the breadth of holy feeling is in them; how much less the *voice* itself, whose very qualities of sound are inevitably toned by the secret feeling of the spirit. — *H. Bushnell.* *Praise.*—One of the Moravian brethren, going very early one morning to let out their sheep heard uncommonly sweet singing in a tent, and drawing near, found it was the head of the family performing his morning devotions with his people. Beckoning to the others to come, "We stood still," say the brethren in their diary, "and listened to this sweet melody with hearts exceedingly moved and with eyes filled with tears, and thought these people were, no longer than two years ago, savage heathen, and now they sing to the Lamb that was slain, so charmingly, that it strikes the inmost soul." — *Whitecross.*

"The first petition that we are to make to Almighty God is for a good conscience, the next for health of mind, and then of body."—*Seneca.*

There is nothing greater for which God made our tongues, next to reciting His praises, than to minister comfort to a weary soul.— *Jeremy Taylor.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

Vss. 1-19 give the 24 classes of priests. *Vss.* 20–31 the order of the rest of the Levites. **1—6.** (1) **divisions,** *etc.* Ex. xxviii. 1; Nu. xxvi. 60. (2) **Nadab,** *etc.*, Nu. iii. 4; Lev. x. (3) **And David,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, 'And David with Zadok of the sons of Eleazer, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to their ordering in their service." **Ahimelech,** *cf.* xviii. 16; 1 Sa. xxii. 20; 2 Sa. viii. 17. Abiather, who escaped to David from the sword of Saul. (4) **chief men,** heads of houses. (5) **by lot,** for the avoidance of jealousies.[c] **governors . . God,** *R. V.*, "princes of God," *cf.* "princes of the sanctuary," Isa. xliii. 28. (6) **wrote them,** the names as drawn in the lot.

the twenty-four orders of the sons of Aaron

[c] *Lit.* "'He divided them by lot, these with these,' *i. e.* those of the same family were together in the same class."—*Wordsworth.*

Importance of order.— What a monster in nature were that body which should have its organs and members so misplaced that the hands occupied the place of the feet, and the heart palpitated in the cavity of the brain! And who, besides, does not know that the fruitfulness, the beauty, the very

"No labor is hard, no time is long, wherein the glory

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of eternity is the mark we level at." — *Quarles.*

life, of a tree, depends not only on its having both roots and branches, but on these members being placed in their natural order? Let a tree be planted upside down,— set the root in the air, and the boughs in the earth,— and I need not ask how much fruit it will yield, nor how many seasons the unhappy plant would survive such barbarous and blundering treatment.— *Guthrie.*

the casting of the lots

"To live is not to learn, but to apply."—*E. Legouve.*

" Methods are the masters of masters."—*Talleyrand.*

7—19. (10) **Abijah,** or *Abia,* Lu. i. 5. (19) **according . . father,** *R. V.,* "according unto the ordinance given to them by the hand of Aaron their father." "The high priest and the heads of the 24 classes are supposed to be represented by the twenty-five men at the door of the temple in Ezek. viii. 16."—*Murphy.*

"*As the Lord God of Israel had commanded him.*"—These words may be said to constitute the key-note of the whole Law (Exod. xxxix. 42; Lev. xxvii. 34; Numb. xxxvi. 13; Deut. xxxiv. 9). Just as Israel should pay heed to this commandment of Jehovah, so it would flourish and rejoice; in proportion as it should depart from these commandments, so it would fail and be distressed. Everything hung on a loyal obedience to the Divine will.

the rest of the sons of Levi

a Not the same as in 1 Chr. xxvi. 25, 26.

" Method is essential, and enables a larger amount of work to be got through with satisfaction. 'Method,' said Cecil, afterwards Lord Burleigh, 'is like packing things in a box; a good packer will get in half as much again as a bad one.'"— *Smiles.*

20—26. (20) **the rest,** of the 2,400 Levites, who were to preside over the work in the temple. (Ch. xxiii. 7–23). The omission of the Gershonites is due to the fact that they were found only among the officers, judges and singers. **Shubael,** comp. ch. xxiii. 16; xxvi. 21. (21) **Rehabiah,** ch. xxiii. 17. (22) **Shelomoth,** or *Shelomith,* as ch. xxiii. 18.[a] (23) **of Hebron . . first,** not in Heb. text, supplied fr. ch. xxiii. 19. (24) **Michah,** comp. ch. xxiii. 20. (25) **Isshiah,** or *Jeshiah,* ch. xxiii. 20. (26) **Beno,** perhaps should be translated *his son; R. V.,* however, retains it as a proper name.

Contrast of order.—In human doings and human productions we see everywhere manifestations of order. Well-ordered stones make architecture; well-ordered social regulations make a constitution and a police; well-ordered ideas make good logic; well-ordered words make good writing; well-ordered imaginations and emotions make good poetry; well-ordered facts make science. Disorder, on the other hand, makes nothing at all, but unmakes everything. Stones in disorder produce ruins; an ill-ordered social condition is decline, revolution, or anarchy; ill-ordered ideas are absurdity; ill-ordered words are neither sense nor grammar; ill-ordered imaginations and emotions are madness; ill-ordered facts are chaos.— *Blackie.*

27—31. (28) **Eleazar,** ch. xxiii. 21, 22. (29) **Kish,** also a son of *Mahli.* (30) **Mushi,** ch. xxiii. 23. (31) **over against,** *R. V.,* "even as." **principal . . brethren,** *R. V.,* "the father's houses of the chief, even as those of his younger brethren," *i. e.* the lots were drawn on equal terms: it is also intimated that the course of Levites and priests were fitted to each other.[b]

The three sons of Mushi (*vss.* 30, 31). — These all content with an inferior "lot," anxious to do their best, and joyfully contributing to the whole. "They were arranged by lot to match the courses of their brethren, the sons of Aaron, in the presence of the same superiors." "The principal fathers," or the chief over against his lesser brother. Each, great and small, his place and his work, and acting under "the great Taskmaster's eye." "Let every man be *occupied,* and occupied in the highest employment of which he is capable, and die with the consciousness that he has done his best." — *Sidney.*

b "It was known and settled beforehand what course of Levites should be in waiting, with the courses of the priests respectively."—*Wordsworth.*

"He praiseth God best that serveth and obeyeth Him most; the life of thankfulness consists in the thankfulness of the life." — *Burkitt.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

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the order of the singers and musicians

This chapter is about the singers. **1—7.** (1) **captains,** same as mentioned, ch. xxiii. 2; xxiv. 6. **of the,** omit these words. **Jeduthun,** or *Ethan,*[c] ch. vi. 42. **prophesy,** that is "sing" (*cf. vs.* 2); "there is so close a connection between sacred song and prophecy that the former is called prophecying, and the chief singers appointed by David are called prophets and seers (2 Chr. xxix. 30; xxxv. 15)." — *Oehler.* **harps,** Ge. iv. 21. **psalteries,** 1 Sa. x. 5. **cymbals,** 2 Sa. vi. 5. (2) **Asaph,** twelve psalms are inscribed "For Asaph," some of which probably were composed by him. **under the hands,** or leadership. (3) **six,** as there are only five names here, add *Shimei,* from *vs.* 17. (4) **Uzziel,** *see vs.* 18. **Shebuel,** *see vs.* 20. (5) **lift up the horn,** fig. for increase of dignity and honor in such a family. **daughters,** evidently women and children were included in the temple choirs. (6) **cymbals,** *etc., vs.* 1. (7) **cunning,**[d] skillful. **two . . eight.**[e]

c See titles of Ps. xxxix., lxii., lxxvii., lxxxix.

d 1 Chr. xxii. 15.

e "Each lot consisted of twelve persons, and there were twenty-four courses, and each course was in waiting for a week."

Number. — A number competent, skillful, orderly, and devout. What a pattern choir! All may imbibe their spirit and follow their example. "As it is commanded of God that all should sing, so all should make a conscience of *learning* to sing, as it is a thing that cannot be done decently without learning. Those, therefore, who neglect to learn to sing live in sin, as they neglect what is necessary to their attending one of the ordinances of God's worship." — *Pres. Edwards. The word "cunning" (vs. 7).* — Many words implying knowledge, art, skill, obtain in course of time a secondary meaning of crooked knowledge, art which has degenerated into artifice, skill used only to circumvent. Among other words which have gone this downward course is our English wôrd "cunning." In Foxe's *Martyrs* we read, "I believe that all these three persons, *i. e.* the Godhead, are equal in power and in cunning." — *Trench.*

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"We should shun giving offense, and and also taking it Happy the church where there is concord from the choir and no discord within it." — *Clarkson.*

8—31. (8) **as well the small,** comp. ch. xxiv. 31, and note. This arrangement avoided signs of partiality. (9–31) These verses indicate the order in wh. the courses were settled, Asaph took the first, Jeduthun the second, Heman the third, and so on alternately; this left all the later courses to the family of Heman.

Variety. — The instruments of music used were various — "cymbals, psalteries, and harps." Doubtless others would have been used if they had been known and found fitting. We may do better to use one instrument of music only, but we do not well to make God's service monotonous. We should make it as attractive with variety of engagements, freshness of thought and newness of method as is consistent with reverence and propriety. — *Clarkson.*

the twenty-four orders of the singers

"Nothing but what is just, can finally be expedient, because nothing else can secure the permanent concurrence of mankind." — *Sir. A. Alison.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1—12. (1) **porters,** keepers or watchmen.[a] **Korhites,** ch. ix. 19, 31 **Asaph,** the *Ebiasaph*, of ch. vi. 37; ix. 19. (2) **Meshelemiah,** *vs.* 14; comp. the *Shallum* of ch. ix. 19. (4) **Obed-edom,**[b] was a Kohathite of Gath-rimmon (xv. 18, 24; xvi. 38). God blessed him, among other reasons, because he took charge of the ark when David was terrified by the breach upon Uzza (xiii.) Hence he had a large family of eight sons. — *Murphy.* (6) **mighty men,** so able to swing the great gates, and form a guard of defense in case of popular tumult. (7) **strong men,** comp. *vs.* 6. (8) **able men,**[c] indicating that physical strength was required. (10) **Hosah,** ch. xvi. 38. (12) **chief men,** of these porters there were ninety-three, increased later to 212 (ch ix. 22.) **wards,** *R. V.*, "charges" or stations, comp. ch. xxv. 8. **one against another,** *R. V.*, "like as their brethren."

"*Honorable mention*" often found in Scripture. 1. That we may discern the goodness of God. The smallest service, even a cup of cold water, not overlooked. He is gracious, accepts and crowns our service for Him. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love." 2. That we may imitate the example. We may not be in the same circumstances and able to do the same things, but we may cherish the same spirit and copy their example. "Nobleness of condition," says Dr. Chalmers, is "not essential as a school for nobleness of character. It is delightful to think that humble life may be just as rich in moral grace and moral grandeur as the loftiest places in society; that as true dignity of principle may be earned by him who in homeliest drudgery plies his conscientious task, as by him who stands entrusted with the fortunes of an empire." — *Hom. Com.*

Porters. — "A man called 'The Man of the Mountain of the House' went round every night to see that all were in their places, and that none of them slept. If he found any one asleep he struck him, and had liberty to burn his clothes. To this Lightfoot thinks there is a reference in Rev. xv. 16: 'Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments.'" — *Hom. Com.*

the courses of the porters

[a] "This word does not bear its modern significance of a *carrier of burdens*, but denotes in every case a *gate-keeper*, from the Latin *portarius*, the man who attended to the *porta*." — *Smith's Bib. Dict.*

[b] "The nature of the blessing consisted in the great increase in progeny by wh. his house was distinguished; 72 descendants are reckoned." — *Jamieson.*

[c] "The original is in the singular number, showing that each of them was thus qualified." — *Wordsworth.*

13—19. (13) **cast lots,** especially for the gates, of wh. there were *four*, ch. xxv. 8. It seems to have been the universal custom to decide order and rank by lot, *cf.* Nu. xxvi. 55; Ps. xxii. 18. Also 1 Sa. xiv. 41–42; Jon. i. 7, *etc.* (14) **eastward,** *i. e.* for the east gate. (15) **house of Asuppim,** *R. V.*, "the store-house."[d] (16) **Shallecheth,** *lit. gate. of the throwing out.*[e] **causeway,** or ascent, 1 Ki. x. 5. (17) **six Levites,** bec. the E. gate was most frequented. **toward Asuppim,** *R. V.*, "for the store-house." (18) **Parbar,**[f] some place on the W. side of the temple enclosure. (19) **These,** *etc.*, comp. ch. xxiii. 5;

lots cast for the gate-keepers

[d] "The store-chambers of the gates." — *Gesenius.*

[e] "Prob. the rubbish gate, thro' wh. all the accumulated filth and sweepings of the temple and its courts were poured out." — *Jamieson.*

[f] "Comp. *parvarim*, A.V. *suburbs*,

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of 2 Ki. xxiii 11. Poss. Parbar is ancient Jebusite name." — *Smith's Bib. Dict.*

"Chance is but the pseudonym of God for those particular cases which He does not choose to subscribe openly with His own sign-manual." — *Coleridge.*

the large number were prob. under the leadership of these chief men. **Kore,** *R. V.*, "the Korahites."

Casting lots (*vs.* 13). — Thus the gates were assigned to the different officers by lot. On the death of a parent, the whole of his fields and gardens are often divided among his children, and great disputes generally arise as to whom shall be given this or that part of the property. One says, "I will have the field to the east." "No," says another, "I will have that;" and it is not till they have quarreled and exhausted their store of ingenuity and abuse, that they will consent to settle the matter by lot. The plan they take is as follows: They draw on the ground the cardinal points, they then write the names of the parties on separate leaves, and mix them all together; a little child is then called, and told to take one leaf and place it on any point of the compass he pleases. This being done, the leaf is opened, and to the person whose name is found therein will be given the field or garden which is in that direction. I think it therefore probable that the lots eastward, westward, northward, and southward, which fell to Shelemiah, Zechariah, Obed-edom, and Shuppim, were drawn something in the same way. — *Roberts.*

the keepers of the treasures

20—28. "The grand treasurers." (20) **Ahijah,** "As we find in the following verses the names of the treasurers, we can scarcely take the original word here as the proper name of a treasurer-general over them both. As a common noun, if it is to stand in its present form, it must mean a brotherhood or body of brothers to the other Levites. As this noun, however, occurs nowhere else, we may suppose an *m* dropped at the end to be restored, and then we shall have the Sept. reading, 'their brethren,' which is certainly the meaning in any case. There were two treasures,[a] one for the house of God for the maintenance of its officers and services, and one for the things consecrated for the building of the temple." — *Murphy.* (26) **dedicated things,** needful for the service. (27) **spoils,** a proportion was always devoted to the temple. **to maintain,** *R. V.*, "to repair," *i. e.* used not for the regular support of the temple, but for extraordinary expenses. (28) **had dedicated,** this information of the acts of Samuel, Saul, Abner and Joab is not given elsewhere. **under the hand,** in the care of.

a Ex. xxx. 12; Nu. xviii. 16; Le. xxvii.

"Five things are requisite to a good officer, — ability, clean hands, despatch, patience, and impartiality." — *W. Penn.*

Spoils of war (*vs.* 27). — According to the law of Moses, the booty was to be divided equally between those who were in the battle, and those who were in the camp, whatever disparity there might be in the number of each party. The law further requires that out of that part of the spoils which was assigned to the fighting men the Lord's share should be separated; and for every five hundred men, oxen, sheep, etc., they were to take one for the high priest, as being the Lord's firstfruits, and out of the other moiety belonging to the children of Israel, they were to give for every fifty men, oxen, sheep, etc., one to the Levites. Among the Greeks and Romans the plunder was brought together into one common stock, and divided afterwards among the officers and soldiers, paying some respect to their rank in the distribution. Sometimes the soldiers made a reserve of the chief part of the booty, to present, by way of compliment, to their respective generals. The gods were always remembered. And the priest had sufficient influence to procure them a handsome offering, and other acceptable presents. — *Bruder.*

"High office is like a pyramid; only two kinds of animals reach the summit, — reptiles and eagles." — *D'Alembert.*

the officers and judges

29—32. (29) **outward business,** concerning the people's private or public affairs, not those of the temple. **officers,** *etc.*, as ch. xxiii. 4. (30) **were officers,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "had the oversight of Israel beyond Jordan westward." **business of the Lord,** probably does not refer to special religious work, as that of a scribe, but to the fact that all of their duties were God-given, in all they serve God and the king. (31) **Jazer,**[b] also *Jaazer*, about 10 m. W. of Ammân, and 15 fr. Heshbon. (32) **chief fathers,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "heads of fathers' houses, whom king David made overseers" (*cf.* vii. 7).

b Jos. xiii. 25; xxi. 39.

"One man, perhaps, proves miserable in the study of the law, who might have flourished in that of physic or divinity; another runs his head against the pulpit, who might have been serviceable to his country at the plough; and a third proves a very dull and heavy philoso-

Jewish scribes (*vs.* 29). — The *schoterim*, or scribes, were different from the judges, for Moses had expressly ordained (De. xvi. 18) that in every city there should be appointed, not only judges, but schoterim likewise. It is very certain that Moses had not originally instituted these officers, but already found them among the people while in Egypt. For when the Israelites did not deliver the required tale of bricks, the schoterim were called to account and punished (Ex. v. 6–14). Now, as "satar." in Arabic, signifies to write, and its derivative, "mastir," a person whose duty it is to keep accounts and collect debts, I am almost persuaded that these schoterim must have been the officers

who kept the genealogical tables of the Israelites, with a faithful record of births, marriages and deaths; and, as they kept the rolls of families, had, moreover, the duty of apportioning the public burdens and services on the people individually. An office exactly similar we have not in our governments, because they are not so genealogically regulated; at least, we do not institute enumerations of the people by families. But among a people whose notions were completely clannish, and among whom all hereditary succession, and even all posthumous fame, depended on genealogical registers, this must have been an office fully as important as that of a judge. In Egypt, the Levites had not yet been consecrated and set apart from the rest of the tribes; there, of course, the schoterim must have been chosen out of every family, or, perhaps, merely according to the opinion entertained of their fitness for the office. In the time of the kings, however, we find them generally taken from the tribe of Levi (1 Ch. xxiii. 4; 2 Ch. xix. 8–11; xxxiv. 13). — *Michaelis.*

Officers. — The curious fact comes out in all the arrangements that office was hereditary. The heads of the different departments are named after the heads of the families employed in them. All that David seems to have done was to restore and regulate a system that had been organized at the first settlement of the nation. In this respect it presents a striking contrast to our modern customs. — *Murphy.*

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pher, who possibly would have made a good mechanic, and have done well enough at the useful philosophy of the spade or anvil." — *South.*

"Occupation was one of the pleasures of Paradise and we cannot be happy without it." — *Mrs. Jameson.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

1—9. (1) This verse is a kind of title for the whole chapter. **courses,** arrangements for the army similar to that already described for priests and Levites. Military force consisted of twelve companies of 24,000 each: a company serving a month at a time. (2) **Jashobeam,**[a] 2 Sa. xxiii. 8. In chap. xii. 11 he is mentioned as one of the "three mighties" of David. (3) **Of the children,** *R. V.*, "*He was* of the children," referring to Jashobeam. **Perez,** or *Pharez*, son of Judah. (4) **Dodai,** *R. V.*, "Dodai the Ahopite, and his course; and Mikloth the ruler, and in his course were," *etc.* The meaning of the verse is much disputed. (5) **Benaiah,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 20–23. **chief priest,** *R. V.*, "son of Jehoiada, the priest, chief;" the word chief referring to Benaiah. Abiathar was high priest. Notice that not all Aaronites were priests, tho' the priesthood was confined to that family. (7) **Asahel,**[b] "as he was killed by Abner (2 Sa. xxiii. 24) this name must refer to his family." — *Pul. Com.* (8) **Shamhuth,** comp. Shammah, 2 Sa. xxiii. 11, and Shammoth, 1 Chr. xi. 27. (9) **Ira,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 26.

the twelve monthly captains

[a] 2 Sa. xxiii. 8; 1 Ch. xi. 11.

[b] 2 Sa. xxiii. 24; ii. 18-23.

Zeal in the service of God. — The angel (who delivered Peter), like the other angels of God — like the angel that hurried Lot — appears in a kind of solemn haste. "Arise up quickly," he says; "gird thyself." These spirits, when their purpose is effected, do not stand in wonderment at their own exploits — they take no breathing time — they want no leisure to rest from the toil and contemplate the conquest. It is a very ordinary thing to them; it excites no particular surprise or elation in their minds; they do not think of repose. So should it be with the servants of God on earth. They should not stand still wondering at their own doings, or think they deserve a year's holiday after the labor of one exploit; they also should be in solemn haste — their time is all too short. Not an hour should pass, after their greatest effort, without preparing for some new service. — *J. Foster.*

"Zeal for the public good is the characteristic of a man of honor and a gentleman, and must take the place of pleasures, profits, and all other private gratifications. Whoever wants this motive, is an open enemy or an inglorious neuter to mankind in proportion to the misapplied advantages with which nature and fortun have blessed him." — *Steele.*

10—15. (10) **Helez,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 26. (11) **Sibbecai,** 2 Sa. xxi. 18. (12) **Abiezer,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 27. (13) **Maharai,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 28 (14) **Benaiah,** 2 Sa. xxiii. 30. (15) **Heldai,** or *Heleb*, 2 Sa. xxiii. 29. **Othniel,** nephew and son-in-law of Caleb. Twelve captains have been named, of whom seven come from Judah, two each from Benjamin and Ephraim and one from Levi.

The sure reward of serving God. — When Calvin was banished from ungrateful Geneva, he said: "Most assuredly, if I had merely served man, this would have been a poor recompense; but it is my happiness that I have served Him who never fails to reward His servants to the full extent of His promise."— *Spurgeon.*

Captains. — At the head of his army were officers of consummate experience, and what was more highly esteemed in the warfare of the time, extraordinary personal activity, strength and valor. His heroes remind us of those of Arthur or Charlemagne, excepting that the *armor* of

"Not what I have, but what I do, is my kingdom." — *Carlyle.*

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the feudal chieftains constituted their superiority; here main strength of body and dauntless fortitude of mind."—*Hist. of Jews, Milman.*

the princes of the twelve tribes

16—24. (18) **Elihu,** or Eliab, 1 Sa. xvi. 6.[a] (19–22) "Zebulun and Dan are omitted in the pedigrees of the tribes. We have here thirteen princes, and yet Gad and Asher are omitted. The number is made up by giving two for Levi, one for the Levites, and one for the priests; and three for Joseph, one for Ephraim, and one for each half tribe of Manasseh. This seems to have been the state of things at the close of David's reign."—*Murphy.* (23) **took not,** *etc.*, intimating that the census was not of the whole population, and that its chief object was an arrangement of the army in proper proportion to the adult population. **increase,** *etc.*, Ge. xv. 5.[b] (24) **because there fell,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "and there came wrath because of this upon Israel." Ch. xxi. 7.

[a] 1 Sa. xvii. 13, 28; 1 Chr. ii. 13.

[b] Ge. xxii. 17; xxvi. 4.

"The zeal which begins with hypocrisy must conclude in treachery; at first it deceives, at last it betrays." —*Bacon.*

An innumerable people (*cf.* Gen. xv. 5; xxii. 17; xxvi. 4). 1. In actual existence. 2. In future calculations. The actual number of the people living at a given time is not the sum of the Lord's people. In the Divine estimate those gone before and those coming after are taken into account. Can we count the stars? then may we number God's children! They are perpetually increasing.—*Hom. Com.*

"Whether zeal or moderation be the point at wh. we aim, let us keep fire out of the one, and frost out of the other."—*Addison.*

In what way this promise was, and is yet to be, fulfilled (*vs.* 23). —Under Solomon the nation of Israel reached its highest pitch of fame and power. But it is pleasant and encouraging to believe that the promise recorded in the text will be fulfilled in a deeper sense than that which appears on the surface. There is a true Israel, composed of all who, sharing Abraham's faith, are Abraham's spiritual children. These are destined to be numerous as the sands of the desert, as the leaves of the forest, as the dew-drops of the morning, as the stars of heaven. This is a kingdom whose subjects shall ever multiply, whose glory shall know no limit and no end.

David's several officers

25—29. (25) **king's treasures,** his private accumulations. This refers to the treasure in Jerusalem. **storehouses,** these were scattered about the country, bec. taxes would be paid *in kind*, not in money. (26) **of the field,** tilling the royal farms. (27) **vineyards,** one officer presided over the grape-growing, another over the wine-making. (28) **olive trees,** grown chiefly for the oil. **sycomore,** the fig-mulberry, 1 Ki. x. 27. (29) **herds,** cattle for supply of milk and flesh to the royal table. **Sharon,**[c] a very fertile district. **valleys,** or plain, the *Shefelah*, or low country of Judah.

[c] Is. lxv. 10.

"If every man works at that wh. nature fitted him for, the cows will be well tended." —*La Fontaine.*

Cellars of oil (*vs.* 28). —When our translation represents Joash as over the cellars of oil, in the time of king David, 1 Chr. xxvii. 28, they have certainly, without any necessity, and perhaps improperly, substituted a particular term for a general expression. Joash was at that time, according to the sacred historian, over the treasures of oil; but whether it was kept in cellars, or in some other way, does not at all appear in the original history.—*Harmer.*

"Every base occupation makes one sharp in its practice, and dull in every other."—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

David's counsellors

30—34. (30) **Obil,** means "a tender of camels," work for which an Ishmaelite would be fitted. **Meronothite,** cannot be identified as person or place. (31) **flocks,** including sheep and goats. (32) **Also Jonathan,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. viii. 15–18. **scribe,** or secretary. **with the king's sons,** as companion and adviser. (33) **Ahithophel,** 2 Sa. xv., xvi., xvii. **king's companion,** comp. 1 Ki. iv. 5. (34) **after Ahith.,** next valued as a counsellor. **Jehoiada,** *etc.*, probably the son of Benaiah. Some of these men are elsewhere spoken of in connection with other offices. Here they probably are placed for honorable mention among the famous and intimate servants of David.

"Let a man choose what condition he will, and let him accumulate around him all the goods an all the gratifications seemingly calculated to make him happy in it; if that man is left at any time without occupation or amusement, and reflects on what he is, the meagre, languid felicity of his present lot will not bear him up. He will turn necessarily to gloomy anticipations of the future; and

Optimism of Chronicles. —David pictured in his struggles, elevation, and grandeur. His wars and conquests, the extension of his kingdom, and the list of his officers. Arrangements sacred and civil, and the use of symbolic numbers illustrate the same tendency. A preference for brilliant scenes. Parts omitted chiefly dark. "Such as would disturb and in some points obscure the lustre of the picture. He collects all that is fitted to represent the hero-king in his greatness, and the activity of his reign as an uninterrupted chain of splendid theocratic events. To finish a picture that presents David in the meridian height of his glory and mighty achievements is the obvious aim of all that our author adds in the way of supplement on the ground of his resources to the life-picture of the great king as given in the Books of Samuel."—*Lange.*

Earth's produce. — David was a man of war, and it is not surprising that these historical books are largely occupied with an enumeration of his armies, catalogues of his mighty men of valor, and records of his military exploits, but it is interesting and instructive to observe that the chronicler does not pass unnoticed matters which give an aspect of peace and prosperity to David's reign. The king was not only a commander and a judge, but also an administrator and an economist. The chronicler, in referring as he does in this place to the accumulation of wealth and to material prosperity generally, indicates that in his judgment a nation's greatness does not consist simply in the number of its warriors or the brilliance of its feats of arms.

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except, therefore, his occupation calls him out of himself, he is inevitably wretched." — *Pascal.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

David assembles the princes of Israel

This chapter and the next contain the last words of David. **1—4.** (1) **assembled,** *etc.*, all the various officials of whom previous account has been given: really the whole court.[a] (2) **stood up,** indicating effort made in the feebleness of old age and disease.[b] **my brethren,** affectionate mode of address, and putting himself on an equality with them. **made ready,** gathering materials.[c] (3) **God said,** 2 Sa. vii. 5, 13; 1 Ki. v. 5; 1 Chr. xxii. 8. (4) **chosen Judah,** Ge. xlix. 8.[d]

David's spirit. — "My brethren and my people." 1. A humble spirit. "My people" whom I rule, with whom I rank myself in this great work. He is their superior, but does not forget the command "that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren." 2. An affectionate spirit. "My brethren" whom I love, not servants whom I command. Affection and condescension to inferiors becoming in monarchs. Not less honored, but more beloved. "Love levels all," said Cervantes. 3. A spirit of authority. "Hear me." The king's circumstances, history, and experience gave weight to his authority. His message solemn, required attention, and must be obeyed, if the nation prospered. "Where the word of a king is there is power." Court and people are bound in faithfulness to their sovereign, and to the interests of their country. Hence, "Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing" (Ecc. viii. 4, 5). — *Hom. Com.*

a 1 Chr. xxvii. 1-31.

b 1 Ki. i. 1.

c Comp. Ps. cxxxii. 8-5.

d 1 Chr. v. 2; Ps. lx. 7; lxxviii. 67, 68.

The beauty of old age. — Old age is a part of the scheme of life, which was designed to be beautiful from beginning to end. It is the close of a symphony, beautiful in its inception, rolling on grandly, and terminating in a climax of sublimity. It is harmonious and admirable, according to the scheme of nature. The charms of infancy, the hopes of the spring of youth, the vigor of manhood, and the serenity and tranquillity, the wisdom and peace of old age; all these together constitute the true human life — with its beginning, middle, and end — a glorious epoch. — *Beecher.*

The best friends are those who stimulate us to that which is good. Heb. x. 24. — *Nicholls.*

and declares Solomon his successor

5—8. (5) **throne . . of the Lord,** a fine expression of the theocratic idea (comp. xxix. 23; xvii. 14). The hill of Zion as the dwelling place of Jehovah was the centre of the theocracy. (6) **my son,** specially to serve me in this matter. (7) **constant,** comp. 1 Ki. iii. 14; ix. 4. (8) **Now,** *etc.*, appeal first to the congregation, then to Sol. in their presence.

Care for future. — David was most solicitous to leave nothing undone that he could do to secure the happiness and well-being of Israel after his death; therefore he convened this great assembly and gave this solemn charge. In the same spirit he adjured them to do the one right thing, in order that, in their turn, they might "leave the good land for an inheritance for their children," *etc.* (*vs.* 8). The spirit of indifference respecting the days that will succeed our own is one which the disciples of Jesus Christ should be ashamed to cherish. It is profoundly unchristian; it is as far as it can be from the spirit of Him who died that, after and through His death, there might be righteousness, joy, life, upon the earth. — *Pul. Com. Inheritance.* — Mark it is only those who possess the good land who shall "leave it for an inheritance." It is your half-Christians, your narrow-souled, crooked, unwise Christians, who leave no spiritual influences behind. Their children get soured by the caricature of religion they see in their parents. When parental restraint is over, there are no deep spiritual principles laid in the soul in early life, and they cast off what they feel has been a yoke. As a rule, most parents have to blame themselves for what they mourn over in their children. — *Whitefield.*

The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made
Stronger by weakness, wiser men become
As they draw near to their eternal home;
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.
—*Waller.*

Happiness of old age. — As ripe fruit is sweeter than green fruit, so is age

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"A youthful age is desirable, but aged youth is troublesome and grievous."—*Philo.*

sweeter than youth, provided the youth were grafted into Christ. As harvest time is a brighter time than seed-time, so is age brighter than youth; that is, if youth were a seed-time for good. As a completion of a work is more glorious than the beginning, so is age more glorious than youth; that is, if the foundation of the work of God were laid in youth. As sailing into port is a happier thing than the voyage, so is age happier than youth; that is, when the voyage from youth is made with Christ at the helm. — *J. Pulsford.*

charges Solomon to build the temple

9—10. (9) **know thou,** that experimental knowledge wh. is only to be gained by loving and serving.[a] "An unusual phrase in the earlier Scriptures." **searcheth,** so the least failure will surely be observed.[b] "The charge to Solomon is very touching and of perpetual interest. 'The God of thy father;' 'a perfect heart and a willing mind;' 'the Lord searcheth the heart,' — these are eternal principles of truth and duty, as potent now as ever. The special point of duty is then urged in the tenth verse." — *Murphy.*

[a] Ps. xxxvi. 10.

Fathers and children (*vss.* 9, 10). — In this earnest and affectionate charge, we see one generation — I. Transmitting the knowledge of God to its successor. II. Enjoining the service of God upon its successor. III. Indicating God's method of dealing to his successor. IV. Bequeathing its unfulfilled intentions to its successor. — *M. Braithwaite. The knowledge and service of God* (*vs.* 9). — Impossible to obtain a complete, but easy to acquire a sufficient knowledge of God. I. In what it consists. II Some practical observations. III. The necessity of serving God. IV. The character of this service. — *F. J. Durand.*

[b] Ps. vii. 9; xvii. 3; cxxxix. 1-3.

The temple. — No exclusive sanctity belonged to it. It and its lineal successors were to lie level with the ground. But its seed was to be as the stars of heaven, or as the sand upon the shore. "Neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem," meant no doom, no curse, no disparagement of the temple. Those words of Jesus spoke the charter of God's church, as a growing, an ever-growing, and a prevailing reality in the world. Literally innumerable have been already the copies after that type. And they have yet to be manifold more. The building itself was emphatically not an ordinary building, nor a mere building. The thought of it in David's heart was not indigenous to that heart, nor was the execution of it to be liable to be dangerously ascribed either to his architecture, or his sons, or to that of the combined professional talent of the nation, or of all nations. No, it is unique. It has virtue in it. It, in the person of its successor, justifies Jesus' admiration, and a share of his tears. It breathes and moves ubiquitously, and has life in it. And it was because it was necessary that it should have these endowments, that though David thought and gave and prepared, and a nation now banded as one man consented and gave and wrought enthusiastically, yet the architect was God the Spirit." — *Pul. Com.*

"How long will the time be in coming when men shall see that an idea is of more value than gold, that knowledge is power, and that wisdom is better than strength." —*J. Parker.*

David gives Solomon the pattern of the temple

11—15. (11) **the pattern,** or plan. This was given to Dav. by the Spirit, *vs.* 12.[c] **porch,** 2 Chr. iii. 4. **houses,** holy place, and holy of holies. 2 Chr. iii. 5, 8. **treasuries,** chambers built round the outer wall. 1 Ki. vi. 5. **upper chambers,** either those over the treasuries, or chambers forming second story over porch, or holy place. **inner parlours,** 2 Chr. xxii. 11. Supposed to be the porch and the holy place, (12) **by the spirit,** reference is undoubtedly to the Divine Spirit as appears by *lit.* rendering "all that was in the Spirit with him." He was taught by the Spirit in this matter as Moses had been taught of God concerning the tabernacle. **courts,** round the building for the assembling of worshippers. **treasuries . . things,** separate buildings in the courts. (13) **courses,** already explained, ch. xxiii.-xxv. (14) **by weight,** fixing what should be the proportionate weights. **instruments,** *R. V.*, "vessels." (15) **lamps,** wh. fitted on the candlesticks.

[c] "The temple was not left to man's art or invention to contrive it, but was framed by Divine institution."—*Matt. Henry.*

Comp. Ex. xxv. 9, 40.

"This expression (*vs.* 12) may, however, only mean what he had in his spirit, *i. e.* floating in his mind."—*Jamieson.*

Gold of Ophir (also 1 Ch. xxix. 4). — Nothing is said during the reign of David of voyages by sea, although Elath and Ezion-geber were under his authority; and in speaking of the offerings which he had prepared for the Lord, he refers to "three thousand talents of the gold of Ophir," which he had amassed. It is probable that his conquest was not sufficiently complete to enable Huram to undertake any commercial enterprise; and the gold of Ophir to which he alludes is, perhaps, a proof of the justness of the opinion which considers the name of Ophir as a general designation of all the countries of the south which furnished gold and precious stones, and of which little was known at that time, save by vague reports that confounded the

"Don't do right unwillingly
And stop to plan and measure;
'Tis working with the heart and soul

whole under one general appellation. — *Laborde. The pattern of the Spirit.*— We sometimes make a great mistake in neglecting to remark the presence and operation of God in the ordinary and secular affairs of life. The Hebrews were in this respect in advance of us; they justly attributed all wise and good works to that Spirit from whom all wisdom and goodness proceed. Thus the workers in the construction of the tabernacle are expressly said to have received from the Spirit of God the knowledge and skill they needed to fulfil their undertaking, and in the passage before us David is represented as having received by inspiration from heaven the plans upon which his son was to erect the temple of Jehovah. —*Pul. Com.*

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That makes our duty pleasure." —*Phebe Cary.*

"How few, like David, have God and gold together." —*G. Villiers.*

16—21. (16) **tables,** *etc.*, ten of these in the temple, all connected with the shewbread.[a] (17) **fleshhooks,** Ex. xxvii. 3; 1 Sa. ii. 13. **bowls,** Ex. xxvii. **cups,** Ex. xxv. 29. (18) **chariot of the cherubims,**[b] "as the bearers of the manifestation of God when He reveals himself to the world in His glory the cher. are here called God's 'chariot!'" (comp. Ps. xviii. 10). They are first mentioned Gen. iii. 24, and belong to a symbolism perhaps older than Mosaic. — *Oehler.* (19) **the Lord made,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "All this, said David, have I been made to understand in writing from the hand of the Lord." (2 Ki. iii. 15). "This indicates an inspiration from the Lord, wh. enabled D. to put in writing the plan of all those things." — *Murphy.* David felt himself under special Divine guidance in forming the plan. (20) **fear not,** comp. Jos. i. 5-9. (21) **skilful man,** ch. xxii. 15.

gold, etc., provided for the temple

a 1 Ki. vii. 48; 2 Chr. iv. 19.

b "The expanded wings of the cherubim formed what was figuratively styled the throne of God, and as they were emblematical of rapid motion, the throne or seat was spoken of as a chariot."— *Jamieson.*

Help of God. — When Tarik the Saracen went to vanquish Spain, he informed his followers that he had been favored by Heaven with a dream which had given him the fullest assurance of success. He had seen the prophet Mohammed surrounded by those holy saints and faithful companions who had adhered to his cause while he was an exile in Medina. They stood close by his couch with their swords unsheathed and their bows bent, and he heard the prophet say, "Take courage, O Tarik, and accomplish what thou art destined to perform." He then saw the prophet and his companions entering Spain, as if to herald the way for the faithful followers of Islam. With a truer vision and more confident assurance may we enter the lists, go on to the struggle, and engage in the warfare of those who are fighting beneath the leadership of the cross. For as surely as day conquers night, the cause of Heaven shall prevail and he shall reign whose right it is to reign. — *G. McMichaels. Personal relations with God.* — "The Lord God, even my God." It is possible for us to have thoughts of God that keep Him wholly external to us, and altogether unrelated to us. And it may be feared that such are the thoughts of God usually cherished by men. Though they may have a certain influence on us, the full and saving power of God cannot be known until we have appropriated Him and come into direct and personal relations with Him. A man finds God a living force upon thought, heart, life, and conduct when he calls Him my God. The work of Christ is, in great part, the bringing about of this relation, and the persuasion of the man to recognize it fully. Man lost says, "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, and *hid myself*." Man redeemed, and standing right with God, says "I flee unto thee to hide me." "For thou art my God." — *Pul. Com.*

Ps. xcix. 1.

"There is much religion in the possessive pronouns." — *Luther.*

"Each man stands before God and lifts up a different humanity to the common Father; and for each God has a different response." — *George Macdonald.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

1—5. (1) **palace,** Heb. *birah*, only found in later Heb., and prob. word of Persian origin.[c] (2) **onyx,** Ge. ii. 12. **glistering stones,** *R. V.*, "stones for inlaid work."[d] 2 Ki. ix. 30. **marble,** or white stones, perhaps alabaster. LXX. and Vulg. have *marble.* (3) **proper good,** or private property. (4) **overlay,** as with plating. (5) **consecrate,** *lit. fill His hand:* "or come with full hands to Jehovah." It is an appeal for voluntary offerings. **his service,** *R. V.*, "himself."

David exhorts Israel to aid in building the temple

c Est. i. 2, 5; ii. 3, 8; Ne. i. 1; ii. 8; vii. 2; Da. viii. 2.

d "Here they seem to signify stones of a dark brilliant color, like the stiblum prepared from it,

A call to early devotedness (*vs.* 5). — I. We shall explain what we regard as the consecration of service to God. 1. There must be correct views of the Divine character and claims; 2. A practical obedience to the will of God; 3. Active exertion to promote the Divine glory. II. We shall present the considerations which ought to urge to an engagement in the service of God. 1. We are placed under universal and imperative obligation to do so; 2. The

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and perhaps used for making cement." — *Wordsworth.*

"There is a quiet repose and steadiness about the happiness of age, if the life has been well spent. Its feebleness is not painful. The nervous system has lost its acuteness. Even in mature years we feel that a burn, a scald, a cut, is more tolerable than it was in the sensitive period of youth." — *Haslitt.*

"To worship rightly is to love each other, each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer."— *Whittier.*

influence His service has in preventing the degradation and promoting the dignity of our nature; 3. The true and solid pleasure His service communicates to the soul; 4. The glorious recompense by which the engagements of His service are consummated. III. We shall impress the question by which, to an engagement in the service of God, you are emphatically challenged. — *J. Parsons.*

Consecration (*vs.* 5). — An affecting incident was related by Rev. Dr. Nevin, to show the spirit of consecration which the church of Christ must have if she would extend her triumphs over the world. Two plain, poor people lived within the bounds of the church of which he was pastor. Their son presented himself and was received as member of the church. He attended Lafayette College, and finished his course in Princeton. He devoted himself to the missionary work in Africa. In fulfilling one of his engagements to preach, the vessel in which he sailed capsized, and he was drowned. In the meantime the father had died, and the sad intelligence came with crushing weight on the heart of that old mother. She submitted, however, cheerfully to the Lord's dealings, with the remark, "My son is nearer to me now, in heaven, than he was in Africa." She was poor, but had always managed, by the sale of her thread and other little articles of her manufacture, to lay by fifty dollars a year for the aid of her son in his good work. When the news came that he needed her aid no longer, she said with tears, "Now my dear son is gone, my fifty dollars shall go to some other servant of Jesus Christ." How long would it take to convert the world, if every Christian had the same spirit of self-consecration as that poor mother?

the people offered willingly

6—9. (6) **willingly,**[a] cheerfully responding to Dav.'s invitation. (7) **drams,** *R. V.*, "darics,"[b] a Persian coin, mentioned elsewhere only in Ezra and Nehemiah; value about $5.40. Heb. *adarconim*, comp. Ezr. viii. 27. (8) **they,** *etc.*, comp. Ex. xxxv. 27. **by the hand,** *R. V.*, "under the hand." **Jehiel,** 1 Chr. xxvi. 21. (9) **rejoiced,** at such readiness of giving, and in anticipation of the splendid temple.

[a] Ex. xxv 2; 2 Cor. ix. 7.

Generosity and joy.—There was true unity between king and subjects. It was a national movement in which they joined, and it was a national emotion which they shared. I. The cause to which they gave. It was their own cause, but in a higher sense it was the Lord's. It was for the glory of Jehovah and for the spread of His worship and obedience that the temple was to be reared; a cause this which justified all their enthusiasm and all their liberality. II. What they gave. They offered of their own substance, and according to their several ability; and their gifts were appropriate, costly and generous. III. How they gave. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver;" and such givers Israel furnished on this occasion in great abundance. They gave willingly, and not simply in conformity to their sovereign's example. They gave with a perfect heart; *i. e.* from disinterested, devout, and pious motives. IV. The consequence of their giving. "They rejoiced." A simple but very expressive account of the feelings of both monarch and subjects. They felt by anticipation the truth of our Lord's saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The selfish and niggardly are ever the miserable; the sympathetic, liberal, and self-denying are ever the happy and lightsome of heart.— *Thomson.*

[b] "The *daric* was a Persian gold coin, common among the Jews while under Persian rule. It usually bore the image of an archer with a tiara, and on the reverse an irregular square. The weight was about 128 grains troy." —*Ayer.*

"Upon such sacrifices the gods themselves throw incense."— *Shakespeare.*

Self-denial (*vs.* 6).— The following incident was recorded some years since in the *New York Observer:*—A clergyman from one of the Western States visited the town of H——, New Hampshire. On the Sabbath he represented to the congregation the wants of a feeble church, in the place where he resided, who were then struggling to build a house of worship. A son of the clergyman of H——, a lad of twelve, and a Sabbath scholar, listened to the account with deep interest. After worship, he applied to his father for a few cents which he wished to contribute to aid the feeble church. But the father, to his regret, was compelled to deny him, as he had just emptied his own purse for some benevolent object. The next day was the fourth of July. There was to be a splendid celebration near, and the boy had received promise of this as a holiday. In the evening, the father sent him a short distance on an errand. On his way he met with a farmer, to whom he offered his services for a moderate compensation. The farmer, being pressed in business, hired him; and the boy labored faithfully all day, sacrificing the pleasures of his anticipated festivity for one shilling, which he joyfully contributed to aid the above-mentioned church.

"It is the comfort of poverty that our affections are valued, not our presents." — *Bp. Hall.*

"We can offer much in the large, but to make sacrifices in little things is what we are seldom equal to."— *Goethe.*

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10—13. (10) **blessed . . congregation,** an example of the priestly character which kingship exhibited in the person of David. But we never find him offering sacrifices with his own hands as the degenerate kings of later days did. (11) **Thine,** *etc.*, these signs of wealth around him, Dav. would not permit to take his heart from God. The glory of all was due unto Him.[a] Lockler in Lange translates "Thine is the greatness, and the power and the beauty, and the lustre, and the majesty," *etc.* This exaltation of the beauty and splendor and glory of God is Davidic, *cf.* Ps. xcvi. 6; xxix. 2. (12) **make great,** man does not do it, or win it, of himself, *cf.* Rev. iv. 11; v. 12; vii. 12, *etc.* (13) **we thank,** speaking not for himself only, but in the name of the people.

David publicly praises God

a Mat. vi. 13; 1 Ti. i. 17; Rev. v. 13.

The Lord the owner of all things (*vs* 11). — I. The evidence we have of this in scripture. II. Inquire what is the ground of the Lord's proprietary in all things. He made all — 1. For Himself; 2. Of nothing; 3. Without help; and 4. Upholds all. III. The nature and quality of this proprietary. He is — 1. The primary; 2. Absolute; 3. Principal; 4. Total; 5. Perpetual; 6. Transcendently; 7. Sole ruler of all things. — *D. Clarkson.*

"Among all the other virtues, humility, the lowest, is pre-eminent. It is the safest, because it is always at anchor; and that man may be truly said to live the most content in his calling that strives to live within the compass of it." — *Richter.*

One example. — "Intoxicated with empire, flushed with uncounted victories, the first Napoleon cynically proclaimed to a trembling Europe: 'I have observed that God is always on the side of the strongest battalions.' Was He so? 'Amid bursts of cheering his Grand Army crossed the Niemen; he won the awful battle of Borodino; he took Smolensko; he dictated a dispatch from the Kremlin at Moscow. Then the soft snows of God — no more — began to fall; and, annihilated by the most insignificant of the powers of heaven, his *Grande Armée* was tossed out of Russia.'" — *Farrar.*

14—19. (14) **who am I,** all impressions of the goodness of God humble the receivers of it in the dust. *Comp.* James i. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 7; 2 Sa. vii. 18; Ps. cxv. 1. (15) **strangers,**[b] Ps. xxxix. 12. **none abiding,** *lit. no hope:* referring to the hope of abiding. Seeing how frail and how transitory our life is it seems strange that God should give us so much. (16) **thine own,** essentially then, and now by us willingly given to thee. (17) **triest the heart,** 1 Sa. xvi. 7; ch. xxviii. 7; He. iv. 12, 13. (18) **keep this,** this spirit of willing giving for the glory of God and God's house. **prepare,** *lit. establish.* (19) **perfect,** in sense of entire sincerity.

David prays for Solomon

b He. xi. 13; 1 Pe. ii. 11.

"In this I see that we, all we that live, are but vain shadows, unsubstantial dreams." — *Sophocles.*

David. — What idea does Chronicles give us of the man and his character? He is first and foremost a man of earnest piety and deep spiritual feeling. Like the great religious leaders of the chronicler's own time, his piety found its chief expression in ritual. The main business of his life was to provide for the sanctuary and its services; that is, for the highest fellowship of God and man, according to the ideas then current. But David is no mere formalist; the psalm of thanksgiving for the return of the ark to Jerusalem is a worthy tribute to the power and faithfulness of Jehovah. His prayer after God had promised to establish his dynasty is instinct with devout confidence and gratitude. But the most gracious and appropriate of these Davidic utterances is his last prayer and thanksgiving for the liberal gifts of the people for the temple. — *Expos. Bible.*

"No good man is jealous of his son, but desires to see his children more famous than himself." — *Theodoret.*

20—25. (20) **blessed,** this was done by bowing down their heads together. **worshipped . . king,** the same attitude expressed their reverence, and the king was in a sense the representative of God. (21) **drink offerings,** Nu. xv. 5, 7, 10. (22) **second time,** for first time see ch. xxiii. 1, compare with 1 Ki. i. 11–53, which records the second anointing. This was a more perfectly representative assembly. **Zadok,** to supersede Abiathar, who had sided with Adonijah, *cf.* 1 Ki. i. 7, 8, 32, 38–45; ii. 26, 27. (23) **Then Sol.,** *etc.*, *i. e.* during a small part of his father's lifetime. (24) **all the sons,** even Adonijah, 1 Ki. i. 53. (25) **magnified,** 1 Ki. iii. 13.[c]

Solomon enthroned king of Israel

c 2 Chr. i. 11, 12; Ec. ii. 9.

Giving. — A little boy became the glad possessor of ten pennies, and proceeded to make division of the same after this manner: "One for God, one for mamma, one for papa, one for baby sister, one for me, and five for God." "Why," said one who was watching, "you have given God His before." "Oh," said the boy, "that belonged to Him; this is a present."

"What has surprised me most in history is to read of so few kings who have abdicated their thrones — not above a dozen or two at the most." — *Sterne.*

26—30. (26) **Thus,** as previously narrated. (27) **time,** more precisely given, 2 Sa. v. 5. (28) **old age,** in his seventy-first year, and was buried in the city of David, 1 Ki. ii. 10. There are two chapters in 1. Kings which concern the later scenes in David's life omitted by Chronicles. (29) **book of,** *R. V.*,

David dies in a good old age

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"history of Samuel," *etc.* A part of the work of the school of the prophets was the writing of *theocratic history*, and this undoubtedly began with Samuel. The work of this school seems to have been the basis of much of the record of our sacred Scriptures. **book of Nathan,** of this and book of Gad we have no relics that can be identified. (30) **went over him,** a singular expression, meaning the affairs with wh. he was concerned; the scenes through wh. he was brought.

Life's changing current (*vss.* 29, 30). — I. Time makes a deep mark upon the body, the least important portion of our complex nature. II. Equally marked is the effect of "the times" as they pass over us, upon our intellectual nature. III. Not less striking or important is the stamp of time upon the history of our sensibilities. IV. The most important change connected with time is the one that refers to our moral and spiritual state. V. Our social and relative condition is subject to the constant mutations of time. — *S. T. Spear.*

"There appears to exist a greater desire to live long than to live well! Measure by man's desires, he cannot live long enough; measure by his good deeds, and he has not lived long enough; measure by his evil deeds, and he has lived too long." — *Zimmerman.*

Life compared to a book. — Man is like a book; his birth is the title-page; his baptism, the epistle dedicatory; his groans and crying, the epistle to the reader; his infancy and childhood, the argument or contents of the whole ensuing treatises; his life and actions are the subject; his sins and errors, the faults escaped; his repentance, the correction. As for the volumes, some are in folio, some in quarto, some in octavo, some much smaller; some are fairer bound, some plainer; some have piety and godliness for their subjects; others (and they too many) are mere romances, pamphlets of wantonness and folly: but in the last page of every one there stands a word, which is *Finis;* and this is the last word in every book. Such is the life of man: some longer, some shorter; some stronger, some weaker; some fairer, some coarser; some holy, some profane. But death comes in, like *finis*, at the last, and closes up all; for that is the end of all. — *Spencer.*

"The true estimate of being is not to be taken from age, but action. A man as he manages himself, may die old at thirty, and a child at fourscore." — *Collier.*

Honored in death by God and man. — This was the case with King David. "He died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor." With the reverent love of a whole nation round him, they bore him to his royal tomb. "David died, according to Josephus, at the age of seventy. The general sentiment which forbade interment within the habitations of men, gave way in his case, as in that of Samuel. He was "buried in the city of David," in the city which he had made his own, and which could only be honored, not polluted, by containing his grave. It was, no doubt, hewn in the rocky side of the hill, and became the centre of the catacomb in which his descendants, the kings of Judah, were interred after him." "The only site which is actually consecrated by traditional sentiment as the tomb of David, is the vault underneath the Mussulman Mosque of David, on the southern side of modern Jerusalem. The vault professes to be built above the cavern, and contains only the cenotaph usual in the tombs of Mussulman saints, with the inscription in Arabic, 'O David, whom God has made vicar, rule mankind in truth.'" Observing how honored in death King David was, and how honored in memory King David is, though his life was so checkered and so seriously marred with wilfulness, indulgence, and sin, we are reminded of the lines often quoted from our greatest national poet —

"Amongst rational beings that life is longest, into which the largest amount of mind, of mental and moral activity, is condensed." — *Coird.*

> "The evil that men do lives after them;
> The good is oft interred with their bones;"

and we ask — Are these lines, in any large and important sense, true; and must we so invert our fixed notions as to admit that the good in our lives is temporary and fading, while the evil is permanent, and must go on, with its mischievous influences, when we have passed away? We cannot think this. — *R. Tuck.*

Men's lives should be like the day, more beautiful in the evening; or, like the summer, aglow with promise, and the autumn, rich with the golden sheaves where good works and deeds have ripened on the field.

THE SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

Introduction.

See general intro. at begin. of 1st bk. "The most remarkable feature in the historical books of Scripture, and especially of I. and II. Chronicles, is their religious, theocratic character. Secular hist. gives the public changes which nations have undergone, with their causes and results. Church hist. traces the progress of sentiment, and of various influences in relation to the church. But here king, church, state, are all represented as under God. The character of each king is decided by his fidelity to the religious obligations of his office. Of each it is said, He walked in the ways of David his father and so prospered; or of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, and so failed. These books are valuable as the history of God, and His law in the nation, and that nation a monarchy; as the books of Joshua and Judges are the history of God and His law in an aristocracy or democracy; or as the earlier books are the history of God and His law in the family. In the Prophets, and in the Acts of the Apostles, we have glimpses of what is to be the history of God and His law in the world. Mark, therefore, the prominence given to the erection of the temple; the numerous references to the ancient law, especially when the two kingdoms were drawing near to their end, as if to account for their decay and approaching fall; the frequent interposition of prophets, now rebuking the people, and now braving the sovereign; the deposition and succession of kings; and the connection everywhere traced between what seem to be mere political incidents and the fidelity or idolatry of the age. The genealogical tables, though to us comparatively uninteresting, were highly important among the Jews, who were made by prophetic promises extremely observant in these particulars. These tables give the sacred line through which the promise was transmitted for nearly 3,500 years; a fact itself unexampled in the history of the human race."—*Angus.*

Synopsis.

For Synopsis to Second Book see General Synopsis at beginning of first Book.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

Solomon's offering on Gibeon

1—6. (1) **strengthened,** better "strengthened himself." The words suggests th. S. threw all his force of moral energy into his work.[a] (2) **captains,** *etc.*, 1 Chr. xxvii. 1 ; xxviii. 1. This was an assembly of all Israel *by their representatives.* **judges,** 1 Chr. xxiii. 4. The office and the person of the judge were held in high honor among the Jewish people from the first, and perhaps, also, with a noteworthy uniformity, even in the more degenerate periods of their history. Their commencement in patriarchal simplicity can be easily imagined, and receives illustration from such passages as Job xxix. 7, 8, 9 ; xxxii. 9. Their more formal development may be considered to date from the crisis related in Ex. xviii. 14–24. — *Pul. Com.* **chief of the fathers,** *R. V.*, "heads of the fathers' houses."[b] (3) **high place,** "the multiplied heights of the country were so many natural altars."[c] **Gibeon,** the tabernacle was removed from Shiloh, in consequence of the inroads of the Philistines, to Nob (1 Sa. xxi. 1); and thence, after the destruction of Nob by Saul (1 Sa. xxii. 9) to Gibeon. This high place was consecrated to the worship of the true God. — *Murphy.* **tabernacle,** Ex. xxvi.[d] (4) **the ark,** 2 Sa. vi. 17. (5) **brasen altar,** Ex. xxvii. 1-8.[e] **he put,** *R. V.*, "was there." Though the ark was at Kirjath-jearim the brazen altar was with the tabernacle at Gibeon, hence this was the right place for sacrifice. (6) **burnt offerings,** wh. required by law to be presented on this brazen altar. The king was also in some measure a priest (*cf.* 2 Sa. vi. 18) ; bu there is no evidence that he ever offered sacrifice with his own hands.

God and the king (*vs.* 1). — I. God is often against the kings of the earth. This is seen in the disasters which He brings on their armies, *etc.*, and may be illustrated by the histories of many kings mentioned in the Bible. II. God is with some kings for the punishment of others. The wicked are the sword of God. III. God was with Solomon for the good of Israel : with him in answer to prayer. IV. God was not with Solomon unconditionally.

The heritage he had from his father. — It was much to him that he was "Solomon, *the son of David.*" He was known to be the favorite son and chosen heir of his illustrious father. All the strong attachment which the people felt for the late (or the dying) sovereign went to establish his son upon the throne. Solomon succeeded to the gathering and deepening affection which his father David had been winning to himself through a long and prosperous reign. All the influence which an honored and beloved leader can convey to his successor was communicated to him. — *Pul. Com.*

Solomon prays for wisdom

7—12. (7) **In that night,** *etc.*, comp. 1 Ki. iii. 5–15 ; fr. this it appears that God communicated with Sol. thro' his dream. (8) **me to reign,** the first case of a son succeeding his father. (9) **thy promise,** this is not mentioned in the parallel passage, 1 Ki. iii. 6 ; *cf.* 1 Chr. xvii. 12–14 ; xxii. 9, 10 ; xxviii. 6, 7. **like the dust,** the numbers of the people brought the sense of responsibility to the young king. (10) **wisdom and knowledge,** comp. 1 Ki. iii. 7–9, where the humility of the prayer is more evident.[f] (11) **long life,** for thyself.[g] "He reigned forty years, but died at the age of sixty, and did not attain the age of his father."— *Farrar.* (12) **give thee riches,** *etc.*, in addition, and as the natural result of such practical wisdom to rule and judge.[h]

The prayer for wisdom. — I. Come and see a youth who at a critical moment is found in prayer. II. Come and see a king's son who prays exclusively for wisdom. III. Come and see a humble one who prays not in vain. IV. Come and see here a favored one, who receives much more than he asks for. V. Come and see an unhappy one who by his own fault has forfeited the blessing of his prayer.— *Van Oosterzee.*

Who are the wise ? —

Who are the wise?
They who have govern'd with a self-control
Each wild and baneful passion of the soul ;
Curb'd the strong impulse of all fierce desires,
But kept alive affection's purer fires ;
They who have pass'd the labyrinth of life,
Without one hour of weakness or of strife ;
Prepared each change of fortune to endure,

a For Sol.'s early difficulties, see 1 Kings i., ii.

b "The Jewish system was still so far patriarchal that the heads of families continued to have a recognized status, if they had no longer any special civil function."— *Spk. Com.*

c "The national worship down to the time of Hezekiah may almost be said to have been a religion of high places."— *Stanley.*

d Comp. 1 Chr. xvi. 39; xxi. 29; 1 Ki. iii, 4.

e Ex. xxxi. 2, 9; xxxviii. 1.

"A weak mind sinks under prosperity as well as under adversity. A strong and deep one has two highest tides — when the moon is at the full and when there is no moon." — *Hare.*

f "The ideal answer of such a prince, burdened with the responsibility of his position. He showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom."— *Stanley.*

g This was only given conditionally. 1 Ki. iii. 14.

h Eccles. ii. 9.

" God delights to hear and answer those prayers that are for His best blessings. When Solomon prayed for wisdom to rule his people, God was so pleased that He gave him wisdom in an emi-

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nent degree, and as an accession, riches and honor." — *Bates.*

Humble though rich, and dignified though poor;
Skill'd in the latent movements of the heart,
Learn'd in the lore which nature can impart,
Teaching that sweet philosophy aloud
Which sees the "silver lining" of the cloud,
Looking for good in all beneath the skies—
These are the truly wise! — *Prince.*

Solomon's riches

13—17. (13) **came,** *i. e.* "from before the tabernacle on the height in Gibeon, Solomon came to Jerusalem," where, according to 1 Ki. iii. 15, he offered fresh burnt-offerings and thank-offerings in gratitude for the answer to his prayer. **over Israel,** the Syriac has "over all Israel," as in 1 Ki. iv. 1. (14) **Solomon,** *etc.*,[a] multiplying horses was forbidden to Israelite kings, *cf.* Deut. xvii. 16; note that the horse was used exclusively for war and not for agriculture. **chariot cities,** depots, or stables, erected at the frontiers of his kingdom, partly for the trade in chariots and horses which he carried on. (15) **cedar trees,** valued for their scent, and bec. their transit made them expensive. (16) **linen yarn,** *R. V.*, "and the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt; the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price." The *A. V.* is certainly wrong, but the Hebrew text is probably imperfect. (17) **kings . . Syria,** *i. e.* Solomon carried on trade between Egypt on the south and Syria and Phœnicia on the north of Palestine.

a Comp. 1 Ki. x. 26–29.

"Without a rich heart wealth is an an ugly beggar." — *Emerson.*

"Many are not able to suffer and endure prosperity; it is like the light of the sun to a weak eye — glorious indeed in itself, but not proportioned to such an instrument."— *Jeremy Taylor.*

Influence of commerce. — Commerce tends to wear off those prejudices which maintain distinction and animosity between nations. It softens and polishes the manners of men; it unites them by one of the strongest of all ties; the desire of supplying their mutual wants. It disposes them to peace by establishing in every state an order of citizens bound by their interest to be the guardians of public tranquillity. As soon as the commercial spirit acquires vigor, and begins to gain an ascendant in any society, we discern a new genius in its policy, its alliances, its wars, and its negotiations. — *Robertson.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

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preparations for building the temple

1—6. (1) **determined,** better commanded.[b] **for the name of the Lord,** *cf.* "hallowed be Thy name," the name stood for God himself and was a revelation of Him. **house for his kingdom,** prob. referring to his own palace,[c] (2) The presence of this verse here may probably mark some error of copyists, as the first two words of it are the proper first two words of *vs.* 17, and the remainder of it shows the proper contents of *vs.* 18, which are not only in other aspects apparently in the right place there, but also by analogy of the parallel (1 Ki. v. 15, 16).—*Pul. Com.* (3) **Huram,** or *Hiram*, seems to be a later form of the word. **As . . father,** 1 Chr. xiv. 1; 2 Sa. v. 11. (4) **burn,** *etc.*, Ex. xxx, 7, 34–36. **continual shewbread,** Ex. xxv. 30; Nu. iv. 7. **new moons,** Nu. xxviii. 11–15. **solemn feasts,** the three great annual feasts. (5) **for great is our God,** *i. e.* the temple is in its grandeur and beauty to represent the Hebrew idea of their God. (6) **But who,** *etc.*, "this pious strain of sentiment well became the king of Israel."

b 1 Ki. v. 5.

c 2 Chr. vii. 11; viii. 1; 1 Ki. vii. 1–12.

"Monarch, thou wishest to cover thyself with glory, be the first to submit to the laws of thy empire." — *Bias.*

"There is a fitness in all things. God will meet us under the plainest roof, if it is all we can supply; He will make it beautiful; but if we say, "Any place will do for God," you may make the appointment, but He will not be there."—*J. Parker.*

"All things being in order; so shall they end, and so shall they begin again; according to the Ordainer of order, and mystical mathematics of the city of heaven." — *Sir. Thomas Browne.*

Temple building. — In opening the business Solomon grounded his request for Tyrian aid on two reasons: 1. The temple he proposed to build must be a solid and permanent building, because the worship was to be continued in perpetuity, and therefore the building materials required to be of the most durable quality. 2. It must be a magnificent structure, because it was to be dedicated to the God who was greater than all gods; and, therefore, as it might seem a presumptuous idea to erect an edifice for a Being "whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain," it was explained that Solomon's object was not to build a house for Him to dwell in, but a temple in which His worshippers might offer sacrifices to His honor. No language could be more humble and appropriate than this. The pious strain of sentiment was such as became a king of Israel. — *Jamieson.*

The temple of Solomon was, according to our notions of size, a small building. It was less than one hundred and twenty feet long, and less than thirty-five feet broad; in other words, it was not so large as one of the ordinary parish churches of our own land: much less did it approach to the size of the colossal buildings in Babylon or Egypt. But in Jewish eyes, at the time that

it was built, it may have been "great," that is to say, it may have exceeded the dimensions of any single separate building existing in Palestine up to the time of its erection. It may even have exceeded the size of the buildings which the neighboring nations had erected to their gods. Ancient worship was mainly in the open air; and temples were viewed as shrines for the Deity and his priests, not as buildings in what worshippers were to congregate. Hence their comparatively small size. — *The Speaker's Com.*

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"Doubtless the example set by rulers insinuated itself into the common herd." — *Claudianus.*

7—10. (7) **a man cunning,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. vii. 13, 14. (8) **algum,** or *almug*, most prob. *sandal-wood* fr. China and the Indian Archipelago.[a] (9) **wonderful great,** *lit.* great and wonderful. (10) **beaten wheat,** *lit. wheat of strokes*, comp. 1 Ki. v. 11. "There is no discrepancy between the statement of the Chronicles of what Solomon promised to give to the people of Hiram, and the statement in Kings of what Hiram asked for the maintenance of his court. The two passages treat of different things." — *Keil.*

the message of Huram

Every man a king. — When the man comes from Tyre he will be as much a king as Solomon; not nominally, but in the cunning of his fingers, in the penetration of his eye, in his knowledge of brass and iron, and purple and crimson and blue, and in his skill to grave things of beauty on facets of hardness. Every man has his own kingship. Every man has something that no other man has. A recognition of this fact, and a proper use of all its suggestions, would create for us a democracy hard to distinguish from a theocracy, for each man would say to his brother, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" and each man would say for himself, "By the grace of God I am what I am." — *People's Bible.*

[a] "Gesenius suggests that this timber was exported fr. Tyre, after having been brought thither from the East." — *Smith's Bib. Dict.*

"Wheat stripped of the husk, boiled, and saturated with butter, forms a frequent meal with the laboring people of the East." — *Jamieson.*

11—16. (11) **in writing,** Sol.'s message had prob. been conveyed by an ambassador. (12) **the Lord God of Israel.** Huram has no scruple about acknowledging the God of Israel as the Self-existent, that made heaven and earth. There was a community of speech between the two sovereigns, and Huram may have accepted the primitive Hebrew term as applicable to the one God. whom he worshipped simply under another title.[b] — *Murphy.* (14) **man of Tyre,**[c] poss. a second husband of the woman. (15) **wheat,** *etc.*, *vs.* 10. (16) **in flotes,** from the sea-shore near Lebanon "huge rafts of the costly timber were floated to Joppa, a hundred miles, and then with infinite toil were dragged about 35 miles up the steep and rocky roads to Jerusalem." — *Farrar.*

Huram's reply

A God-sent king (*vs.* 11) — I. A good king is a great blessing for a people. II. A good king is a Divine gift. III. A good king thus sent is a proof of God's regard for the people. IV. This teaches, by inference, that kings should regard themselves as reigning for the people's good, and not for private ends.

Mutual dependence. — Wondrous is this thought, that no one land is absolutely complete in itself: we still need the sea; we cannot get rid of ships, — "we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in flotes by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem." We are not permitted to enjoy the narrow parochial comfort of doing everything for ourselves. — *Parker.*

[b] "In the Persian inscriptions *Ormazd* is constantly called the 'great God, who gave' (or made) 'heaven and earth.'" — *Spk. Com.*

[c] 1 Ki. vii. 13, 14.

"Even a heathen could trace great blessings to God's love; what heathen those are who do not speak of the Lord's goodness, but talk of 'chance' and 'good luck.'" — *Spurgeon.*

17—18. (17) **strangers,** descendants of the Canaanites who had not been expelled at the invasion. **David,** 1 Chr. xxii. 2. (18) **bearers of burdens,** *cf.* Ju. i. 28, 30; "thus was formed in the Hebrew state a sort of helot-class, bound to compulsory labor and employed on public works." It was slavery, but in a milder form than among any other of the neighboring nations. — *cf. Oehler.* **set . . work,** no work is done in the East without overseers, who, doing nothing themselves, see that other people are diligent. In this case there was one overseer and about forty men.

the census of the strangers

Legend of industry. — Some centuries ago, a man resident in Egypt became a convert to the Christian faith. The spirit of the times favored asceticism: and he, being of a contemplative mind, conceived the unnatural idea that if he could retire from society and spend his time in contemplation he should attain to the perfection of human happiness on earth. Filled with this thought he bade adieu to the abodes of men, wandered far into the desert, selected a cave near which flowed a spring, for his home, and, subsisting on the scanty crops of roots and herbs which sprang up spontaneously in the adjacent glens and valleys, began his life of meditation and prayer. He had

The manufacture of silk was established in Spitalfields by emigrants from France, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

"The administration of government, like a guardianship, ought to be directed to the good of those who confer, and not to those who receive the trust." — *Cicero.*

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not spent many seasons in his hermitage before his heart grew miserable beyond endurance. The long and weary hours of the day, and the dreary, interminable nights, oppressed and crushed his listless soul. In the extremity of his wretchedness, he fell upon his face, and cried, "Father, call home Thy child! Let me die! I am weary of life." Thus stricken with grief, he fell asleep; and in his vision an angel stood before him, and spake, saying, "Cut down the palm tree that grows by yon spring, and of its fibres construct a rope." The vision passed away; and the hermit awoke with a resolution to fulfil his mission. But he had no axe, and therefore journeyed far to procure one. On his return he felled the tree, and diligently labored till its fibres lay at his feet, formed into a coil of rope. Again the angel stood before him, and said, "Dominic, you are now no longer weary of life, but you are happy. Know, then, that man was made for labor, and that prayer also is his duty. Both are essential to his happiness. Go, therefore, into the world, with the rope girded upon thy loins. Let it be a memorial to thee of what God expects from man." — *Wise.*

"If you ask me which is the real hereditary sin of human nature, do you imagine I shall answer, pride, or luxury, or ambition, or egotism? No; I shall say indolence. Who conquers indolence will conquer all the rest. Indeed, all good principles must stagnate without mental activity." — *Zimmerman.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

the building of the temple

1—5. (1) **mount Moriah,** this is probably not the place mentioned in Gen. xxii. 2. Stanley (Sinai and Palestine) translates "in the mount of the appearance of the Lord where He appeared unto David his father." **had prepared,** *R. V.*, "which he made ready in the place that David had appointed." 1 Chr. xvii. 1–5. **Ornan,** called also *Araunah.*[a] (2) **second,** word *day* is not in the original, and prob. the word *second* should be omitted.[b] (3) **instructed,** *R. V.*, "Now these are the foundations which Solomon laid for the building," *etc.* **first measure,** according the ancient Mosaic standard.[c] The proportions of the tabernacle were followed but the dimensions doubled. (4) **height,**[d] *etc.* "This is a textual error and a height of thirty cubits is now generally accepted." — *Oehler.* (5) **greater house,** the holy place.[e] **set thereon,** *R. V.*, "wrought thereon." *Cf.* Jno. xii. 13 and Re. vii. 9. The palm was a symbol of joy and victory, and the "chains" were probably garlands of flowers to represent beauty.

a 2 Sa. xxiv. 18; 1 Chr. xxi. 18.

b It is omitted in the Sept., Syr., Arab. and Vulg. versions.

c The Jews carried the Babylonian measures back with them on returning to their own land.

d Spk. Com. proposes to read 20 for 120: *Wordsworth* thinks the height as given here should be retained.

e Comp. 1 Ki. vi. 15-18.

The hour of beginning. — It may well be one of: 1. Joyful eagerness; for there is something very inspiring in the act of commencing a truly noble work — it exhilarates and animates the soul. It should also be one of; 2. Special prayerfulness; for then we urgently need the guiding and guarding hand of our God to be upon us. 3. Steadfast purpose; for there will be unanticipated difficulties and disheartening delays, possibly much temporary disappointment and partial failure, and a strong, resolute purpose will be needed to carry us through to the end. 4. Unselfish devotedness. We must ever keep in mind that the "house" we are erecting, of whatever kind it be, is the house "of the Lord." If we fail to realize that it is for Christ that we are working, our labor will lose its excellency, its inspiration, and its reward. — *Clarkson.*

"They who are not made saints in a state of grace shall never be saints in glory. The stones which are appointed for that glorious temple above are hewn and polished and prepared for it here, as the stones were wrought and prepared in the mountains for the building of the temple at Jerusalem." — *Leighton.*

The poetry of art. — It is a shallow criticism that would define poetry as confined to literary productions in rhyme and metre. The written poem is only poetry *talking*, and the statue, the picture, and the musical composition, are poetry *acting*. Milton and Goethe, at their desks, were not more truly poets than Phidias with his chisel, Raphael at his easel, or deaf Beethoven bending over his piano, inventing and producing strains which he himself could never hope to hear. The love of the ideal, the clinging to and striving after first principles of beauty, is ever the characteristic of the poet, and whether he speak his truth to the world through the medium of the pen, the perfect statue, or the lofty strain, he is still the sharer in the same high nature. Next to blind Milton describing Paradise, that same Beethoven composing symphonies and oratorios is one of the finest things we know. Milton saw not, and Beethoven heard not; but the sense of beauty was upon them, and they fain must speak. Arts may be learned by application — proportions and attitudes may be studied and repeated — mathematical principles may be, and have been, comprehended and adopted; but yet there has not been hewn from the marble a second Apollo, and no measuring by compasses will ever give the secret of its power. The ideal dwelt in the sculptor's mind and his hands fashioned a statue which yet teaches it to the world. — *Ruskin.*

"It is better to have nothing to do, than to be doing nothing." — *Attilus.*

the ornaments of the temple

6—10. (6) **precious stones,** either *marbles,*[f] or *gems.*[g] **Parvaim,** not certainly identified: prob. a district of Arabia. (7) **posts,** *R. V.*, thresholds.

f Vulgate.

g Bertheau. See 1 Chr. xxix. 2.

with gold, *i. e.* gold plating. 1 Ki. vi. 29, 30. (8) **most holy house,** also called *the oracle:* a dark inner chamber.[a] *Cf.* dimensions with Re. xxi. 16. **six hundred talents,** comp. 1 Ki. x. 14. Equal perhaps to 15 million dollars, a gold talent amounting to $26,000. — *Schaff-Herzog.* (9) **nails,** wh. fastened the gold plating. **upper chambers,**[b] probably over the holy of holies, which was only 20 cubits high, or perhaps the holy place was only 20 cubits high and these were over it, making the 30 cubits of 1 Ki. vi. 2.— *Oehler.* (10) **two cherubims,** large figures standing on each side of the ark.[c] **image work,** *tsaatuim,* a word only found here. Prob. of Arabic origin, and meaning *carved work.* — *Gesenius.*

The surpassing beauty of the temple (*vs.* 6). — Observe — I. That God did not need this lavish expenditure of gold and gems and rich ornament. They were all perishable things. II. Yet Divine condescension accepted this offering of human gratitude. III. The beauty and costliness of the temple not without their uses. The temple so adorned served to impress the mind of surrounding nations with the feelings of the people of Israel toward their great God. IV. The adornment of the temple a rebuke of the utilitarian views of those who are advocates of a Judas-like economy, and who regard as waste all that is given to God beyond the bare necessities of the case.

The temple. — Of all monuments of the internal administration of Solomon none is to be compared in itself or in its effect on the future character of the people with the building of the temple. It was far more than a mere architectural display. It supplied the framework of the history of the kingdom of Judah. There is hardly any reign which is not in some way connected with its construction or its changes.—*Stanley.*

11—17. (11) **wings,** *etc.,* 1 Ki. vi. 24–27. (12) **reaching to the wall,** so the the wings stretched across from wall to wall, and met over the ark. (13) **inward,**[d] *R. V., towards the house:* (14) **the vail,** separating the holy of holies fr. holy place.[e] From 1 Ki. vi. 31 it appears that between the holy and the most holy place there was a partition wall, in which was a folding door. Over this was stretched the vail.—*Murphy.* (15) **before the house,** either standing separate, or supporting the porch: prob. the former. The heights given differ fr. those in 1 Ki. vii. 15.[f] (16) **chains,** *R. V.,* "chains in the oracle," chaplets or festoons. **pomegranates,** 1 Ki. vii. 15–20. (17) **Jachin,** he who establishes. **Boaz,** in Him is strength. "The meaning of the pillars evidently is that God has here established His temple on a firm foundation, and it is to be no longer a traveling sanctuary."[g]

The mission of art.— You need not go to old Rome and Athens to find the beautiful. When democratic beauty once is opened up, you will have an idea of beauty that will turn to shame aristocratic, monarchic, and monocratic beauty. A true, Christian, democratic beauty has more elements, more complexity, and more power, and when it has been developed, it will be more glorious, than any that has ever existed. Why, in the palmy days of Athens, when her magnificent temples were in their glory, when her statues were abundant — that are the admiration and despair of the world — and when her walls were painted so that Nature found itself reflected more beautiful in art than in herself, what was the condition of her streets? They were so filthy that people could not walk in them! The common people lived in huts that were no better than our pigsties! No man except the king and the priest was rich enough in those days to have a picture in his house. Art belonged to the king — that is, the government, and to the priest — that is, the church. It was the privilege of these two sections of society. The great mass of men knew nothing of it. It was to them something like the stars that they might worship, but that did not belong to them. We go back to the time when Rome was in her glory, and look with envy upon the development of art then. But what was then the condition of art? It had been widened, it had been purified, and it had grander ideas and conceptions; but, so far as mankind were concerned, it was in the hands of the rich and of the ecclesiastical orders mainly. It did a great deal of good, and its usefulness was felt in a broad sphere; but that was not its broadest sphere. Still traveling downward, art is on a mission for the great common people. It is to educate them. It is to elevate them. It is to refine them. It is to do its work now, no longer for the palace, no longer for the temple, but for that which has something of both the palace and the temple in it — for the family. Art is aiming at the household; and when it shall have done its work there, it will be with such

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a 1 Ki. vi. 20.

b "Three suggestions have been made: — 1. They were chambers built over the holy of holies. 2. They were built as the second story of the porch. 3 The upper range of the sets of side chambers is referred to."

c 1 Ki. vi. 23-28.

"A statesman, we are told, should follow public opinion. Doubtless, as a coachman follows his horses having hold on the reins and guiding them."—*Hare.*

the cherubim and the pillars

d Comp. Ex. xxxvii. 9

e Comp. vail of tabernacle, Ex. xxvi. 31.

f "Poss. a corruption of the number in the present passage in consequence of the resemblance bet. the Heb. signs for 18 and 35." — *Spk. Com.*

g "Poss. these are proper names, and may belong to supposed younger sons of Solomon." —*Ewald.*

"One of the most important, but one of the most difficult things to a powerful mind, is to be its own master; a pond may lie quiet in a plain, but a lake wants mountains to compass and hold it." —*Addison.*

There is in all men a provoking love of quiet comfort; they are like dogs, who will let themselves be fondled for ever so long before they get up. Once moved, however, it is just as difficult to keep quiet.

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resplendent and wondrous fruits as shall make all the past as nothing in the comparison. We are just on the eve of this great development. The wealth of the world is increasing, so that men are beginning to be able to make their houses richer than Grecian temples used to be. — *Beecher.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

the altar, molten sea, etc.

1—8. (1) **made,** it is uncertain whether this was wholly new, or the brazen altar from the tabernacle enlarged or recast.[a] **ten cubits the height,** wh. necessitated either steps or an inclined plane. (3) **oxen,** (twice in this *vs.*) the true reading appears to be knobs, colocynths, or flower-buds, as in 1 Ki. vii. 24. The word *oxen* seems to have come in by mistake from the next verse. — *Murphy.* (5) **with flowers of lilies,** shaped like the flower of a lily. **bath,** 4½ gals. each. **three thousand,** should be two thousand as in Kings. — *Murphy.* (6) **lavers,** for washing utensils; the sea being for the bathing of the priests. (7) **according . . form,** *R. V.*, "according to the ordinance concerning them." Ex. xxv. 31. (8) **ten tables,** instead of the one in the tabernacle. Prob. in temple shewbread was placed only on one.

The coming kingdom. — I do not see the cathedral as yet, when I go into the confused quarry-yard and see there the half-wrought stones, the clumsy blocks, that are by and by to be decorated capitals. But when at last they are finished in form and brought together, the mighty building rises in the air, an ever-enduring psalm in rock. I do not see the picture yet, when I look upon the palette with its blotches and stains and lumps of color. By and by, when the skilful brush of the painter has distributed those colors, I see the radiant beauty of the Madonna, the pathos of the Magdalene; I see the beauty of the landscape spread out upon the canvas, with meadow, and hill, and winding stream, and the splendors of the sunset crowning the whole. I do not see yet the perfect kingdom of God upon earth, but I see the colors which are to blend in it. I see the already half-chiseled rock out of which it shall be wrought; and I am not going to despond now, when so much already has been accomplished. — *R. S. Storrs.*

a "The thickness of the metal used for this altar is nowhere given; but supposing it to have been 3 inches, the whole weight of the metal would not be under 200 tons." — *Napier.*

"Which is the best government? That which teaches self-government." —*Goethe.*

the courts, utensils, etc.

9—18. (9) **court,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. vi. 36. **great court,** for the congregation. (10) *R. V.*, "He set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, toward the south." **sea,** the great brazen sea. (11) **pots,** *etc.*,[b] various articles necessary for the sacrifices. (12) **pommels,** *R. V.*, "bowls" and "net-work," in each case where *A. V.* has "pommels," and "wreaths." **chapiters,** the upper part, or capital of a column. (13) **pomegranates,** "palms, lilies and pomegranates are chosen for decorations as the most beautiful of the natural productions of Palestine," — *Oehler.* 1 Ki. vii. 20. (14) **bases,** ornamental stands for the lavers. (15) **sea,** *vs.* 2. *Twelve,* being always in worship the mark of the covenant people. (16) **instruments,** *R. V.*, "vessels." **his father,** *i. e.* his master-workman, or chief designer. (17) **Succoth,** Ge. xxxiii. 17. **Zeredathah,**[c] 1 Ki. xi. 26. (18) **found out,** so freely used that they ceased to take the weights of it.

Abundance (*vs.* 18). — It is not right that we should do our work in Christ's vineyard in a spirit of perfunctoriness, as the workman who will do no more than is imperatively demanded of him. Ours is not a slavery; nor are we hirelings. We are the children of God; we are the friends of Jesus Christ; we are co-workers with Him; His interests are ours also; we long intensely for the coming of His kingdom. We shall not do stintingly or grudgingly what we do for Him. We shall not count the hours, or the days, or the weeks we spend in His service; we shall not measure the powers we employ for His glory. We shall gladly pour forth all our faculties, shall give in "great abundance" of our resources, that His name may be extolled, and that He may be made "very high." — *Pul. Com. Finished.* — "Hiram finished the work that he was to make" (*vs.* 11). "The end crowns the work." Well is it for the Christian workman when, having endured all criticisms, having borne all rebuffs, having met and mastered all difficulties, having submitted to all disappointments, having cheerfully wrought all his labors and having struck his last stroke, he can say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." For him is a generous commendation and a large reward (Matt. xxv. 23). — *Clarkson.*

b "Cooking utensils of various sizes and depths, with their covers, are always made of whitened copper. This mineral is obtained in large quantities, and of the best quality, fr. the mines in Armenia, in the neighborhood of the Euphrates, wh. are worked exclusively by Greeks, and seem to be inexhaustible, though they have doubtless yielded their treasures to man fr. time immemorial." — *Van Lennep.*

c Comp. Jos. iii. 16; Ju. vii. 22; 1 Ki. iv. 12; vii. 46.

"The idle, who are neither wise for this world nor the next, are emphatically fools at large." — *Abp. Tillotson.*

19—22. (19) **vessels,** articles of furniture. (20) **after the manner,**[a] *R. V.*, "according to the ordinance." Comp. *vs.* 7. (21) **flowers,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. vii. 49 (22) **entry,** "appears to be the doorframe, while the doors are the door leaves. These were overlaid with gold." — *Murphy. See* 1 Ki. vii. 50.

Art and tobacco. — It is not possible for a laboring man to buy an oil painting, but it is possible for him to buy a chromo-lithograph; it is possible for him to buy a lithographic print; it is possible for him to buy engravings. The mode of multiplying copies of fine pictures is becoming so facile and admirable, that it is in the power of a man for a few dollars, to have copies of the master thoughts and works of ages. What would in my boyhood have cost a small fortune, can now be had easily, if a man will substitute pictures for tobacco. If a man, instead of tanning his mouth and smoking his head, would lay out for pictures what he expends for tobacco, it would make all the difference in his dwelling between walls handsomely decorated and pleasant, and walls without decoration, bald and cold. Not that I would infringe upon your liberty of using tobacco. That is a precious liberty which I do not touch. I give you no advice. I merely say that the annual cost of tobacco would more than furnish, every year, a room in your house for your children. If you see more pictures, evanescent, in the indulgence of tobacco, and have more pleasure in them than you would in works of art — that is your liberty. Your children, perhaps, may have a right to say something; your companion, perhaps, may; but I say nothing. — *Beecher.*

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the golden vessels, etc.

[a] Ex. xxvii. 20, 21; Le. xxiv. 2, 3.

"Rather do what is nothing to the purpose than be idle, that the devil may find thee doing. The bird that sits is easily shot, when fliers escape the fowler. Idleness is the dead sea that swallows all the virtues, and the self-made sepulchre of a living man." — *Quarles.* "To me more dear, congenial to my heart, one native charm, than all the gloss of art." — *Goldsmith.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1—5. (1) **finished,** the building began in the fourth year of Solomon (1 Ki. vi. 1.), was finished in seven years, and fitted up and furnished in thirteen years more (1 Ki. ix. 1, 2). — *Murphy.* **dedicated.**[b] **the treasures,** *R. V.*, "in the treasuries," the side store-chambers. (2) **Sol. assembled,** 1 Ki. viii. 1. The account in Kings has led some commentators to suppose that this was delayed till all his buildings were finished, in the 24th year of his reign. But "it is the more natural conclusion that the temple was dedicated as soon as finished." — *Farrar.* **chief of the fathers,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "the princes of the father's houses of the children," *etc.* (3) **the feast,** of tabernacles, which was the closing festival of the sacred year. (4) **Levites . . ark,** it was the office of the Levites, and in particular of the Kohathites (Nu. iv. 15), to bear the ark. (5) **tabernacle . . congregation,** *R. V., tent of meeting,* appears to mean the tabernacle at Gibeon, which was consecrated to the Lord, and was properly called by this name. We are not informed what was done with the tent of David (2 Sa. vi. 17). — *Murphy.*

dedicated treasures, the ark, etc.

[b] 1 Chr. xviii. 11.

"Idleness is the badge of gentry, the bane of body and mind, the nurse of naughtiness, the step-mother of discipline, the chief author of all mischief, one of the seven deadly sins, the cushion upon which the devil chiefly reposes, and a great cause, not only of melancholy, but of many other diseases." — *Burton.*

A royal executor (*vs.* 1). — I. An interesting historical incident. It was considered worthy of note by the inspired penman — 1. That David before he died dedicated certain things to God; 2. That Solomon carried out the desires of his father. II. An example worthy of imitation. 1. What more commendable than such conduct in a son; 2. How frequently are the wishes of pious relatives evaded by their worldly-minded heirs; 3. The known wish of the deceased should be as binding as a duly attested will.

"In every rank, or great or small, 'tis industry supports us all." — *Gay.*

Finished. — There are some buildings that are never finished. We never finish our life building; the life temple goes up evermore. Let every man take heed how he buildeth. Do not suppose that you finish your education. In the higher education you only finish that you may begin; you close one book as a pledge of your qualification to open another. There is always a higher aspect of things to apprehend and apply. — *Parker.*

6—10. (6) **not be told,**[c] 1 Ki. viii. 5; these provided materials for the great national feast, as well as for sacrifices. (7) **under the wings,** those which met in the middle of the room. "The ark passed into the darkness of the oracle and was seen no more till it was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar four centuries afterwards."—*Farrar.* (8) **covered,** or shaded. (9) **drew out,** *R. V.*, "And the staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle." **from the ark,** should be "from the holy place."[d] (10) **nothing,** 1 Ki. viii. 9. Hence we learn that the two tables of the law, which Moses placed in the ark (De. x. 5), were in existence in the time of Solomon. They were now nearly 490 years old. Aaron's rod and the pot of manna and the golden censer had been "lost it may be in the Philistine captivity." — *Stanley.*

the ark

[c] "According to an Arabian historian, the Caliph Moktader sacrificed during his pilgrimage to Mecca, in the year of the Hegira 350, 40,000 camels and cows and 50,000 sheep." — *Spk. Com.*

[d] 1 Ki. viii. 8.

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Things that remain (*vs.* 9). — Among the things that remain unto this day are — I. Sin, and its consequences in the physical and mental and moral world. II. Redemption, and its possible application by the energy of the Holy Ghost. III. Heaven, and all its unimagined glories, as the inheritance of the saints. IV. Hell, and all its woes, as the lot of the finally impenitent. V. The judgment, as the test of character, and final decision of a righteous God.

"*Nothing, save.*" — Another thing that Solomon finished was the furnishing of the ark — "there was nothing in the ark save" — and after that word comes the only thing that could really fill the ark; that is to say, there was nothing in the little chest but everything — "save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt" (*vs.* 10). "There was nothing save" — that is to say, there was nothing except, and behold the exception is as God himself, for power, righteousness, grace, mercy; for the lid of the chest was the propitiation, the mercy seat, the symbol of the eternal pity. Why not learn this lesson in the development of life? — *J. Parker.*

"It is among the evils, and perhaps not the smallest of democratical governments, that the people must feel before they will see. When this happens they are roused to action. Hence it is that those kinds of government are so slow." — *Washington.*

Late comers to worship. — A gross abuse of religious decorum sometimes needs harsh medicine as a remedy. We give that adopted by Henry Clay Dean, who was at one time chaplain of Congress. The anecdote is from the *Pacific Methodist:* "Being worried one afternoon by this turning practice in his congregation, Mr. Dean stopped in his sermon, and said, 'Now, you listen to me, and I'll tell you who the people are as each one of them comes in.' He then went on with his discourse, until a gentleman entered, when he bawled out like an usher, 'Deacon A——, who keeps the shop over the way,' and then went on with his sermon. Presently another man passed up the aisle, and his name, residence, and occupation were given: so he continued for some time. At length some one entered the door who was unknown to Mr. Dean, when he cried out, 'A little old man, with drab coat and an old white hat; don't know him — look for yourselves.' That congregation was cured."

"Arouse thee, youth! — it is no human call — God's Church is leaguer'd — haste to man the wall; haste where the red-cross banners wave on high — signal of honored death or victory!" — *James Duff.*

the singers and musicians

11—14. (11) **by course,**[a] "It is an ecclesiastical mind is speaking, one deeply impressed with holy things and wishing to impress his readers with the vital importance of maintaining in full vigor the religious ordinances inherited from their fathers." — *Bp. Horsey.* (12) **singers,** 1 Chr. xxv. 1-6. In like manner all the twenty-four choirs were combined into one grand choir. **white linen,** the symbol of purity. **cymbals,** regulating the time. **psalteries and harps,** accompanying the song of praise (1 Chr. xv.). The trumpets belonged to the priests (Nu. x. 8), and the sounding of them usually constituted a distinct part of the ceremony.[b] — *Murphy.* (13) **good,** Ps. cxxxvi.; this was shouted when notice came that the ark had found rest. **cloud,** the well-known symbol of the Div. presence: the sign of His taking up His abode in the temple.[c] (14) **stand to minister,** before the blaze of the glory of God they prostrated themselves.

[a] 1 Chr. xxiii. 6, 23.

[b] "The manner of blowing the trumpets was, first, by a long, plain blast, then by one with breakings and quaverings, and then by a long, plain blast again." — *Jamieson.*

The use of church music (*vss.* 13, 14). — Every duty which we owe to God is excellent in its season. The duty of praise seems to claim a just preference before all others, because in all others we receive from God; whereas in this we give to God. Consider—I. The manner in which they praised God. II. The subject matter of their praise. III. The token which God gave them of His approbation. — *C. Simeon.*

[c] 1 Ki. viii. 10, 11.

"Nothing promoted the Reformation more, than inviting the common people to sing psalms, and that sometimes there would be six thousand persons at St. Paul's Cross singing together, which was very grievous to the Papists." — *Bp. Jewel.*

Praise to God. — "Plutarch tells us," says Flavel, "that when Titus Flaminius had freed the poor Grecians from the bondage with which they had been long ground by their oppressors, and the herald was to proclaim in their audience the articles of peace he had concluded for them, they so pressed upon him (not half of them being able to hear) that he was in great danger to have lost his life in the press; at last, reading them a second time, when they came to understand distinctly how their case stood, they shouted for joy, crying, "A Saviour! A Saviour!" so that they made the very heavens ring again with their acclamations, and the very birds fell down astonished. And all that night the poor Grecians, with instruments of music and songs of praise, danced and sung about his tent, extolling him as a god that had delivered them. But surely you have more reason to be exalting the author of your salvation, who, at a dearer rate, had freed you from a more dreadful bondage. O ye that have escaped the eternal wrath of God, by the humiliation of the Son of God, extol your great Redeemer, and forever celebrate His praises." — *Whitecross.* *The glory.* — Not until the glory fills the Christian

"Those who love music are gentle and honest in their tempers. I always loved music, and would not, for a

church, the human heart, and the plans of life, will they become fit for God. Let this be a lesson to all church builders. Your painted windows, and gilded columns, and majestic roofs are nothing until the living Spirit comes into the sanctuary, fills it with an illuminating presence. The house is built for God, and until God comes it is but a structure of calculated matter; when he comes every stone glows and every corner of the house becomes a sacred refuge, and the whole temple becomes as it were a part of heaven.—*Parker.*

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great matter, be without the little skill which I possess in the art."—*Luther.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

Solomon blesses the people

1—6. (1) **Then said Sol.,** 1 Ki. viii. 12-15.[a] **thick darkness,** this applies to the cloud, and to the darkness of the chamber called the holy of holies, to wh. the cloud symbol had come. (Le. xvi. 2; Ex. xix. 9; xxiv. 16; xxv. 22; xl. 34, 35). This thing which He said, and did, even while instructing a special people, is essentially what He ever has said and is doing in all time, in all the world, and in all nature and providence. It is a fact and it is necessary that His glory be for the present veiled in "clouds of darkness" (Ps. xcvii. 2; xviii. 11).—*Pul. Com.* (2) **of habitation,** in which God might abide. But comp. *vs.* 18. The presence of God is in the whole universe. This is only a special place of revelation. (3) **turned his face,** fr. looking towards the temple. (4) **with his hands,** all who had a part in this building were but "hands" of God, 2 Sa. vii. (6) **have chosen,** now at last.

[a] "It was at this moment that Sol. himself first took his part in the dedication. Up to this point he had been seated on the brazen scaffold, his eyes fixed on the temple. But now that he heard the announcement that the sign of Div. favor had been perceived, he rose from his place, and broke into a song, or psalm, of which two versions are preserved."—*Stanley.*

The habit of public worship.—The question is often asked how shall we get our working classes to attend public worship. The answer may be supplied by an incident of my boyhood. On the mantelshelf of my grandmother's best parlor, among other marvels, was an apple in a phial. It quite filled up the body of the bottle, and my wondering inquiry was, "How could it have been got into its place?" By stealth I climbed a chair to see if the bottom would unscrew, or if there had been a join in the glass throughout the length of the phial. I was satisfied by careful observation that neither of these theories could be supported, and the apple remained to me an enigma and a mystery. But walking in the garden I saw a phial placed on a tree bearing within it a tiny apple, which was growing within the crystal. Now I saw it all; the apple was put into the bottle while it was little, and it grew there. Just so must we catch the little men and women who swarm our streets—we call them boys and girls—and introduce them within the influence of the church, for, alas! it is hard indeed to reach them when they have ripened in carelessness and sin.—*Spurgeon.*

That work which is begun well is half-done;
And without prayer no work is well begun."—*Fanshawe.*

The law reveals sin, but it cannot subdue it.

Solomon rehearses his purpose

7—11. (7) **in the heart,** 2 Sa. vii. 2; 1 Chr. xxviii. 2, (8) **didst well,** even good purposes are commended of God. (9) **thou shalt not,** bec. his reign had been so full of wars. (10) **performed his word,** Solomon gives the credit of his work to God first, tho. he had been the agent. The moment was a proud moment in Solomon's history; as well there may be proud moments in men's lives, but it was divinely shielded, as divinely inspired.—*Pul. Com.* (11) **have I put,** the priests had done it for him.

"The will without the deed is better than the deed without the will. A person who is charitably disposed, for instance, but who lacks pecuniary ability, may confer a greater benefit by means of sincere prayer and good wishes than he could possibly do by merely giving him money; and thus the means of being charitable can never be said, in the strict sense of the word, to be wanting."—*Lee.*

Answer to prayer.—In a biographical sketch of Miss Fletcher, an earnest Christian worker, the following incident is told. One Sabbath, at forenoon service, Miss Fletcher's eyes and heart were irresistibly drawn towards an old woman who was evidently pinched with care, and bowed under some load of anxiety. She felt that she ought to give that old woman some money and mentally resolved to do so if the opportunity presented itself at the evening service. Arrived at home, she found that her pocket-money consisted of one napoleon, and though loth to part with the whole of it, she felt she could neither break it nor leave it behind, but must take it with her to church. This she did, half hoping the old woman would not be among the worshippers. But there she was, with the mute and unconscious, but irresistible appeal as plainly written on her face as ever. On coming out of church Miss Fletcher somehow found herself beside her, and slipped the gold piece into the astonished old woman's hand, and ran off without waiting for thanks. It afterwards transpired that the poor woman at that very time was in the greatest destitution, and had been rolling her case on the Lord, and had left it with Him in confidence, and this was His answer.—*Anec. Illus. of O. T. Wishing and willing.*—To wish and to will are very different things. There are a thousand men who wish, where there is one man that wills. Wishing is but

"Give thy heart's best treasure. From fair nature learn; give thy

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love — and ask not, wait not, a return! And the more thou spendest from thy little store, with a double bounty God will give thee more."

a faint state of desire. Willing is a state of the reason, and of the affections, and of the will, in activity, to secure what one desires. A man may wish, and yet reject all the steps and instruments by which that wish can be carried into effect. No man wills until he has made up his mind not only to have the end, but to have all the steps intermediately by which that end is to be secured. To will a thing is to will the instruments of it. Wishing and willing are so diverse, that it would seem as though they were hardly related; but they are. It is true that the will is generated sometimes from wishing; but it is as seeds become plants, by a total change. Wishing, in its commoner form, is merely a passive state. It is susceptible of impressions. It is the faint recognition of excellence, but without a purpose or a power of doing, or being, or securing that which is liked.— *Beecher.*

Solomon's prayer at the dedication

12—16. (12) **stood . . altar,** eastward of it, with his face to the temple as the spokesman of the people. (13) On a platform about five feet high, he would be visible to the people. His posture in prayer is plainly described.[a] (14) This is the longest prayer in Scripture. **no god like thee,** Ex. xv. 11. (15) **hast kept,** *vs.* 10.[b] (16) The first petition, that God will perpetuate the house of David, as He had promised. 2 Sa. vii. **yet so that,** *R. V.*, "if only."

God and His people (*vs.* 14, 15).— In this address Solomon declares the — I. Unexceptional character of God. There is no God like Him. II. In what that unexceptional character of God consists: in keeping covenant and mercy. III. Who those are to whom that character is manifested: those who walk before God with all their hearts. IV. The evidence that God has graciously given of this exceptional relation; His conduct in the past to David, and the fulfilment of His word to his house.

Greatness of God.— If philosophy is to be believed, our world is but an outlying corner of creation; bearing, perhaps, as small a proportion to the great universe as a single grain bears to all the sands of the seashore, or one small quivering leaf to the foliage of a boundless forest. Yet, even within this earth's narrow limits, how vast the work of Providence! How soon is the mind lost in contemplating it! How great that Being whose hand paints every flower, and shapes every leaf; who forms every bud on every tree, and every infant in the darkness of the womb; who feeds each crawling worm with a parent's care, and watches like a mother over the insect that sleeps away the night in the bosom of a flower; who throws open the golden gates of day, and draws around a sleeping world the dusky curtains of the night; who measures out the drops of every shower, the whirling snowflakes, and the sands of man's eventful life; who determines alike the fall of a sparrow and the fate of a kingdom, and so overrules the tide of human fortunes, that, whatever befall him, come joy or sorrow, the believer says, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good!" — *Guthrie.*

17—20. The second petition. To have respect unto the house in which He had now put His name. (17) **thy word** (1 Chr. xvii. 9–12). The reference to the house is not explicit in this verse; but it comes out in the following verses. — *Murphy.* (18) **will God,** ch. ii. 6.[c] "Solomon had some conception of the condescension and at the same time of the majesty of God. He by no means limits Him to this house." (19) **Have respect,** *etc.*, comp. 1 Ki. viii. 28–30.

Will God in very deed dwell with men? — I. Reason says, No! 1. The greatness of God forbids it. 2. The sinfulness of man opposes it. II. Revelation answers, Yes! 1. God has already dwelt with man in the past. (1) Symbolically. (2) Historically. 2. God now dwells with man in the present. 3. God will dwell with men visibly and personally in the future. — *T. Whitelaw.*

The greatness of God. — Will He, indeed, whom the heaven of heavens will not contain, take up His abode with men? What heart among us but glows with gratitude and love at these joyful tidings! Let us, at the head of our several families, in a transport of devout affection, welcome this kind and generous Guest into our houses. Let us give Him the entertainment He demands, even that of cordial love and obedience. Let us present Him the sacrifices He requires, even those of daily prayer and praise. And let us tremble at the thought of so demeaning ourselves in the habitations He has thus honored, as ever to provoke Him to depart thence. — *S. Stennett. Solomon's prayer.* — He prayed for wisdom at the outset, and he has verified the answer to prayer by the wonderful structure he put up. But the blessing did not end in architectural skill; that great proof of the blessing given to Solomon is to be found

[a] "He stretched forth his hands in the gesture of Oriental prayer, as if to receive the blessings for which he sought, and at the same time exchange the usual standing posture of prayer for the extraordinary one of kneeling, now first mentioned in the sacred history, and only used in Eastern worship at the present day in moments of deep humiliation." — *Stanley.*

[b] Jos. xxi. 45.

"We see that good designs and intentions are approved and commended by God, though He gives not the opportunity of putting them in execution. On the other hand, good intentions are but hypocrisy without vigorous endeavors." — *Orton.*

[c] Is. lxvi. 1; Ac. vii. 49; Jno. i. 14; ii. 21.

"Life is a delight, just in the degree that it is consecrated to action. Action and enjoyment are contingent upon each other; when we are unfit for work we are always incapable of pleasure; work is the wooing by which happiness is won." — *L. Grindon.*

No one knows what sin is fully, but the Saviour, who has borne it in our room.

in the prayer which he prayed at the dedication of the temple. No man could have prayed that prayer without help. This we should have said about it in all honesty if we had found it in Sanscrit; if we had exhumed it out of Indian libraries, it would have been due to the author to have said, "You never dreamed that dream, it was a vision of God." Read the prayer from beginning to end, and say if this be not so, How majestic in conception! how beauteously eloquent in expression! how wise, how tender, how patriotic, how philanthropic! How it grows and swells, and abounds in all elements of spiritual sympathy! Probably there is no such prayer in all literary records. If ever that prayer be excelled it will be by the Son of God alone, and His excelling of it will be by contrast rather than by comparison. — *Parker.*

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"God never made His work for man to mend." — *Dryden.*

21—27. (21) The third petition. To hear in heaven the supplications made in this place. The centre and core of all worship is prayer. This is the great thought of Solomon. He now proceeds to enumerate seven cases of prayer under this head. — *Murphy.* (22) **an oath be laid,** Le. v. 1. **and the oath,** *R. V.*, "and he come and swear before." (23) **requiting,** returning an equivalent. (24) **to the worse,** in battle.[a] Ex. xxvi. 15–17. **in this house,** looking towards it. (25) **bring them again,** this expression seems anticipative of the times of captivity. (26) **shut up,** fig. for time of drought.[b] (27) **hast taught them,** by the affliction, all trouble brought on God's people being corrective and disciplinary.

[a] Illus. Jos. vii. 4, 5.

[b] Illus. 1 Ki. xvii. 1.

Harmony of the natural and moral. — A regular system of agency connects results with the sovereign will of God. An unbroken link between the natural and moral world, between the conduct of men and the conditions of nature. The principle of mediation seen in all departments of God's government. "I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel." Hos. ii. 22. — *Hom. Com. The patience of God.* — Suppose a man should come into a curious artificer's shop, and there, with one blow, dash in pieces such a piece of art that had cost many years' study and pains in the contriving thereof, how could he bear with it, how would he take on to see the workmanship of his hands so rashly, so willfully destroyed? He could not but take it ill, and be much troubled thereat. Thus it is, that as soon as God had set up and perfected the frame of the world, sin gave a subtile shake to all; it unpinned the frame, and had like to have pulled all in pieces again; nay, had it not been for the promise of Christ, all this goodly frame had been reduced to its primitive nothing again. Man by his sin had pulled down all about his ears, but God in mercy keeps it up; man by sin provokes God, but God in mercy passeth by all affronts whatever. Oh the wonderful mercy! Oh, the omnipotent patience of God! — *Spencer.*

"Whoever well considers the state of the world, and human experience, cannot but conclude that God is more concerned to make men holy than happy; for many are able to rest in their sorrows, for the sake of their use and end, but no one finds rest in unholy delights. In sinful pleasure God follows man with a scourge; in sorrow, with balm." — *J. Pulsford.*

28—31. (28) **dearth,** scarcity, fr. other causes than lack of rain. **pestilence,** wh. frequently sweeps over Eastern lands. **blasting,** *etc.*, various forms of peril for growing crops. **in the cities of their land,** this, to represent correctly the Hebrew, should read, *in the land of their gates.* Reference probably is being made to the fact that law and justice and judgment were administered in "the gate of the city" (De. xvi. 18; xxi. 19; Josh. xx. 4). — *Pul. Com.* **sore,** *R. V.*, "plague." (29) **his own sore,** much more expressively put in 1 Ki. viii. 38, *plague of his own heart.* (30) **thou only,** comp. Ha. iv. 13, therefore God deals with us in perfect righteousness.[c] (31) **fear thee,** godly fear is in O. T. presented as the foundation of true piety, and the great end of forgiveness and acceptance. Ps. cxxx. 4. Love takes its place, and includes it, in the N. T.

[c] 1 Chr. xxviii. 9.

The lessons of the pestilence (*vss.* 28–31). — I. Our text supplies us with a rebuke of mere rationalism. There is a God of Providence behind all natural causes. Men often look after the natural cause, and forget God. II. Our text shows us the spirit and way in which the plague, pestilence, and famine are to be met. Scientific and sanitary measures are not forbidden, but prayer is encouragingly enforced. III. Our text also shows us that calamities that proceed from so-called natural causes should lead to repentance and reconsecration to God.

"Nothing surely can be better adapted to turn man's thoughts off his own self-sufficiency than the works of nature. Wherever he rests his attention, whether on matter organized or unorganized, there he

Destructive insects. — The causes of famine, reckoned up here, are want of rain, blasting, mildew, locusts, and caterpillars, according to our translation: with which may be compared the following passage of Chardin, in the second tome of his *Travels:* "Persia is subject to have its harvest spoiled by hail, by

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drought, or by insects, either locusts or small insects, which they call *sim*, which are small white lice, which fix themselves on the foot of the stalk of corn, gnaw it, and make it die. It is rare for a year to be exempt from one or the other of these scourges, which affect the ploughed land and the gardens," *etc.* The enumeration by Solomon, and that of this modern writer, though not exactly alike, yet so nearly resemble each other that one would be inclined to believe these small insects are what Solomon meant by the word translated caterpillars in our English version. — *Harmer.*

will discover convincing evidence of his own ignorance; and at the same time the omnipotence of a first great cause will be impressed on his mind, and influence his understanding."-*Maund.*

32—35. (32) **stranger,** many such came to reside in the country, for trading purposes, during Sol.'s reign. "The spirit of the Old Testament was catholic. There was always a welcome for any one of all the nations of men who should draw nigh to God. (33) The end of this invitation is broadly stated, that all people of the earth may know Thy name, and fear Thee, *as Thy people Israel.* The rights and privileges of all the redeemed were to be equal."— *Murphy.* (34) **way . . them,** "this is the case of aggressive war undertaken by commission from heaven. If they from afar pray toward this place, let their cause be maintained." (35) **cause,** or right.

Count Godamar, a foreigner of note, often professed, in the declining part of his years, when death and the eternal world seemed near, "that he feared nothing in the world more than sin; and that whatever liberties he had formerly taken, he would rather now submit to be torn to pieces by wild beasts than knowingly or willingly commit any sin against God."

The stranger in the house of God (*vss.* 32, 33.) — I. Strangers often visit the house of God, impelled thereto by a variety of circumstances. II. Their visits should be expected, and provision made for their comfort. III. Their coming should be met by a hearty welcome from all the people of God. IV. Prayer should be made that the stranger may hear words whereby he may be saved. V. It is reasonably expected of the stranger that he will return to his land and kindred, and spread the praises of God.

Prayer for strangers. — We need not ask whether such a prayer is inspired. Its humanity is its divinity. Who teaches prayers like this? Who is not limited to his own house, his own nation, his own language? How thrilling when a man, by any means, lifts the prayer to a new level and speaks the universal tongue! How wondrous the miracle when one so far away in the darkness of history effected that one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin! — *J. Parker.* *The influence of worship.* — A Thug at Meirut, who had been guilty of many murders, was arrested, and cast, heavily ironed, into prison. There a missionary visited him, and preached Christ to him with such success that he professed conversion. As he was brought before the judge, and confronted by many witnesses, he said, pointing to them, "No need of these; I am ready to avow the crimes of my dreadful life." He then proceeded to declare, that, having been brought up among the Thugs, he fully believed that, by the shedding of the blood of each victim, he had not only pleased the dreadful goddess Kali, but procured her favor for himself. And he recounted murder after murder in which he had been engaged, some of them attended with such cruelty that those present who had begun to feel some pity for him again shrunk back; the judge himself lifting up his hands and exclaiming, "How could you be guilty of enormities like these?" The only reply the poor man made to the judge was to place his hand in the bosom of his linen vest to take forth a little book; then, holding it up in his hand, he said, "Had I but received this book sooner, the book of Jesus, my Saviour and my God, I should not have done it."

"Happy the man who sees a God employed in all the good and ill that chequer life." — *Cowper.*

"Expressions of the most expansive philanthropy echoed in the anthems of the Jewish temple"

36—42. (36) **no man,**[a] "the O. T. knows nothing of absolutely righteous persons, Ps. cxliii. 2; Is. xliii. 27; Pro. xx. 9. The Mosaic law attests this by excepting none from the need of atonement."—*Oehler.* (37) **bethink themselves,** Heb. bring back to their heart. (38) **all their heart,** God can only accept a return thus sincere and whole-hearted. (39) **from the heavens,** comp. *vs.* 18. It is evident that this thought was not of a God in the temple only, but omnipresent. **forgive,** that being their great request (40) **Now my God,** comp. the conclusion of the prayer in the Bk. of Kings. **attent,** or attentive, ready to listen. (41) **resting place,**[b] on the native rock under the wings of the cherubim, the symbol of God's presence was placed. (42) **turn not away,** in shame at unanswered prayers. **mercies of David,** shown to David.

a Ecc. vii. 20; Jas. iii. 2; 1 Jno. i. 8.

b Comp. Psalm cxxxii. 9.

"The bravest commanders men of prayer. Prayer a means of divine fellowship and training, imparts strength, courage, and victory in conflict."

Sin. — 1. A description of human nature. "No man which sinneth not." 2. A moral difficulty between God and man. "Thou be angry with them." 3. A cause of great trouble in man's experience. 4. A bitter experience in man's history. Sin in the universality of its existence, in the moral consciousness of men, in its prejudicial influence to human interests.— *Hom. Com.*

"Prayer should ever be upwards, direct to the pres-

Worship.—

Oh, brother man ! fold to thy heart thy brother ;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there ;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of Him whose holy work was "doing good ;"
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

Then shall all shackles fall ; the stormy clangor
Of wild war-music o'er the earth shall cease ;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace." — *Whittier.*

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ence of God. Not to man, not without aim, but straight as an arrow to its centre. Not at random, but with orderly words and definite purpose."— *Hom. Com.*

"God never leaves any till they first leave Him."

"Immediate are the acts of God, more swift than time or motion." — *Milton*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

the sacrifices consumed, the glory of God fills the temple

1—7. (1) **the fire,** the sign of God's acceptance of Sol.'s sacrifices.[a] As in the case of the tabernacles, the first sacrifices are consumed by fire from God, which fire is never to go out (Le. vi. 13), and from it all other offerings are to be lighted. "Every sacrifice which man makes to God is made perfect only by being taken up into the purifying element of divine life."—*Oehler.* **the glory,** as ch. vs. 13, 14. (2) **into the house,** prob. the first house, wh. as well as the holy of holies was filled with the glory-cloud. (3) **bowed themselves,** attitude of extreme adoration and reverence.[b] (4) **and all the people,**[c] they did not offer them on the altar. These sacrifices were peace-offerings, which were dressed and eaten by the priests and the people in sacred communion before the Lord. This accounts for the vast number of them. (6) **waited . . offices,** "stood in their stations," to receive and kill, *etc.*, the sacrifices. **David . . made,** 1 Chr. xv. 16. (7) **middle of the court,** the middle of the court had to be sanctified, because the blood of all the sacrifices had to be poured out and the fat burned, while the burnt-offerings were wholly consumed by fire ; for all which even the large brazen altar was not sufficient.

a Le. ix. 24; Ju. vi. 21 ; xiii. 20 ; 1 Ki. xviii. 38.

b Le. ix. 24.

c Comp. 1 Ki. viii. 62-66.

The house filled with the glory of God (*vs.* 1). — I. The impressive scene that the text brings before us. II. The things now present, of which those things were a shadow in the past. 1. The fire of the Holy Spirit comes down to consume sin, to apply the word, to convert the soul ; 2. The great sacrifice for sin has been offered once for all ; 3. The glory of the Lord fills the earthly courts of His house this day when sinners are converted — when saints rejoice in Him — when His people show forth the praises of Him who has called them to a new life in that new life of which He is the model and the source.

Sacrifices. — Profusion the usual feature of ancient sacrifices : 300 oxen formed a common sacrifice at Athens. But all sacrifices offered by men to God are inadequate. "Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering." "Jehovah being so much greater than man, how can any sacrificial rites be worthy of Him ?" — *Cheyne.* "What real propitiation could be effected, though the whole region of Lebanon were made an altar, its pines and cedars piled up on it for firing, and its thousands of beasts offered as victims ? Very different was the offering which was to procure man's redemption."— *Kay.* That offering which alone prevails before God is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a sacrifice of infinite value because He is God. All our offerings, our acts of worship, our self-denial, our good deeds cannot *in themselves* avail with God. But they are accepted when offered upon "the altar which sanctifieth the gift," the altar of Christ's merits. — *Hom. Com.*

"With God there is no free man but His servant, though in the galleys; no slave but the sinner, though in a palace ; none noble but the virtuous, if never so basely descended; none rich but he that possesseth God, even in rags; none wise but he that is a fool to himself and the world; none happy but he whom the world pities. Let me be free, noble, rich, wise, happy, to God "— *Bp. Hall.*

the solemn assemblage and banquet

8—11. (8) **feast,** *R. V.*, "So Solomon held the feast at that time seven days." The first seven days was the feast of tabernacles, the second seven the feast of the dedication. **entering . . Hamath,** northern boundary of Palestine.[d] **river of Egypt,** Jos. xiii. 3, *i. e.* from the extreme north to the extreme south of the land. (9) **solemn assembly,** special closing day. (10) **three and twentieth,** the day following the completion of the double feast.

d Nu xxxiv. 8 ; Jos. xiii. 5.

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"What throbbings of deep joy pulsate through all I see; from the full bud whose unctuous sheath is glittering in the moon, up through the system of created things, even to the flaming ranks of seraphim."—*Alford.*

(11) **all . . effected,** it is not probable that the dedication of the temple was delayed until the palace of Solomon also was finished. But the chronology of these events cannot be decided. The temple was finished in the 11th yr. of his reign and the palace in the 24th year (1 Ki. vii. 1).

Piety is sure to find its way home. — The people went back to "their tents" with this abounding exultation. They carried it home; they shared it with those with whom they dwel; they communicated it to those who could not derive it from the temple-scenes themselves. This is a simple Christian obligation. All that we have from God we should carry home with us; and particularly those inspirations and exaltations which we gain in His house and from His worship we should impart to our kindred and our friends. We are closely related to one another for the express purpose that we may communicate to one another the best and highest that is within us — our purest thoughts, our worthiest feelings, our highest aspirations, our most sacred joys. — *Pul. Com.*

God promises the prayer shall be answered

12—18. (12) **appeared** *etc.*, as at Gibeon.[a] (13) **If,** *etc.*, the response recalls the chief points of Sol.'s prayer. (14) **humble themselves,** God can only accept such as thus in heart return to him. (15) **attent,** ch. vi. 40. (16) **and sanctified,** by making the symbol of Div. presence rest in it. (17) **walk before me,** this condition Sol. failed to meet. Though David grievously sinned, he kept his integrity of heart. (18) **There shall not,** *etc.*, ch. vi. 16.

[a] 1 Ki. iii. 5; ix. 2.

Biblical anthropomorphism. — Human organs. The eyes and ears of God (*vs.* 15). This language is used for two purposes. I. To express His cognizance of man. He knows us — 1. Directly; 2. Thoroughly. II. To express His interest in man. 1. In the various capacities of enjoyment with which He has endowed us, and the provisions He made for them; 2. In the preservation of our existence, notwithstanding our sinfulness; 3. In our redemption by Jesus Christ. Conclusion: — Thou God seest me, we unite with the blessed fact, "Thou God lovest me." — *Homilist.*

"In nature, all is managed for the best with perfect frugality and just reserve, profuse to none, but bountiful to all: with exact economy retrenching the superfluous, and adding force to what is principle in everything."—*Shaftesbury.*

The grandeur of worship. — Which was the greater, the external magnificence or the moral sublimity of the scene? Was it the temple situated on its commanding eminence, with all its courts, the dazzling splendor of its materials, the innumerable multitudes, the priests in their gorgeous attire, the king with all the insignia of royalty on his throne of burnished brass, the music, the radiant cloud filling the temple, the sudden fire flashing upon the altar, the whole nation upon their knees? Was it not rather the religious grandeur of the hymns and of the prayer; the exalted and rational views of the Divine Nature; the union of a whole people in the adoration of the one Great, Incomprehensible, Almighty, Everlasting Creator? —*Milman. The Lord appeared.* — This vision presents a remarkable contrast with that recorded (1 Ki. vi. 11–13) while the temple was in building. Then all was promise and encouragement; now, not only is warning mingled with promise, but as in Solomon's own prayer, the sadder alternative seems in prophetic anticipation to overpower the brighter. In this there is (as often remarked) a striking exemplification of the austere and lofty candor of the inspired narrative, sternly contradicting that natural hopefulness in the hour of unexampled prosperity, which would have shrunk from even entertaining the idea that the blessings of God on the temple should be frustrated, and the glory of Israel pass away. — *Ellicott.*

"Nature is the most thrifty thing in the world; she never wastes anything; she undergoes change, but there's no annihilation — the essence remains — matter is eternal.—*Binney.*

God declares the consequences of apostasy

19—22. (19) **serve other gods,** this was the greatest sin an Israelite could commit. (20 **them up,** *i. e.* the people who follow the lead of such a king. Nations suffer for the unrighteousness of their rulers. Compare modern wars as well as ancient. (21) **is high,** or *shall be high;* high now in glory, it shall then be high in shame. **astonishment,** bec. of its ruin.[b] **Why hath the Lord done this?** (see De. xxix. 24; Je. xxii. 8, 9) To the "astonishment" prophesied here the parallel adds, "shall hiss" — in a forcible expression found first in ch. xxix. 8, and afterwards in Micah (vi. 16) and in Jeremiah (xviii. 16; xix. 8; xxv. 9, *etc.*; La. ii. 15, 16). — *Pul. Com.* (22) **all this evil,** comp. the wailing of Ezekiel over the desolations that actually overtook the city and temple.

[b] "The sense is as to this house, wh. was once lofty and admired; even the casual passers by, who once gazed at it in wonder, shall be astonished at its desolation.—*Worsdworth.*

The solution of a great historical problem (*vs.* 22). — I. The problem is this: — The Jews were anciently the favored people of a God of infinite faithfulness, whose love is an unchanging love, and we find them this day a by-word

and a proverb. How is this to be explained? II. The answer is to be found in the events of their history, and especially in their rejection of the Son of God. Therefore hath He brought all this evil upon them.

Retribution. — The late Rev. John Campbell relates the following occurrence, which took place when sailing to London in a Leith trader, many years ago: "I remember once," says he, "about two in the morning, an alarming occurrence taking place by a young gentleman, in his sleep, rushing from his bed to the middle of the cabin, and, pointing to the floor, calling out with a loud voice, 'There's the blood! there's the blood! yes, there's the blood!' on which some of us rose and found he was asleep, and awoke him and got him back to his bed. In the morning, we requested a sprightly young gentleman, whom we observed had got intimate with him after their meeting on board, to see if he could find out the cause of his thus dreaming. In the evening, he told us that the gentleman who had so disturbed us in the night-time was an officer in the army, and on his way to join his regiment in Sicily; that some time ago he had shot a brother officer in a duel, and that ever since he had been disturbed in his sleep in the night-time, and appeared downcast even when perfectly awake. He said it was his custom every night to fasten his leg to the bed-post, or to anything to which he could tie it, to prevent his getting out of bed; 'but I found,' said he, 'nothing of the kind in these ship beds.' What a striking resemblance was the state of this young murderer's mind to that of the first murderer, Cain, who immediately became a coward, afraid to move from his accustomed home, lest every stranger he met should endeavor to slay him!"

B. C. 954.

"When it is intended by a line of rails to conduct a train off the main trunk and turn it aside to another direction, the branch line at first runs almost parallel with the trunk, but when it has thus got fairly off, then it turns more rapidly round, and bounds away at right angles to its proper course. As engineers avoid the physical, so the tempter avoids the moral difficulty; an abrupt turn is not attempted in either case." — *W. Arnot.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

Tadmor, etc., are built

1—6. (1) **twenty years,** date fr. fourth year of Sol.'s reign; add seven years for building temple, and thirteen for building Sol.'s own palace.[a] (2) **restored,** *R. V.*, "given," comp. 1 Ki. ix. 11–13. (3) **Hamath-zobah,**[b] 1 Chr. xviii. 3, 9. (4) **Tadmor,** 1 Ki. ix. 18. Tadmor is Palmyra, the splendid ruins of which remain to this day. (5) **built,** *i. e.* repaired or fortified. **Beth-horon,** at entrance of dangerous and narrow passes. The house of the caves, two villages three miles apart and ten miles N. W. of Jerusalem, where Joshua before and Judas Maccabæus afterward won great victories. (6) **Baalath,** comp. 1 Ki. ix. 18, 19.[c]

Lessons of prudence. — Why "fenced cities with walls, gates and bars?" Silent witnesses against the honesty of the society in which we live. Every bolt upon the door is a moral accusation; every time we turn the lock we mean that there is an enemy outside who may endeavor to violate the sanctity of the house. — *Parker.* *The danger of prosperity.* — Commercial intercourse with foreign nations, the assimilation of the Israelitish monarchy to corresponding institutions of surrounding kingdoms, though indispensable to certain elements of the church and state of Judea, yet was fraught with danger to a people whose chief safeguard had hitherto been their exclusiveness, and whose highest mission was to keep their faith and manners distinct from the contagion of the world around them. The gigantic experiment of Solomon, though partially and prospectively successful, yet in a greater part and for the moment failed. As he is the representative of the splendors of the monarchy, so is he also the type and cause of its ruin. — *Stanley.*

a 1 Ki. vi. 37, 38; vii. 6; ix. 10.

b "Prob. a town of Zobah, otherwise unknown, wh. revolted fr. Sol., and was reduced to subjection." — *Spk. Com.*

c "Some of these fortified places may have been necessary to keep in check the Canaanitish population, who were likely to fret under the forced labor wh. he exacted from them." — *Tuck.*

Solomon marries the princess of Egypt

7—11. (7) **left,**[d] descendants of the people in the land at the time of the invasion. (8) **pay tribute,** *R. V.*, "of them did Solomon raise a levy of bond servants," *etc.* (9) **men of war,** *etc.*, occupying honorable offices of all kinds. (10) **two hundred,** *cf.* 1 Ki. ix. 23, where all the overseers are said to be 500. The 250 mentioned here were chiefs over Israelites only. (11) **daughter of Phar.,** 1 Ki. iii. 1. The Pharaoh whose daughter Solomon married, was probably Psusennes, the last of the twenty-first dynasty. The city of David was the eastern hill, south of the temple site. As she still adhered to the gods of Egypt, she is transferred to a house built for herself (1 Kings vii. 8) in the upper city; because the old Zion derived a sanctity from having been the site of the tabernacle, which was on the same ridge with the temple mount.— *Murphy.*

A politic marriage (*vs.* 11). — I. No doubt this marriage was brought about by Solomon's desire to strengthen himself by foreign alliances. It would have been better for him to have looked to the bonds that bound his throne to God.

d Comp. 1 Ki. ix. 20-23.

"Sol.'s own palace was erected considerably below the level of the temple mount, on the southwest, and quite apart fr. the castle of David." —*Tuck.*

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"He that made the first marriage in paradise bestows His first miracle upon a Galilean marriage. He that was the author of matrimony and sanctifieth it, doth, by His holy presence, honor the resemblance of His eternal union with His church."—*Bp. Hall.*

Many marriages are made from worldly motives. II. It was the source of immediate perplexity. Solomon felt that it would be incongruous to introduce his wife to scenes that were associated with a religion that she did not recognize. Diversities of religious sentiment often a source of domestic perplexity.

Solomon's "servants."—The working class population of those days, the artisans and laborers, Solomon employed in the construction of his temple, palaces and cities, just as the Pharaohs of former times had employod the progenitors of his people in making bricks and erecting store cities in the land of Ham (Ex. i. 11). It was the custom then and long after to subject prisoners of war and the populations of conquered territories to servile work. Thothmes III. of Egypt carried laborers captive to build the temple of his father Amon (Wilkinson, "Ancient Egyptians"). The employment of foreign captives in such tasks was an ancient practice in Egypt. An inscription of Esarhaddon states that the custom prevailed in Assyria, he himself saying of his captives from foreign lands, "I caused crowds of them to work in fetters in making brick."—*Pul. Com.*

Solomon's gold, fleet, etc.

12—18. (12) **Sol. offered,** not in person, but through the priests. Reference is to the appointment of regular service in the temple.[a] **altar,** ch. iv. 1. (13) **Even after,** *etc., R. V.,* "even as the duty of every day required, offering." **commandment of Moses,** Ex. xxiii. 14; xxix. 38. (14) **order of David,** 1 Chr. xxiv. 1–5. **porters,** 1 Chr. ix. 17; xxvi. 1–19. **man of God,** term only applied to Moses and one nameless prophet, besides David[b] in the Bks. of Chr. (15) **king,** *i. e.* David. **treasures,** 1 Chr. xxvi. 20–28. (16) **prepared,** idea is, made ready for use, so meaning *completed.* (17) **Ezion-geber,** the *giant's backbone,* Nu. xxxiii. 35, 36.[c] On the N. E. point of the gulf of Akaba, an eastern gulf of the Red Sea, near Elath, De. ii. 8; 2 Sa. viii. 14. (18) **ships,** *etc.,* bec. the Israelites had no knowledge of ship-building or navigation. The parallel much helps us by saying that "Solomon made a navy," and Hiram assisted by manning it with competent sailors; he "sent in the navy his servants," *etc.* (1 Ki. ix. 26, 27). — **Ophir,** it is an unsettled question where Ophir was situated, though an Arabian situation is most probable.

Solomon. — Solomon was great in burnt-offerings. Do not men sometimes make up in burnt-offerings what they lack in moral consistency? Is not an ostentatious religion sometimes the best proof of internal decay? It ought not to be so. The hand and the heart should be one, the outward and the inward should correspond, the action should be the incarnation of the thought. We are not always to look upon the ceremonial action of the church as indicative of its real spirituality. Sometimes men make a great noise in order to conceal a courage that is giving way.—*Parker.*

a 1 Ki. ix. 25.

b 1 Chr. xxiii. 14; 2 Chr. xxv. 7, 9.

c De. ii. 8; 1 Ki. ix. 26.

"The increase of a great number of citizens in prosperity is a necessary element to the security, and even to the existence, of a civilized people."—*Buret.*

"Before we ask what a man worships, we have to ask whether he worships at all."—*Ruskin.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

B. C. 954-937.

the queen of Sheba

1—6. (1) **Sheba,** "Sheba was in the S. of Arabia. The queen may have heard of Solomon through the traders to Ophir. The Arabs were famous for their riddles."—*Murphy.* **prove,** test his reputed wisdom. (4) **sitting,** in council of his chief officers. **attendance,** standing of his attendants. **no more spirit,** she was breathless with amazement. (5) **acts,** marg. *sayings.* (6) **mine eyes,** they saw the grandeur of his kingdom, but her ears heard the proofs of his wisdom.

A spirit of inquiry. —She came to hear his wisdom and enlarge her own; to ask as well as answer questions. The spirit of this asking of questions and solving of dark riddles is of the very nature of true philosophy. "To ask questions rightly," says Lord Bacon, "is the half of knowledge." "Life without cross-examination is no life at all," said Socrates. When we inquire, when we restlessly question in our search after truth, when we seek it from unexpected quarters, we are but following in the steps of the wise king of Judah and the wise queen of Sheba.—*Stanley, Questioners* must be teachable. When Haydn was in London, a nobleman came to him for lessons in music, but found fault with all that Haydn said. At last out of patience, the musician exclaimed, "I see, my lord, that it is you who are so good as to give lessons to me, and I am obliged to confess that I do not merit the honor of having such a master."—*Spurgeon.*

"Do not suppose that wisdom is so much flattered at having you for a pupil that she will set you easy lessons, and yet give you the gold medal."—*T. T. Lynch.*

"Justice is the first virtue of those who command and stops the complaints of these who obey."—*Diderot.*

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the queen pronounces Solomon happy

7—12. (7) **Happy,** or blessed. (8) **Lord thy God,** the queen does not claim Him as her God, but comp. Christ's lesson from this "queen of the south" in Mat. xii. 42. (9) **talents,** Josephus says 20 talents (= $60,000) which is more probable. **such spice,**[a] the district fr. wh. she came being famous for its spices. (10) **algum trees,** sandal-wood. (11) **terraces,** "raised walks or corridors protected by a balustrade."—*Murphy.* **psalteries,** 1 Sa. x. 5. (12) **gave . . desire,**[b] exchanging presents; and adding to his own chosen gifts things which the queen admired and wished for.

"*These words,*" (*vss.* 5–8) says Canon Barry, "are clearly from some contemporary document. They breathe at once the spirit of Oriental compliment, and a certain seriousness of tone, as of a mind stirred by unusual wonder and admiration. It is worth notice that they touch but lightly on external magnificence and prosperity, and go on to dwell emphatically on the wisdom of Solomon as a wisdom enabling him to do judgment and justice, and as a gift from Jehovah, his God. The acknowledgment of Jehovah, of course, does not apply acceptance of the religion of Israel. It expresses the belief that He, as the tutelary God of Israel, is to be held in reverence, proportionate to the extraordinary glory which He has given to the nation" (see 1 Ki. v. 7).

a *Josephus* says that the genuine balsam, which grew near Jericho and at Engedi, was introduced into Palestine by the Queen of Sheba.

b Comp. expression 1 Ki. x. 13.

the wealth of Solomon

13—18. (13) **weight,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. x. 14. (14) **chapmen,** traveling peddlers. **kings of Arabia,** the desert districts south of Sol.'s country.[c] (15) **targets,** are large shields, covering the whole man. They were made of wickerwork or wood, and usually covered with leather. But these were covered with a plating of gold. The shekel weighed about 9 dwt. 3 gr. But the word shekel does not appear in the original either here or in Kings. And the beka or half shekel may be supplied. —*Murphy.* (16) **house of the forest,** 1 Ki. x. 17. (17) **of ivory,** not all solid ivory, some parts veneered with it. (18) **footstool,**[d] necessary bec. the throne was raised. This is not mentioned in Bk. of Kgs. **stays,** or arms. (19) **lions,** large carved figures; as the royal animal, the lion was properly associated with a king's throne.

The incessancy of labor. — The more we accomplish, the more we have to accomplish. All things are full of labor; and therefore, the more we acquire, the more care and the more toil to secure our acquisitions. Good men can never retire from their works of benevolence: their fortune is never made. I never heard of an apostle, prophet or public benefactor, retiring from their respective fields of labor. Moses, and Paul, and Peter, died with their harness on. So did Luther, and Calvin, and Wesley, and a thousand others as deserving, though not so well known to fame. In the war for truth and against error there is no discharge.— *A. Campbell.*

c 1 Ki. x 15.

d "Xerxes is said to have witnessed the naval fight at Salamis sitting on a golden stool. Elsewhere he is described as sitting on an ivory stool, a present from Arabia." — *Van Lennep.*

"Prosperity is the touchstone of virtue; for it is less difficult to bear misfortunes than to remain uncorrupted by pleasure."—*Tacitus.*

the end of the reign of Solomon

20—24. (20) **none were of silver,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "silver was nothing accounted of," *etc.* (21) **Tarshish,**[e] prob. Tartessus in Spain. **peacocks,**[f] Heb. *thukyim:* these, it is thought, must have come fr. India. (23) **all the kings,** extravagant expression, the reference is to tributary and friendly neighboring sovereigns. (24) **harness,** *R. V.*, "armour." **rate year by year,** *i. e.* tribute regularly levied, and paid in kind.

A real enlargement.— Great wealth does not go far to enrich a nation when it does nothing more for it than provide targets and shields, drinking-vessels and ivory thrones overlaid with gold, with golden footstools — nothing more than multiply splendors about the royal palace. When it promotes healthful and remunerative activities among the people, when it facilitates and quickens the expenditure of profitable labor in agriculture, in seamanship, in manufacture, in art, in literature, in worship, then it is really and truly serviceable. So with individual men. Wealth that only ministers to luxury does very little good to its owner. But when it enables a man to put forth mental and physical powers that otherwise would slumber for lack of opportunity, when it stimulates to worthy and elevating enterprise, when it opens the door of usefulness and hopefulness, then it is a blessing indeed, a real and true enlargement.— *Pul. Com.*

e "Large trading vessels appear to have been designated *ships of Tarshish.*" — *Ayre.*

f 1 Ki. x. 22.

"Greatness stands upon a precipice, and if prosperity carries a man ever so little beyond his poise, it overbears and dashes him to pieces." — *Seneca.*

"We like the gift when we the giver prize."— *Ovid.*

the death of Solomon

25—31. (25) **stalls,** *etc.*, 1 Ki. iv. 26. **chariot cities,** 1 Ki. x. 26. (26) **the river,**[g] Ge. xv. 18, the Euphrates. (27) **as stones,** strong fig. for abundance, and comparative worthlessness. (28) **all lands,**[h] "we should not have expected him to close the history of a great reign by a reference to the king's trade in horses."— *Exp. Bib.* (29) **the rest of,** *etc.* The discreditable record contained in 1 Ki. xi. is here omitted. **Nathan,** 2 Sa. vii. 1–17. **Ahijah,** 1

g 1 Ki. iv. 21.

h Law of Moses did not permit this

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multiplying of horses. De. xvii. 16.

Ki. xi. 11–13, 29–39. **Iddo,**[a] 2 Chr. xii. 15; xiii. 22. (30) **forty years,** comp. reigns of Saul and David. (31) **his son,** fr. all that appears his *only* son. "Solomon's life does not close with any scene in which his people and his heir assembled to do him honor." Nor is he spoken of as was David (1 Chr. xxix. 28). "The lame and impotent conclusion" of this narrative is "as severe a condemnation" as that of kings with its record of the sins of the king.— *Exp. Bib.*

Death of Solomon.— Solomon did not live to a very great age, since he was not more than twenty years old when he ascended the throne. Whether Solomon turned to the Lord again with all his heart, a question widely discussed by the older commentators, cannot be ascertained from Scripture. If the preacher (Ecclesiastes) is traceable to Solomon, so far as the leading thoughts are concerned, we should find in this fact an evidence of his conversion, or at least a proof that at the close of his life he discovered the vanity of all earthly possessions and aims and declared the fear of God to be the only abiding good with which a man can stand before the judgment of God.— *Keil.*

[a] He seems to have been the prophet of Rehoboam's reign.

"Prosperity seems to be scarcely safe unless it be mixed with a little adversity."— *Hosea Ballou.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

Rehoboam made king

1–5. (1) **Rehoboam,** "the impression left by the Scripture narrative is that up to this time he has lived a mere courtier's life without serious aims or stirring circumstances."—*Robinson.* **Shechem,**[b] Ge. xii. 6. The ancient capital and place of popular assembly in the days of Joshua (Jos. xxiv. 1), between Ebal and Gerizim, 34 miles north of Jerusalem, *cf.* De. xi. 29, 30. (2) **Jeroboam,** 1 Ki. xi. 26–28, 40. During the life of Solomon he had stirred up the people against their king, and now they send for him to return from Egypt and lead them. (3) **they,** *i. e.* all Israel, naturally regarding him as a leader, who would represent their cause to the king. **spake,** Jeroboam being the speaker. (4) **our yoke,** the style and pomp of Solomon had rendered the burden of taxation great. The vast building operations and the enormous establishment of the court were a constant and grievous drain upon the resources of the nation. The proposal to lighten the burden met with universal concurrence, and was reasonable in itself. — *Murphy.*

[b] 1 Ki. xii. 1-19.

"Human depravity flows in different channels: some are prone to one sin, and some to another."— *Scott.*

Rehoboam and Jeroboam. — Rehoboam was now called upon to decide definitely what policy he would pursue in his administration — whether that of leniency and popularity, or that of stringency and force; whether he would "rule by love or fear." Jeroboam had, at this point in his life, to decide whether he would adopt the *safe* policy of continuing in retreat, or the bold and venturesome one of heading a national revolt, and being either crushed beneath the feet of authority or raised to the height of a successful revolution. Singularly enough, the names of both these men signified "enlarger or multiplier of the people;" they pointed, probably, to the hopes of their parents concerning them. But though they both occupied the throne, and one of them rose to a much higher position than could have been anticipated at his birth, both men failed in the sight of God and in the estimate of the wise. The one by his folly estranged and lost the greater part of his kingdom; the other led Israel into shameful and ruinous apostasy. — *Pul. Com.*

"Every man's natural disposition is his good or evil demon."— *Epicharmus.*

"Who knows what he is till he is tried, and until he meets his own trial? for every one is not discovered in the same way; we may be firm in one peril and fail in another."—*Jay.*

Rehoboam's reply to the deputation

6—11. (6) **old men,** experienced counsellors, who knew well how heavy the burdens had been. (8) **young men,** his companions of the palace. According to xii. 13 Rehoboam was 41 years old. Even his young counsellors must have had some experience. (9) **give ye,** young people like to carry things with a high hand, and the advice these young counsellors were likely to give would accord with Rehob.'s own inclination. (10) **My little,** *etc.*, demands would be increased rather than diminished. **shall be,** *R. V.*, "is."

Two methods of treating men.— I. The conciliatory. II. The unconciliatory. Social positions are graduated. Yet no elevation of social rank gives one man the right to tyrannize over another. Pass in rapid review a few of the cases in which the two methods of treating men come into constant operation. The maintenance of conciliatory policy is quite consistent with a headship. 1. Firmness; 2. Justice. What is the cure for all false relations among men? The gospel of reconciliation.— *J. Parker.*

Kingly kindness.— When a king speaks "good words," they seem to be better than if spoken by other lips; when a king is kind, he seems to add to his kindness by his very kingliness; the stoop of his condescension redoubles the

"There be three sorts of government, monarchical, aristocratical, democratical; and they are apt to to fall three several ways into ruin; the first by tyranny; the second by ambition; the last by tumult."— *Quarles.*

value of his benefaction. If when the people returned after three days Rehoboam had spoken so, the welkin would have rung with the resonant cheers of a delighted, thankful, because emancipated, people.—*Parker.*

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12—15. (13) **roughly,** the spirit as well as the words were wrong. The whole situation is due more to the king than to his counsellors. (15) **for the cause was of God,** *R. V.*, "for it was brought about of God." "It is the manner of Scripture to rise above the secondary causes of things and trace every event to the primary cause in the will of God, especially in the field of moral conduct."—*Murphy.* **his word,** 1 Ki. xi. 29–31.

Took counsel with young men.— So did our king Richard II. to his utter ruin. Xerxes despised the grave counsel of his uncle Artabanus, and was led wholly by young Mardonius to the loss of all. The like is reported of Dionysius, king of Sicily; Crœsus, king of Lydia; Nero, emperor of Rome; James that reigned in Scotland in Edward IV.'s time; and Lantrer, of whom it is reported that he lost the kingdom of Naples from the French king, his master, and all that he had in Italy, because he would not ask nor follow the advice of those who were wiser than himself.—*Trapp.*

Jeroboam

"To trample on all human feelings, all ties which bind man to man, to emulate the fiends, who will one day requite them in variety of torturing."—*Byron.*

16—19. (16) **What portion,** *etc.*, they refuse to acknowledge Rehoboam as their king. **to your tents,** the cry of revolt.[a] The tribal spirit was strong among the Hebrews. The supremacy of Judah had never been heartily accepted. Reuben, Ephraim, Manasseh perpetually kicked against Judean sovereignty. There had always been a latent discontent; Rehoboam's threats postponed the explosion."—*Rawlinson.* (17) **dwelt in the cities,** and did not care to remove into the territory of the ten tribes. (18) **Hadoram,** 1 Ki. xii. 18, the chief director of the enforced labors against which Israel rebelled. The worst man he could have sent—showing his own lack of judgment. Josephus says he was sent to mollify the people. (19) **Israel,** *i, e.* the ten tribes.

the rebellion of Israel

[a] 2 Sa. xx. 1, 2.

Moral tyrants.—

Think'st thou there is no tyranny out that
Of blood and chains? The despotism of vice—
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury,
The negligence, the apathy, the evils
Of sensual sloth—produce ten thousand tyrants,
Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
The worst acts of one energetic master,
However harsh and hard in his own bearing.—*Byron.*

"When any one person or body of men seize into their hands the power in the last resort, there is properly no longer a government, but what Aristotle and his followers call the abuse and corruption of one."—*Swift.*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

Rehoboam is forbidden to make war with Israel

1—4. (1) **to fight,** Joab gave the sum of the men of Judah fit to bear arms as 500,000 (2 Sa. xxiv. 9) in the time of David. The present levy is about a third of that number. (2) **Shemaiah,** 1 Ki. xii. 22; ch. xii. 5, 7, 15. How "the word" came we are not told, perhaps by a vision. (4) The Lord interferes, assigning as the reason, "This thing is done of me." The message is addressed to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, as well as to Rehoboam. This may have contributed to the readiness with which it was obeyed. We see here that Benjamin adhered to Judah.—*Murphy.*

God in the Bible.—The Bible is never afraid to mention the name of God. Truly it would appear as if it were the only book where He was at home. Other books apologize for Him: introduce Him with pomp that cannot be real: revere Him with worship that must be artificial: but within the sanctuary of the inspired volume God comes and goes and moves with familiarity, with condescension, and yet ever so as to make men think more than they can say.—*J. Parker.*

"The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government."—*Washington.*

"We are often governed by people not only weaker than ourselves, but even by those whom we think so."—*Lord Greville.*

Rehoboam's fenced cities

5—12. (5) **built,** as so often in O. T. history, meaning fortified. **defence,** fifteen in all, of which twelve are south and west of Jerusalem, showing that he feared Egypt more than he did Israel. (6) **Beth-lehem,** *etc.*, three places lying south of Jerus. (7) **Beth-zur,** now Beitsur. Jos. xv. 58. **Shoco,** 17 m. S. W. of Jerus. **Adullam,** Jos. xii. 15. (8) **Gath,** 1 Chr. xviii. 1. **Mareshah,** Jos. xv. 44. **Ziph,** Jos. xv. 24. (9) **Adoraim,** mod. *Dura*, S. W. of Hebron. **Lachish,** Jos. x. 3; xv. 39. **Azekah,** Jos. x. 10, 11. (10) **Zorah,**

"Zorah commanded an important valley,—the Wady Surah, leading up into the

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hills from the low country."— *Spk Com.*

a Ju. xiii 2, 25; xvi. 31.

"O how portentous is prosperity! How comet-like, it threatens while it shines!"— *Young.*

"It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country."— *Horace.*

Jos. xix. 41.[a] **Aijalon,** Jos. xxi. 24. **Hebron,** Nu. xiii. 22; Ge. xxiii. 2; Jos. xiv. 15. (12) **having Judah,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "And Judah and Benjamin belonged to him."

Rehoboam dwelt at Jerusalem. — Unlike kings of Israel, who shifted their capital from place to place for convenience and policy, he perceived importance of retaining hold on the city of David. This central fortress surrounded by a chain of fortresses, in part to carry out the designs of his father, in part to increase his strength. Reduced by secession, he sought to keep what he possessed. He rebuilt, garrisoned, and provided with arms and stores to stand a siege. — *Hom. Com. Cities for defense.* — To defend the frontiers of the kingdom against both Israel on the north and Egypt on the south, for which last special need existed, considering the friendly relations which had subsisted between Jeroboam and Shishak. Shishak's invasion, which soon followed, showed Rehoboam's apprehensions not to have been baseless. — *Pul. Com.*

Israel casts off the worship of God

b "This may account for the institution of the schismatical and idolatrous priesthood by Jeroboam." — *Wordsworth.*

13—17. (13) **priests . . coasts,**[b] the priests and Levites could not bring themselves to offer sacrifice and service to the calves, or to forsake Jerusalem and the temple and the true altar. No doubt a stirring history underlay the few but suggestive words which point here the conduct of the priests and Levites. These would not be content to stand shoulder to shoulder with priests made not from the tribe of Levi, 1 Kings xii. 31. (14) **suburbs,** *see* Nu. xxxv. 1–8. **cast them off,** whether Jerob. took his action first, or when he found Jehovah's priests forsaking his land, does not clearly appear. (15) **devils,** *R. V.*, "he-goats." Le. xvii. 7; after the example of Egypt in the revolting worship of Pan. In all W. Asia it was thought that hairy demons, like goats, haunted lonely places. — *Geikie.* **calves,** 1 Ki. xii. 28. (16) **after them,** the priests, *etc.* (17) **strengthened,** "Righteousness exalteth a nation." Pro. xiv. 34; Is. xxxiii. 6. **three years,**[c] so long they remained faithful against the idolatrous influences that had captured Israel.

c 2 Chr. xii. 1, 2.

"The guarantee of a nation's progress and stability is to be found, not in its armies, not in the genius, the learning, or the wealth of its citizens, but in the sound morality and religious sentiment of the people." — *Thomas.*

The duty of Protestants (*vss.* 13, 16). — This will lead me to set before you — I. The conduct of Protestants in that day. 1. In it they bore testimony against the reigning abominations; 2. They steadfastly adhered to the service of their God; 3. They renounced all for conscience sake. II. Our duty, as Protestants, at the present day. 1. We should realize our own religious principles; 2. We should show their superior efficacy to sanctify the heart and life. — *Simeon.*

"Though a soldier in time of peace is like a chimney in summer, yet, what wise man would pluck down his chimney because his almanac tells him it is the middle of June."— *T. Hughes.*

Three years. — Is it about that time that men's strength gives way, and they begin to long for some other path? Is there about a three-years' staying power in the strongest of us? Does the strength give out then? and do apostles who watch us say, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" For three little years they walked in the way of David and Solomon. We do not despise the three years, but we are tempted to wonder at the men who could have three years' approximate good character, and then turn away again. We wonder at the man who can abstain three years from drinking "liquid damnation," and then can begin again his evil course. We do wonder at a man who can read and think and study three years, and then run and join the weltering society of fools. How is it with the soul in this matter of three years? — *J. Parker. Seducing others to sin.* — To tempt and lead another into sin is worse than to sin thyself. It shows sin to be of great growth in that man that doth it knowingly and willingly. Herbs and flowers do not shed their seed till ripe; creatures propagate not till they are of stature and age! What do those that tempt others but diffuse their wicked opinions and practices, and as it were raise up seed to the devil, thereby to keep up the name of their infernal father in the world? This shows sin to be mighty in them indeed.— *Gurnall.*

the wives of Rehoboam

d "Her mother was Tamar." — *Josephus.*

18—23. (18) **Jerimoth,** not elsewhere mentioned as *son of David.* **and Abihail,** *R. V.*, "and of Abihail." **Eliab,** the eldest son of Jesse. (20) **Maachah,** granddaughter of Absalom.[d] (21) **he took . . wives;** *R. V.*, forbidden by De. xvii. 17. (22) **the chief, to be ruler,** *R. V.*, "to be chief, even the prince." (23) **wisely,**[e] "the system employed was calculated to minimize jealousies among the princes and to benefit their characters by giving them duties to perform instead of making them idle hangers-on upon a court." — *Rawlinson.* **desired,** *R. V.*, "sought for them."

e "By planting his sons in the fenced cities he kept those cities loyal." — *Wordsworth.*

Honor to a wife. —

Yes, wife, I'd be a thronèd king,
That you might share my regal seat,

That titled beauty I might bring,
And princes' homage to your feet.
How quickly, then, would nobles see
Your courtly grace, your royal mien;
Even duchesses all blind should be
To flaw or speck in you, their queen.

Poor wish! O wife, a queen you are,
To whose feet many a subject brings
A truer homage nobler far
Than bends before the thrones of kings.
You rule a realm, wife, in this heart,
Where not one rebel fancy's seen,
Where hopes and smiles, how joyous! start
To own the sway of you, their queen.

How loyal are my thoughts by day!
How faithful is each dream of night!
Not one but lives but to obey
Your rule — to serve you, its delight;
My hours — each instant — every breath
Are, wife, as all have ever been,
Your slaves, to serve you unto death;
O, wife, you are indeed a queen! — *W. C. Bennett.*

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"Christ's first public miracle graceth a marriage. It is an ancient and laudable institution, that the rites of matrimony should not want a solemn celebration. When are feasts in season, if not at this main change of our estate, wherein the joy of obtaining meets with the hope of further comforts!" — *Bp. Hall.*

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

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1—6. (1) **forsook the law,** there was general and wide-spread immorality, (1 Ki. xiv. 22–24); the simple and solemn rites of Jerusalem gave way to "the seductive rites of Phœnicia and the bloody rites of Moab and Ammon." (2) **Shishak,** this is the king to whom Jeroboam fled (1 Ki. xi. 40) before the death of Solomon, and not improbably this invasion was prompted by Jeroboam." — *Lumby.* **transgressed,** as fully detailed 1 Ki. xiv. 22–24. (3) **Lubims,** or Libyans.[a] **Sukkiims,** cave dwellers,[b] or tent dwellers, prob. fr. western shores of Red Sea. **Ethiopians,** Heb. *Cushim*, fr. S. of Egypt. (4) **fenced cities,** ch. xi. 5–10.[c] (5) **Shemaiah,** this message not given in Kings. Only other references are 1 Ki. xii. 22; 2 Chr. xi. 2; xii. 15. **therefore,** distinctly connecting the suffering with the sin.

Shishak's inscription in the Temple of Karnak.— At Karnak, near Thebes, is a great temple, adjoining which is a smaller temple finished by Shishak after his victory over Rehoboam, and its walls are covered with inscriptions. "In one of the processions thus represented there is to be found the only direct allusion to Jewish history on the Egyptian monuments" (except the Tel-el-Amarna tablets lately discovered). "On one side stands the king himself, on a colossal scale, holding in his hand a train of captives. Meeting him is the God Amon, also leading a train of lesser captives, by strings which he holds in his hand, and which are fastened round their necks."— *Stanley.* "Here, then," says Bishop Walsh, "we possess a contemporaneous record of the conquest of Judea by Shishak, drawn up more than nine hundred years before Christ, and agreeing minutely with the account given us in the books of Kings and Chronicles."

invasion of Judah by Egypt

[a] 2 Chr. xvi. 8; Da. xi. 43; Na. iii. 9.

[b] *Troglodytes,* LXX.

[c] "Among the cities fortified by Rehob., and taken by Shishak, we find in the Karnak inscription 3 only viz., Shoco, Adoraim, and Aijalon. Fourteen names, however, are lost fr. the beginning of the inscription." — *Spk. Com.*

7—12. (7) **some deliverance,** or partial deliv.; God's mercy ever meets man's penitence.[d] (8) **know,** *etc.*, by comparison of the two services. Rehob. had to become tributary to Egypt. (9) **shields,** ch. ix. 15, 16. (10) **brass,** *i. e.* bronze. (11) **when . . them,** so they were exhibited only on occasions of state visits to the temple. (12) **things went well,** *R. V.*, "there were good things found." (*cf.* xix. 3).

The cartouche of Rehoboam in Shishak's inscription.— It occurs in the third line of sixty-three prisoners. Each figure has his arms tied behind him, a rope round his neck, and is placed on a turreted oval, indicative of a walled city, within which the name is inscribed. From the variety of their features, they are evidently intended to be portraits, or, at least, typical of the people represented. This one has a distinctly Jewish face, and the inscription within

Jerusalem taken and spoiled

[d] 1 Ki. xxi. 27–29.

We subjoin the inscription in English letters singularly arranged:

U O I
D
A
M
A
L
K

In this case the first line is to be read like the He-

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brew, from right to left.

the oval is "Judah-Melek," *i. e.* king of Judah. In other words it is meant for the Rehoboam of Scripture, who was defeated by Sheshonk. — *Fairholt.*

13—16. (13) **strengthened himself,** by this return in later life to God. **one and forty years,** *see* 1 Ki. xiv. 21. (14) **evil,**[a] such is the general estimate of his life. "Rehoboam's character was weak and irresolute. He seems to have had warm affections, and to have been capable of making good resolutions, under good advice (2 Chr. xi. 4; xii. 6), but he had no stability of purpose." — *Rawlinson.* (15) **book,** *R. V.*, "histories." **Shemaiah,**[b] *cf.* 1 Ki. xii. 22; 2 Chr. xi. 2 and xii. 5, 7. **Iddo the seer,** (ch. xiii. 22; ix. 29). The seer is one who had visions from God, the prophet is one who reveals and proclaims God's truth. But the names are sometimes given to the same man. **concerning,** *R. V.*, "after the manner of." (16) **Abijah,** ch. xi. 22.

The evil of neglected prayer (*vs.* 14).— From this conduct of Rehoboam I will take occasion to show — I. How alone a man can be preserved from evil by seeking after God. This implies — 1. Meditation; 2. Self-examination; 3. Fixedness of heart to follow the dictates of our conscience. We may therefore easily foresee — II. The certain consequences of neglecting the appointed means. For — 1. Our corruptions will rage; 2. Our temptations will multiply; 3. Our enemies will prevail. Get your minds then deeply imbued with — (1) A sense of your weakness; (2) A persuasion of the efficacy of prayer; (3) A conviction of the necessity of holiness in order to your happiness in the eternal world. — *Simeon.*

Necessity of prayer. — The wise Hillel had a pupil named Maimon, and Hillel was greatly pleased with his talents and his good understanding. But he soon discovered that Maimon was trusting too much to his own wisdom, and had entirely given up prayer. For the young man said in his heart, "What is the use of prayer? Does the omniscient God need our words before He helps us? He would then be like a man. Can a man's prayers and sighs alter His plans? Will not the gracious God give us of Himself whatever is good and useful?" These were the thoughts of the youth. But Hillel was troubled in his heart that Maimon should think himself wiser than the Word of God, and he determined to teach him better. When Maimon went to him one day, Hillel was sitting in his garden, under the shade of a palm tree meditating, with his head resting upon his hand. And Maimon said to him "Master, about what are you meditating?" Then Hillel lifted up his head and said, "I have a friend, who lives upon the produce of his estate. Till now he has carefully cultivated it, and it has well repaid his toil. But now he has thrown away the plough and hoe, and is determined to leave the field to itself; so that he is sure to come to want and misery." "Has he gone mad?" said the young man, "or fallen into despondency?" "Neither," said Hillel; "he is of a pious disposition, and well grounded in learning, both human and Divine. But he says: the Lord is omnipotent, and can easily give us nourishment without our bending our head to the ground; and as He is gracious, He will bless my table and open His hand. And who can contradict him?" "Why," said the young man, "is not that tempting God? Have not you told him so?" Then Hillel smiled, and said, "I will tell him so. You, dear Maimon, are the friend I am speaking of." "I?" said Maimon, and started back. But the old man replied, "Are you not tempting the Lord? Is prayer less than work, and are spiritual blessings inferior to the fruit of the field? And He who tells you to stoop your head to the earth for the sake of earthly fruit is He not the same as He who tells you to lift your head towards heaven to receive His heavenly blessings?" Thus spake Hillel, and looked up to heaven; and Maimon went away and prayed, and his life was a very godly one. — *Haven.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1—5. (1) **eighteenth year,** 1 Ki. xv. 1. (2) **Michaiah,** mistake for Maachah, *cf.* xi. 20, and 1 Ki. xv. 2. The queen mother seems generally to have possessed much influence, for we find great respect shown to her, *e. g.* the king bows down before her (1 Ki. ii. 19), also she is called "queen," (2 Chr. xv. 16 Je. xiii. 18). Hence on the accession of a king the name of his mother is given. (4) **mount Zemaraim,** near Bethel; it cannot be certainly identified. **mount Ephraim,** *R. V.*, "The hill country of Ephraim." (5) **covenant of salt,**[c] salt is the symbol of cleansing, purification and durability. Durability

the death of Rehoboam

[a] Rehoboam's sin was want of earnestness and consistency.

[b] 1 Chr. xxix. 29.

"He that prays to God with an angry, that is, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army, and chooses a frontier garrison to be wise in."— *Bp. Taylor.*

"Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream of glory on the consecrated hour of man in audience with the Deity: who worships the great God, that instant joins the first in heaven, and sets his foot on hell."— *Young.*

Wanted immediately: — A few more Aarons and Hurs as attendants on the weekly prayer meetings, to pray for the success of the teaching of the Gospel on the Sabbath.

Abijah succeeds Jeroboam

[c] Le. ii. 13; Ez. xliii. 24.

"Dr Kane finding a flower under the Humboldt glacier was more affected by it because it grew beneath the lip and cold bosom of the ice, then he would have been by the most gorgeous garden bloom. So

is the idea of salt in a covenant act, therefore a permanent covenant is called "a cov.' of salt," Nu. xviii. 19.

A covenant of salt.—The Orientals were accustomed also to ratify their federal engagements by salt. This substance was, among the ancients, the emblem of friendship and fidelity, and therefore used in all their sacrifices and covenants. It is a sacred pledge of hospitality which they never venture to violate. Numerous instances occur of travelers in Arabia, after being plundered and stripped by the wandering tribes of the desert, claiming the protection of some civilized Arab, who, after receiving him into his tent, and giving him salt, instantly relieves his distress, and never forsakes him till he has placed him in safety.—*Paxton.*

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some single, struggling grace in the heart of one far removed from Divine influences may be dearer to God than a whole catalogue of virtues in the life of one more favored of heaven."—*Beecher.*

Abijah's word to Jeroboam

6—12. (6) **hath rebelled,** 1 Ki. xi. 26, 27. (7) **children of Belial,** men animated by malice. **young,** not true. Reh. was 41 yrs. old at the time. This is said for effect. (8) **sons of David,** the lawful rulers. **golden calves,** the proof of apostasy. (9) **cast out,** ch. xi. 14. **consecrate . . rams,** comp. Ex. xxix. 1; Le. viii. 2. "This passage refers to some enactment akin to that of the Mosaic law concerning the priesthood."—*Oehler.* (10) **not forsaken,** this is only true in a degree. **the priests,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "and we have priests ministering unto the Lord, the sons of Aaron and the Levites in their work." (11) **they burn,** *i. e.* the regular Div. service is maintained only by us. (12) **God himself is with us,** so Abijah makes the battle take the character of sacred war. **trumpets,** it was one of the official functions of the priests to blow the silver trumpets at festivals, sacrificial ceremonies and in military campaigns. (Nu. x. 8–10; xxxi. 6.)

"*Ye shall not prosper.*"—Many times has Christianity seemed to be doomed to defeat and even to extinction, but out of every terrible contest it has emerged successful, even triumphant. Persecution, ridicule, argumentation, corruption—these have done their worst, and they have failed. To-day the friends of Christ are more numerous, and the cause of Christ is more advanced, than ever. And he who is in arms against the Lord of all love and power, who is seeking to undermine His influence, who is contemptuous of His holy will, who is opposing his own indifference or his worldliness to the commands and the invitations of a Divine Saviour, he is in the ranks of the army that will be defeated; no voice of victory will greet his dying ear, no hope of commendation and award will then fill his heart.—*Clarkson. God's people delivered by Him in extremities.*—In the day of great distress and great danger to God's people in Germany, Luther cried in his closet, and came out, declaring to friends "*Vicimus, vicimus,*" we have overcome, we have overcome. From that day Charles the Fifth issued a proclamation that none should be further molested for religion.—*Hom. Com.*

When the Rev. Mr. Newton heard an infidel jestingly say,—"I always spend the Sunday in settling my accounts," that venerable minister turned round and said in an accent of deep solemnity, "You may find, sir, that the day of judgment is to be spent in exactly the same manner."

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the death of Jeroboam

13—18. (13) **ambushment,** poss. arranged while Abijah was haranguing. (14) **cried . . trumpets,** *cf. vs.* 12, note, "the sounding of trumpets at worship took the place, as it were, of an invocation. It was to bring the people to the consciousness that God was thinking of them. The word 'selah' in the Psalms is thought to refer to this act."—*Oehler.* (15) **God smote,** an historical instance of the falsity of the statement that "God is on the side of the biggest battalions." (17) **fell down slain,**[a] "this number is hardly correct, even if we regard it as covering all who fell in the war. Such a loss in a war lasting but little over two years, between such petty states as Judah and Israel, would be unexampled."—*Rawlinson.* (18) **brought under,** defeated, not made tributary. **because,** gives the moral significance of the contest and result.

Caractacus.—Caractacus, after defending himself with invincible bravery against the Romans, who had invaded his dominions, was treacherously seized and betrayed to his enemies, by whom he was sent, with the rest of his family, in chains to Rome. The behavior of Caractacus, in that metropolis of the world, was truly great. When brought before the emperor, he appeared with a manly and undaunted countenance, and thus addressed himself to Claudius: "If in my prosperity the moderation of my conduct had been equivalent to my birth and fortune, I should have come into this city, not as a captive, but as a friend; nor would you, Cæsar, have disdained the alliance of a man born of illustrious ancestors, and ruler over several nations. My present fate is to me dishonorable; to you magnificently glorious. I once had horses; I once had men: I once had arms; I once had riches; can you wonder, then,

[a] "The merciless slaughter that ensued can be accounted for only by tracing it to the rancorous passions enkindled by a civil war."—*Jamieson.*

"A wise and virtuous man, when in adversity, may, like a dark lantern in the night, seem dull and dark to those who are about him; but within, he is full of light and brightness; and when he chooses to open the door he can show it."—*Feltham.*

"Let prosperity be as oil to the wheels of obedi-

B. C. 915.

ence; and affliction as wind to the sails of prayer." — *Philip Henry.*

"True patriots we, for, be it understood, we left our country for our country's good." — *Barrington.*

I should part with them unwillingly? Although, as Romans, you may aim at universal empire, it does not follow that all mankind must tamely submit to be your slaves. If I had yielded without resistance, neither the perverseness of my fortune, nor the glory of your triumph, had been so remarkable. Punish me with death, and I shall soon be forgotten. Suffer me to live, and I shall remain a lasting monument of your clemency." The manner in which this noble speech was delivered affected the whole assembly, and made such an impression on the emperor, that he ordered the chains of Caractacus and his family to be taken off; and Agrippina, who was more than an equal associate in the empire, not only received the captive Britons with great marks of kindness and compassion, but confirmed to them the enjoyment of their liberty.

the prosperity of Abijah

19—22. (19) **Bethel,** the frontier town which (1 Ki. xii. 32–33) was the chief seat of the idolatry of Jeroboam. **with the towns,** *i. e.* villages or suburbs. **Jeshanah,** not known. **Ephrain,** *R. V.*, "Ephron." (20) **recover strength,** for war,[a] **struck him,** *i. e.* Jeroboam: this indic. premature death, though he lived two years longer than Abijah.[b] (21) **mighty,** his speech was fine, but his life was bad (1 Ki. xv. 3) and he reigned a brief three years only (1 Ki. xv. 2). He was made mighty for Israel's sake (1 Ki. xv. 4). (22) **story,** *R. V.*, "commentary."[c] This memoir, from which our writer drew his information, is one of the many "original documents" of which we know nothing.

Death a common lot. — 1. It is inevitable. Knocks with impartial step at the door of the cottage and the palace of the prince, says Horace. It is appointed unto all men. Cannot be bribed by prosperity ("Abijah waxed mighty"), nor postponed by adversity ("neither did Jeroboam recover strength"). 2. It is peculiar in method. Abijah's a natural death, "slept with his fathers." Jeroboam "struck." He never survived defeat; stung by accusing conscience, or afflicted with lingering, incurable disease (like Jehoram, 2 Chr. xxi. 19) which at last killed him. Death terminates all earthly glory. — *Hom. Com.*

[a] "The battle at Zemaraim both crippled his power and broke his spirits. — *Jamieson.*

[b] 1 Ki. xiv. 20.

[c] 2 Chr. xii. 15.

"His honor rooted in dishonor stood, and faith unfaithful kept him falsely true." — *Tennyson.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

B. C. 917.

Asa succeeds to the throne

1—5. (1) **Abijah,** of whom the best that can be said is that he prepared the way, in his brief reign, for one of the longest and best administrations that Judah enjoyed. **Asa,** *physician,* 1 Ki. xv. 8, 11. Prob. Asa was about 20 yrs. old at this time. Remarkable that under the influence of Abijah and Maachah he should have been a reformer. **quiet ten years,** in consequence of the great victory gained in Abijah's reign.[d] (2) **good and right,** the addition of the word "good" suggests that Asa did right in an acceptable manner, putting his heart into it. (3) *R. V.*, "for he took away the strange altars and the high places and broke down the pillars and hewed down the Asherim."[e] **high places,** first mentioned Nu. xxiii. 3. "Worship on high places was universal for ages in W. Asia. It originated in adoration of the sun, such places being nearest him and most exposed to his rays." They were natural altars. — *Geikie.* **images,** Baal statues. **groves,**[f] wooden posts consecrated to the Phœnician Venus. (4) **commanded Judah,** not merely setting an example, but exerting his authority to re-establish the worship of Jehovah. (5) **images,**[g] *R. V.*, "sun-images." All about Palestine were nations who worshipped the sun. The Arabians perhaps without any symbol, but the Phœnicians, the Syrians and the Egyptians with idols which were gradually introduced among the Hebrews. Baal and Moloch were sun-idols.

Sun-images. — We see these "sun-images" were connected with the altars and worship of Baal. The "sun-images" are principally if not exclusively, kept in the temples of Siva. They are made of black granite, in the shape of a man, and about his size. There are, however, many of them with only a head, having a halo or numerous coruscations to represent the orb of day. Thus in the houses of rich natives may be seen near a niche, on one side the representation of the sun, and on the other a figure of the crescent moon. The temple images are placed on the east side, and offerings are sometimes presented to them before they are taken to the idol. — *Roberts.* "*Rest on every side.*" — It is significant enough that the chronicler considered it a noteworthy fact that "in his days the land was quiet ten years." It indicates very forcibly that the chronic condition of the country in those times was one of unsettlement and strife. We should think it strange, indeed, if the his-

[d] Comp. 2 Chr. xii. 1, 2, 5.

[e] 1 Ki. xiv. 23; xv. 13.

[f] Le. xxvi. 30.

[g] "Idolatry! — you cannot find any more gross, any more cruel, on the broad earth, than within the area of a mile around this pulpit. Darkminds, from which God is obscured; deluded souls, whose fetish is the dice-box or the bottle; false gods, more hideous, more awful, than Moloch or Baal, worshipped with curses, with the hearthstone for the bloody altar, and the drunken husband for the immolating priest, and women and children for the victims." — *Chapin.*

torian of our country thought it worth while to record that for ten years the sovereign "had no war." But it is painful to think that for very many centuries, in many lands, if not in all, war was regarded as the normal condition; an attitude of armed hostility toward the neighboring nation was considered the necessary and natural relation. History then was not the account of discovery, of invention, of achievement, of advance; it was the story of international or civil war. This was the rule which, we may thank God, is now the exception, and which, we devoutly hope, will soon be obselete. — *Pul. Com.*

B. C. 917.

6—9. (6) **built,** with the frequent sense of restored or fortified. **fenced cities,** prob. those wh. Rehoboam had built, and Shishak may have dismantled.[a] (7) **yet before us,** *i. e.* open to us. Let us take the opportunity of the freedom of the land from hostile forces.[b] **sought the Lord,** "this is the true defense of a kingdom (Zech. ii. 5.) without which all other means are ineffectual." (8) **targets,**[c] the target was a larger shield (ix. 15). Benjamin was a warlike tribe (Ge. xlix. 27; Ju. xx.), among whom were archers and slingers (Ju. xx. 16; 1 Chr. viii. 40). This accounts for the large number of their troops. Benjamin continued to adhere to David. (9) **Zerah the Ethiopian,** or Cushite. Prob. a king of Egypt, identified with Osorken II., the third king after Shishak: second king of the twenty-second dynasty. A million of men is an enormous host; but ancient sovereigns were followed by most of their subjects capable of bearing arms, who were attracted by the hope of plunder. Xerxes assembled nearly three millions for the invasion of Greece. Darius Codomannus had 1,040.000 men at Arbela. — *Murphy.* **Mareshah,** 2 Chr. xi. 8, 26 m. S.W. of Jerus., in the line of march from Egypt.

Marksmen. — Montaigne relates that "an offer was made to an excellent archer, condemned to die, that his life should be saved, if he would show some proof of his art; but he refused to try, fearing lest his agitation should make him shoot wide, and that instead of preserving his life, he should lose the reputation he had got of being a good marksman. Of the precision with which the Americans manage the rifle, Priest, in his *Travels in America,* gives the following account, which it must be confessed, partakes of the marvellous. He says: — "During the late war, in 1775, a company of riflemen, formed from the backwoodsmen of Virginia, was quartered at Lancaster, in New England, for some time. Two of them alternately held a board only nine inches square, between his knees, while his comrades fired a ball through it, from a distance of one hundred paces! The board is still preserved; and I am assured, by several who were present, that it was performed without any manner of deception."— *Percy Anec.*

Asa's fortresses and army

a 2 Chr. xi. 5-12; 1 Ki. xiv. 25-28. Comp. 1. Ki. xv. 22.

b From this it appears that the country was free fr. its tribute to Egypt. 2 Chr. xii. 8.

c "This large number does not mean a body of professional soldiers, such as compose European armies, but all capable of bearing arms, and liable to be called into service." — *Jamieson.*

"No evil can surprise us if we watch, no evil can hurt us if we pray."— *Bp. Hall.* "But war's a game which, were their subjects wise, kings would not play at."—*Cowper.*

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10—15. (10) **valley of Zephathah,** a plain near the town of Mareshah, chosen by Zerah as battle-field for the convenience of his chariots.[d] (11) **nothing . . power,**[e] *R. V.*, "there is none beside thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength." **we rest on thee,** the best plea we can make before God is our trust of the whole case to him.[f] **man,** *marg.* mortal man. (12) **before,** *i. e.* by means of. (13) **Gerar,** Ge. x. 19, on the S. W. border of Palestine, sixty miles fr. Jerus.[g] **Ethiopians,** *etc., R. V.*, "and there fell of the Ethiopians so many that" *etc.* (14) **cities round about Gerar,** these were prob. at this time in the hands of Philistines, who aided Zerah, and so were now punished. The cities belonged of old to the kingdom of Abimelech (Ge. xx). The brook Besor flows through this region; and when there is water, there follow fertility and food for man and beast. Hence the abundance of spoil. (15) The tents were for the nomads who tended the cattle.

Asa defeats Zerah

d Supposed to be the broadway coming down *Beit Jibrin,* towards *Tell-e s-Safieh.*" — *Robinson.*

e 1 Sa. xiv. 6.

f 2 Ch. xvi. 8; Pr. xviii. 10; Ps. xxli. 5.

g "The results wh. follow this victory are most striking. The southern power cannot rally fr. the blow, but rapidly declines, and for above 3 centuries makes no further effort in this direction. All fear of Egypt as an ag-

Prayer in emergencies.— Asa's prayer is a model of prayer in an emergency. Such prayer should include. 1. Strong faith in God's independence of human resources and methods of judgment. "Lord it is nothing with thee," *etc.* 2. A profound sense of the inadaquacy of all other sources of relief. "We rest in thee." 3. A profound identification with God. "In thy name we go against this multitude." 4. A hearty recognition of God's ownership of us, "Let not man prevail against thee."— *Phelps.*

A providential escape.— A merchant was one day returning from market. He was on horseback, and behind him was a valise filled with money. The rain fell with violence, and the good old man was wet to his skin. At this he

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was vexed, and murmured because God had given him such bad weather for his journey. He soon reached the borders of a thick forest. What was his terror, on beholding on one side of the road a robber, with leveled gun, aiming at him, and attempting to fire! But the powder being wet by the rain, the gun did not go off, and the merchant, giving spurs to his horse, fortunately had time to escape. As soon as he found himself safe, he said to himself :— "How wrong was I, not to endure the rain patiently as sent by Providence. If the weather had been dry and fair, I should not, probably, have been alive at this hour, and my little children would have expected my return in vain. The rain which caused me to murmur, came at a fortunate moment to save my life and preserve my property." And thus it is with a multitude of our afflictions ; by causing us slight and short sufferings, they preserve us from others far greater, and of longer duration.— *Arvine.*

gressive power ceases; and the Israelites learn instead to lean upon the Pharaohs for support." — *Spk. Com.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

Azariah exhorts Asa

1—7. (1) **Spirit,** *etc.*, Nu. xxiv. 2. **Azariah,** should be remembered as the first great reformer in those days. He is not mentioned elsewhere. (2) **meet Asa,** on his return fr. the victory over Zerah. **while ye be with him,** intimating that the condition of prosperity was "continuance in well-doing ;" and that precisely in this they were likely to fail. **seek him,** as they had done in this battle.[a] (3) **long season,** *lit.* "there were many days to Israel (when it belonged) to no God of truth." The proph. recalls many historical cases of apostasy. **teaching priest,** instruction and guidance in the national duty to God belonged to priestly office. (4) **turn,** in penitence. (5) **no peace,**[b] the word used signifies especially commotion or trouble sent fr. God. (6) **nation,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "and they were broken in pieces, nation against nation and city against city." (7) **strong,** to continue in the way thus so well begun.

God's presence with a people (*vs.* 2). — I. What was the happiness which they enjoyed? The presence of God in His covenant of grace with any people, is the greatest glory and happiness they can enjoy. It includes — 1. The owning them as His own people ; 2. Assisting and prospering them in all this ; 3. Protecting them from all enemies. II. The condition upon which they held it. God will be with His people, their glory, portion, prosperity and protection, just as they are with Him. Learn : — To be with God is not merely to bear His name, to be called His people, to draw near to Him in external performances ; it is, to be a consecrated people, to be true worshippers, to be engaged in His service. — *S. Marshall.*

"*Without a teaching priest,*" — not an ornament, nor a ceremonialist, but a teaching priest. A man whose business it was to expound the law and make the people understand it. So they preached in olden times ; they took the law syllable by syllable, explained it word by word, and sentence by sentence; they analyzed it, took it member from member. They put it together again and hurled it upon the people like a thunderbolt from heaven. They had naught else to expound, because they thought nothing else worthy of exposition. We are lost in details. Any man may get up a lecture if he has great quoting power. It is almost impossible not to get up a lecture ; the temptations are innumerable, and in many cases irresistible. Only one speech is worth listening to, that is the speech which begins in eternity, sweeps down through time, leaves behind it immortal lessons, and ascends to the fountain of origin. — *Parker.*

a 1 Chr. xxviii. 9; Jer. xxix. 13.

b Illus. by Ju. v. 6.

"Let us not conceive of all genuine religion as moving in one groove of feeling and practice, and refuse to acknowledge any man as a Christian because he does not run upon our particular groove. There are several points of view from which Christianity may be surveyed ; and although it be one and the same object from whatever point we look, yet eyes placed on different levels will see it grouped in different perspectives." — *Goulburn.*

"Lord! let me rather wear out in the work than consume (like a garment laid by) with moths for want of use." — *Swinnock.*

Asa abolishes idolatry

8—13. (8) **prophecy of Oded,** prob. some words have dropped out, and it should read, "the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded."[c] **abominable idols,** *R. V.*, "abominations," including the abominable things connected with the worship of idols.[d] (9) **strangers,** *R. V.*, "them that sojourned." **in abundance,** so it may well be said that among the *Jews*, which name now arose in the S. kingdom. *All Israel* was represented. "From this time the disruption was irremediable." — *Oehler.* (10) **fifteenth year,** so this great battle was in the 15th yr. of his reign, and to celebrate it and attach to himself the people who had flocked to him, he proclaims a great feast and calls on the people to consecrate themselves to the God of Israel. (11) **of the spoil,**[e] as thank-offering. (12) **to seek,** by the covenant pledging themselves to seek. (13) **put to death,** De. xvii. 2–6.

c So read the Alex., Sept., the Syriac, and the Vulgate.

d Re. xvii. 4, 5.

e 2 Chr. xiv. 13, 15.

"Walking with God is the best way to confute them that think religion to be

Covenant. — Charles Kingsley wrote on entering his 22d year: "My birthnight. I have been for the last hour on the seashore; not dreaming, but thinking deeply and strongly, and forming determinations which are to affect my destiny through time and eternity. Before the sleeping earth, and the sleepless sea and stars, I have devoted myself to God — a vow never (if He gives me the faith I pray for) to be recalled." — *Hom. Com.*

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14—19. (14) **loud voice,** *etc.*, indicating the national earnestness and joy. (15) **rest,** another period after the victory, like the one that preceded it. (16) **Maachah,** 1 Ki. xv. 13. **mother,** *i. e.* grandmother. **queen,** or queen-mother.[a] See note on 2 Chr. xiii. 2. **an idol in a grove,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "an abominable image for an Asherah; and Asa cut down her image and made dust of it, *etc.*" **Kidron,** 2 Sa. xv. 23. (17) **high . . not taken away,** some qualification is therefore necessary of such a passage as ch. xiv. 3, 5.[b] **perfect,** *i. e.* true, sincere. (18) **dedicated,** after his victory over Jeroboam.[c] (19) **five and thirtieth,** prob. shd. be five and *twentieth*, to accord with the chronology given in 1 Ki. xvi. 8.

The best use for an idol. — Some years ago, Mr. Ward, a Christian missionary, in going through a village near Calcutta, left at a native shop a Bengalee New Testament, that it might be read by any of the villagers. About a year afterwards, three or four of the most intelligent of the inhabitants came to inquire further respecting the contents of the book left in their village. This ended in six or eight of them making a public profession of Christianity. Among these, one deserves peculiar notice. An old man, named Juggernath, who had long been a devotee to the idol of that name in Orissa, had made many pilgrimages thither, and had acquired such a name for sanctity that a rich man in Orissa was said to have offered him a pension for life, on condition of his remaining with him. On his becoming acquainted with the New Testament, he first hung his image of Khrishnoo, or Juggernath, which he had hitherto worshipped, on a tree in his garden, and at length cut it up to boil his rice. He remained steadfast in his profession of Christianity till his death. Two others, being men of superior natural endowments, employed themselves in publishing the doctrines of Christianity to their countrymen in the most fearless manner; while their conduct was such as to secure them universal esteem. — *Cheever.*

Asa deposes Maachah

a "When Abijah was chosen above all his brothers as successor, she filled the high office known in Jerus., as in the Turkish Empire by a peculiar name — the queen-mother — Gebirah the Leader, *the Sultana Valide*; and her influence continued through his reign and that of her grandson Asa." — *Stanley.*

b "Same purpose to reconcile the apparent discrepancy by distinguishing two kinds of high places, those where Jehovah was worshipped and those dedicated to other gods." — *Spk. Com.*

c 2 Chr. xiii. 16-19.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

1—6. (1) **six and thirtieth,** must be 26th year, comp. 1 Ki. xvi. 8. **Baasha,** 1 Ki. xv. 16, 17. **Ramah,** Jos. xviii. 25.[d] This implies the successful invasion of Judea and conquest of other cities. Ramah was on high ground "half way between Bethel and Jerusalem," and its occupation was a serious menace to Asa. **go out,** alarmed by the migration of his people (ch. xv. 9), he designed to stop all communication between the countries. (2) **Ben-hadad,** "the most powerful monarch in the region betw. Egypt and the Euphrates." — *Rawlinson.* **Damascus,** Ge. xiv. 15. (3) **There is a,** better, *let there be a.* **break,** *etc.*, a league with the northern part of the country was more useful to Ben-hadad, unless he had designs of seizing Israelitish territory. (4) **Ijon,** 1 Ki. xv. 20.[e] **Dan,** Jos. xix. 47. **Abel-maim,** 1 Ki. xv. 20. **store cities,** 2 Chr. viii. 6. (5) **building,** fortifying. (6) **Geba,** Jos. xviii. 24. **Mizpah,** Ge. xxxi. 45-55. Asa tore down the fortifications of Baasha and used the material to fortify two cities some five miles from Jerusalem.

Baasha invades Judah

Bribery. — A man furnished with the arguments from the mint will convince his antagonist much sooner than one who draws them from reason and philosophy. Gold is a wonderful clearer of the understanding; it dissipates every doubt and scruple in an instant; accommodates itself to the meanest capacities; silences the loud and clamorous, and brings over the most obstinate and inflexible. Philip of Macedon was a man of most invincible reason this way. He refuted by it all the wisdom of Athens — confounded their statesmen, struck their orators dumb, and at length argued them out of their liberties. — *Addison.*

Heavenly treasure. — Use all diligence to gain such a treasure as lies above the reach of the storms of this world — a kingdom that cannot be shaken — namely, our peace with God in Christ, the pardon of our sin, and a well-grounded hope and assurance of eternal life. These are the things that lie out

d "As after the division of the kingdom there was a continual flow of the more piously disposed Israelites into Judah, Baasha endeavored to prevent this by fortifying Ramah." — *Ayre.*

e "The present name of the plain is *Merj. Aiyun* — a mere variation of the Heb. It is about 6 miles long and two broad, with a regular descent southward fr. a great mound at the north end.

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The top of this mound is covered with the rubbish of the ancient city. Tradition makes this the site of Ijon."—*Thomson.*

of gun-shot, and will render the greatest troubles that can befall this lower world, or us in it, not only tolerable, but small and inconsiderable, when in the midst of all the concussion of the world, in the midst of losses of goods or estate, in the midst of storms, and confusions and, disasters, and calamities, a man can have such deep and settled considerations as these : — Though I can see nothing but confusion, and little hopes of their amendment, yet I have that which is out of the reach of all these ; that which is infinitely more valuable to me than the best which the world can give ; that which I can please and comfort myself in, notwithstanding all these worldly distractions and fears — namely, the assurance of my peace with the great God of heaven and earth. The worst that I can suffer by these discomposures and the most I can fear from them is but death ; and that will not only put a period to the things I suffer or can fear in this life, but will let me into the actual possession of my hopes, even such a state of glory and happiness as never can be ended or shaken. Such a hope and such an assurance as this will keep the soul above water, and in a state of peace and tranquillity, in all the tempests and shipwrecks that can befall either this inferior world or any person in it. — *Sir M. Hale.*

Hanani reproves Asa

7—10. (7) **Hanani,** 1 Ki. xvi. 1. **relied . . God,** the condition of Asa's prosperity was the maintenance of that trust wh. had already led to victory.[a] **escaped,** *i. e.* an opportunity of victory had been lost. (8) **Ethiopians,** *etc.*, 2 Chr. xiv. 9. **Lubims,** *dwellers in a scorched land ;* same as *Libyans.*[b] (9) **foolishly,** what Asa thought skilful diplomacy the prophet says was foolishness, because Asa had called on man rather than God for aid. Comp. Saul.[c] **wars,** comp. 2 Chr. xiv. 1, 6, 7: xv. 15. (10) **prison house,** Heb. *house of distortion.*[d] Comp. this treatment of Hanani with that of Azariah in xv. 2. This is the first case of persecution of the prophets. **the people,** for agreeing with the prophet.

The eyes of the Lord (*vs.* 9). — We have here — 1. The description of Providence. "The eyes of the Lord" in Scripture signify — 1. His knowledge; 2. His providence — the immediateness of providence — its celerity and speed — its extent — its diligence — its efficacy. II. The design of Providence. To show Himself strong, *etc.* 1. He has strong understanding and wisdom to contrive ; 2. Strong affections to love ; 3. Strong words to cheer and fortify; 4. A strong arm to exert almighty power. Remember the persons for whom — those who are truly gracious and sincere. — *J. Ryland.*

Omnipresence of God. — To the Hebrews the external universe is just a black screen concealing God. All things are full of, yet all distinct from Him. The cloud on the mountain is His covering; the muttering from the chamber of the thunder is His voice ; that sound on the top of the mulberry trees is His "going ;" in that wind, which bends the forest or curls the clouds, He is walking ; that sun is His still commanding eye. Whither can they go from His spirit? whither can they flee from His presence? At every step and in every circumstance they feel themselves God-enclosed, God-filled, God-breathing men, with a spiritual presence lowering or smiling on them from the sky, sounding in wild tempest, or creeping in panic stillness across the surface of the earth; and if they turn within, lo! it is there also, — an "eye" hung in the central darkness of their own hearts. Hence the Muse of the Hebrew bard is not Dame Memory, nor any of her siren daughters, but the almighty, all-pervading Spirit Himself, who is at once the subject, the auditor, and the inspirer of the song. — *Gilfillan.*

a Comp. 2 Chr. xiv. 11; xv. 2, 7.

b Ge. x. 13.

c 1 Sa. xiii. 13.

d So called bec. the limits of the prisoner were so set and fixed as to be twisted and distorted in it. Jer. xx. 2; xxix. 26; Ac. xvi. 24.

"As there is no babe cradled and rocked that has not its mother, in the ordinary course of life, to overhang it by night and by day, to kiss it as it sleeps, and to cover it with smiles and caresses when it wakes, so every creature that is born into life has a God whose ever watchful soul broods tenderly over it by day and by night, and who interspheres it in His own radiant thought and feeling." — *Beecher.*

the death of Asa

11—14. (11) **book,** *etc.*, this is not the one preserved to us under this title, *cf.* note on xxvii. 7. (12) **diseased in his feet,** prob. by the gout. **exceeding great,** or *moved upward*, indic. the violent and dangerous type of the malady. **physicians,** his sin again consisted in his looking to man only and not to God for aid. "Physicians who were neither priests nor prophets of Jehovah were almost certain to be ministers of idolatrous worship and magicians." — *Exp. Bib.* (13) **one and fortieth,** 1 Ki. xv. 10. His reign was exceeded in length by two only (Uzziah, 52 yrs., and Manasseh, 55 yrs.), and from military and religious points of view was unsurpassed. He was about 60 yrs. old when he died. (14) **sepulchres,** rock tombs contained many places for bodies. **sweet odours,** comp. Mk. xvi. 1; Lu. xxiii. 56; xxiv. 1. **burning,** also of spices.[e]

The bed of sweet spices (*vs.* 14.) — According to a tradition that prevailed

e 2 Chr. xxi. 19; Jer. xxxiv. 5.

"The burning of spices in honor of a king at his funeral, and the only peculiarity in the instance before us was the large quantity, and perhaps the rare quality of the spice burnt."—*Spk. Com.*

among the Turks, "an eminent prophet, who lived in Mesopotamia many ages ago, whose name was Zechariah, was beheaded by the prince of that country, on account of his virtuous opposition to some lewd scheme of his. His head he ordered to be put in a stone urn, two feet square, upon the top of which was an inscription, importing that the urn enclosed the head of that great prophet Zechariah. This urn remained in the castle of Aleppo till about 800 years ago, when it was removed into an old Christian church in that city, afterward turned into a mosque, which decaying, another was built near it, and the place where the head was deposited choked up by a wall." Mr. Drummond wrote this account in 1748. About the year 1708, a zealous grand vizier who pretended to have been admonished in a dream to remove this stone vessel into a more conspicuous place, had it removed accordingly, with many religious ceremonies, and affixed in a conspicuous part of the mosque; and at the close of all it is said, "The urn was opened and filled with spices and perfumes to the value of £400." Here we see in late times honor was done to the supposed head of an eminent saint, by filling its repository with odoriferous substances. The bed of sweet spices, in which Asa was laid, seems to have been of the same kind, or something very much like it. Might not large quantities of precious perfumes, in like manner, be strewed, or designed to be strewed about the body of our Lord? This would require large quantities. Zechariah of Mesopotamia had been dead so long that nothing of this kind could be done with any view to preserve his head from decay; it was merely to do him honor. The spices used by the Jews in burial might be for the same purpose.—*Harmer.*

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"Kings then at last have but the lot of all,
By their own conduct they must stand or fall."
—*Couper.*

"Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay, might stop a hole to keep the wind away; O! that the earth, which kept the world in awe, should patch a wall, to expel the winter's flaw!"—*Shakespeare.*

"Ambition mad, that stems alone the boisterous surge with bladders blown."—*Hamilton.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

Jehoshaphat becomes king

1—6. (1) **Jehoshaphat,** *whom Jehovah judges,* 35 yrs. old when he began to reign. This chapter is given only in Chronicles. **strengthened,**[a] *etc.,* prepared himself to resist, for Ahab is king in Israel, with Jezebel his queen, and there were certain cities on the N. frontier liable to be claimed by Israel. (2) **forces,** troops of soldiers. **cities of Eph.,** 2 Chr. xv., 8. (3) **Lord was with,** graciously accepting and blessing him. **first ways,** better to read, "walked in the ways of his father David, the ancient ways." **Baalim,** a plural word. Everywhere in Israel, on the other hand, the worship of Baal, with its obscene rites, its priests or temples, was supplanting Jehovah worship. (5) **presents,**[b] in addition to the taxes. (6) **lifted up,** Keil translates, "His heart was exalted by the ways of Jehovah." **high places,** but it would seem from xx. 33 that he was not completely successful.

Fidelity to the faith and example of a pious ancestry.—I. It is an unspeakable blessing to have been born in the line of a Christian parentage. II. The relig. of our fathers has a strong presumptive claim upon our faith. III. The imitation of a godly ancestry is peculiarly pleasing to God. IV. It is an act of signal and relentless guilt to break the line of a pious heritage by a godless life.—*Austin Phelps.*

Example of earnestness.—When Dr. Chalmers occupied the chair of philosophy in the college of St. Andrews, he used to gather into his own house each Sabbath evening the poorest and most ignorant of the vagrant children of the neighborhood; and his biography states, that, for that audience, he prepared himself as carefully, with his pen in his hand, as for his class in the university. So, on a winter day through frost and in the face of a driving snow-storm, you might have seen him walking five miles to fulfil an appointment of religious worship with a little company of rustic people at Kilmany; and there, amid some illiterate, shivering cottagers, too few for a church or chapel, met in a damp room—an audience that many men would have thought it expedient to dismiss at once "on account of the weather," and many more would have put off with some crude, unpremeditated talk—he preached as labored and as eloquent a sermon as would have moved to rapture and wonder the learning and fashion of Glasgow or of London.

[a] "The temper and proceedings of the kings of Israel rendered it necessary for him to prepare vigorous measures of defense on the northern frontier of his kingdom, and these consisted in filling all the fortresses with their full complement of troops, and establishing military stations in various parts of the country, as well as in the cities of Mount Ephraim, which belonged to Jehoshaphat. (Ch. xv. 8)."—*Jamieson.*

[b] 1 Sa. x. 27.

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he orders the word of the Lord to be taught

7—11. (7) **to teach,** not only destroying the false, but doing all he could to promote that wh. was true. "To promote religious knowledge among the people, a commission consisting of five high officials, two priests and nine Levites was sent about the country with the book of the law to instruct the people."—*Oehler.* Hitherto the dissemination of religious knowledge had

B C. *cir.* 873.

been mainly by family tradition. (8) **Levites,** these were to be the actual teachers.[a] 'These men are not mentioned anywhere else." (10) **all the kingdoms,** not since Solomon's time had so much respect been shown for this southern kingdom. (11) **Philistines,**[b] times had changed so that they now sought the strength of alliance with Judah. **Arabians,** Arab tribes south of Judah. **flocks,** paying their tribute *in kind.*[c]

Religion and the nation. — There is not a sovereign in Europe or in the world but might read this chapter with advantage. 1. It shows most forcibly that true religion is the basis of the state; and that wherever it prospers, there the state prospers. 2. It shows also that it is the wisdom of kings to encourage religion with all their power and influence; for if the hearts of the subjects be not bound and influenced by true religion, vain is the application of laws, fines, imprisonments, or corporal punishment of any kind. 3. A religious nation is ever a great nation; it is loved by its friends, it is dreaded by its enemies. 4. It is ever a peaceful and united nation; the blessings of religion, and a wholesome and paternal government, are so fully felt and prized that all find it their interest to preserve and defend them. — *A. Clarke.*

Arabs. — The Arabs have effected, although in a rude way, far more than the Greeks and Romans towards making the eastern and western worlds acquainted with each other, and communicating arts and knowledge. These (until inspired with the fanaticism of a new religion) housekeeping barbarians pushed their religion, arms, arts and trade, within thirty years, to the western confines of India, and in eighty-eight years to Spain. They pushed their commerce into China and the remotest islands of the Indian Ocean, which neither Greek nor Roman had ever reached. We owe to their fanaticism cotton, coffee, the sugarcane and culture of sugar, paper, arithmetical notation, race horses, the whole citron and orange tribe of fruits, and all the various products of distillation. — *Crawford.*

a Le. x. 11; De. xvii. 9-11; Mal. ii. 7

b The Philistine territory lay exposed to Egyptian ravages, 1 Ki. iv. 21.

c 2 Ki. iii. 4.

"Wherever the word of the Lord has had free course superstition has been chased away, human slavery has been abolished, every instance of intolerance, injustice, unkindness has felt the influence of holy thought." — *Parker.*

Jehoshaphat's prosperity

12—19. (12) **castles,** comp. ch. xxvii. 4, places of defense, situated for the protection of roads, or valleys opening into the country. **cities of store,** where provisions and ammunition could be kept in preparation of seige. (13) **business,** with special reference to building and repairing of cities. (14–18) "The enormous number of 780,000 men able to bear arms in Judah and 380,000 in Benjamin, making 1,160,000 men in all, may be due to the following causes — 1. Every man able to bear arms is enumerated; 2. Judah at this time included Simeon, part of Dan, and the auxiliaries from the Philistines and Arabs who were tributary, and Benjamin included the cities of Ephraim that were annexed to the southern kingdom; and, 3. Many had, on religious grounds, attached themselves to the kingdom of Judah (xv. 9)." — *Murphy.* Some reject the figures as incorrect.[d] (19) **fenced cities,** garrisons.

Activity. — Dr. Adam Clarke said that "the old proverb about having too many irons in the fire was an abominable old lie. Have all in it — shovel, tongs, and poker." Wesley said, "I am always in haste, but never in a hurry: leisure and I have long taken leave of each other." He traveled about five thousand miles in a year; preached about three times a day, commencing at five o'clock in the morning; and his published works amounted to about two hundred volumes. Asbury traveled six thousand miles a year, and preached incessantly. Coke crossed the Atlantic eighteen times, preached, wrote, traveled, established missions, begged from door to door for them, and labored in all respects as if, like the Apostles, he "would turn the world upside down." At nearly seventy years of age he started to Christianize India. — *Stevens.* *Evils of inactivity.* — What a mournful sight the observer may see in some of the outskirts of our huge city; row after row of houses all untenanted and forlorn. The owners had far better let them at the lowest rent than suffer them to remain empty, for the boys make targets of the windows, enterprising purveyors for the marine store shops rend off all the lead, thieves purloin every movable fitting, damp swells the window frames and doors, and mustiness makes the whole place wretched to all the senses: into the bargain the district gets a bad name, which it probably never loses. Better a poor tenant than a house running to ruin unused. The similitude may well suggest the desirableness of an object and a service to those Christians whose time is wasted in slothful ease. All sorts of mischief happens to unoccupied professors of religion: there is no evil from which they are secure; better would it be for them to accept the lowest occupation for the Lord Jesus than remain the victims of inaction. — *Spurgeon.*

d "Jehoshaphat's kingdom was not a third of Dav.'s. David's muster amounted to 1,300,000 men of valor. (2 Sa. xxiv. 9.) Jehoshaphat had 1,160,000." — *Wordsworth.*

"It is probable that the original numbers have been lost, and the loss supplied by a scribe, who took ch. xiv. 8 as his basis."—*Spk. Com.*

"If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiencies. Nothing is denied to well-directed labor; nothing is ever to be attained without it." — *Sir J. Reynolds.*

"Troubles spring from idleness, and grievous toils from needless ease." — *Franklin.*

B. C. 853.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab

1—5. (1) **had riches and honor,** explains what follows. Having power, he wishes for more power. **joined affinity,** by marrying his son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter Athaliah.[a] xxi. 6. This was the greatest mistake of his reign, and had most disastrous consequences in after years, yet at the time it seemed advantageous. (2) **after . . years,** at least eight years after the marriage.[b] **killed,** *etc.*, making a right royal feast for his guest. **Ramoth-gilead,** De. iv. 43. Ahab wished to wrest it fr. the king of Syria, and in the enterprise asked Jehosh.'s help. (3) **as thou art,** *i. e.* our interests are identical. (4) **Enquire,** since he expects to find a prophet of the Lord, the apostasy could not have been complete. (5) **prophets,** professedly Jehovah-prophets from the schools.[c]

The voice of prophecy. — Let us suppose that at the time when Britain was peopled by half-savage tribes, before the period of the Roman sway, some gifted seer among the Druids had engraven upon a rock a minute prediction of a portion of the future history of the island. Suppose he had declared that it should ere long be conquered by a warrior people from the south; that he should name the Cæsar himself, describe his eagle standard, and all the circumstances of the conquest. Suppose he should portray the Saxon invasion centuries after, the sevenfold division of the monarchy, the Danish inroad, the arrival and victory of the Normans. Our imagined prophet pauses here, or at whatever other precise period you please to suppose; and his next prediction, overleaping a vast undescribed interval, suddenly represents the England of the present day. Now conceive the forefathers of existing England to have studied this wondrous record, and to find, to their amazement that every one of its predictions was accurately verified; that, as their generations succeeded, they but walked in the traces assigned for them by the prophetic inscription, and all it spoke progressively became fact. Can we suppose that, however far away in futurity was the one remaining event, and however impossible to them, at their early stage, to conceive the means by which all the present wonders of this mighty empire could ever be realized, they would permit themselves to doubt its absolute certainty after such overwhelming proofs of the supernatural powers of the seer who guaranteed it? Would they not shape their course as confidently in view of the unquestionable future as in reference to the unquestionable past? It should be thus with regard to the coming judgment.—*Archer Butler.*

[a] 2 Chr. xxi. 6; xxii. 2; 2 Ki. viii. 26.

[b] "The visit of Jehoshaphat to Ahab fell in Jehosh.'s seventeenth year. (1 Ki. xxii. 51.)"—*Spk. Com.*

[c] Ahab seems to have imitated heathen custom in thus getting the 400 together.

True religion derives its pedigree from heaven, and constantly moves toward heaven again. It is a beam from God, as "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."

"Ah, curst ambition! to thy lures we owe all the great ills that mortals bear below." *Tickell.*

he is induced to go to Ramoth-gilead

6—11. (6) **besides,** "Josephus says that he understood by their language that they were false prophets."—*Lumby.* (7) **hate him,** as wilful men always hate those who resist them, and tell them the truth. **Micaiah,** not otherwise mentioned.[d] (8) **officers,** marg. *eunuchs.* (9) **on his throne,** portable ones, like chairs of state. **void place,** *R. V.*, "*open* place;" immediately within the gate.[e] (10) **horns of iron,**[f] according to the custom of the prophets he enforces his message by symbol. This one signifies irresistible power. Zedekiah is a false prophet. (*Cf.* 1 Ki. xi. 30.) (11) **prophesied so,** they knew what Ahab wished to hear, and also how he received unfavorable prophecies.

Flattery. — What an appalling illustration is here of the fact that men love to be flattered and encouraged even at the expense of everything holy and true. Ahab was satisfied so long as the prophet ran along the current of his own will. When men agree with us we think they are inspired; when they sanction our plans we look upon them as messengers sent from heaven to comfort us with special revelations: so we cannot get away from the self centre; we judge everything by our own feeling and relation to it; we have not denied ourselves, crucified ourselves, obliterated ourselves; our self-vanity is full of vitality, and is open to every impression that may be made upon it of a flattering and encouraging nature. It is almost impossible for a man to stand really outside of himself under great crises, and to judge of his own position as he would judge of the position of another man. It is this impossibility which invests spiritual communion with God with its highest importance, and elevates prayer to its loftiest usefulness. — *J. Parker.*

Human power. — Man conquers the sea and its storms. He climbs the heavens, and searches out the mysteries of the stars. He harnesses the lightning. He bids the rocks dissolve, and summons the secret atoms to give up their names and laws. He subdues the face of the world, and compels the forces of the

[d] 1 Ki. xxii. 8-28.

[e] "The *meidan* or 'open place,' is large, and is used for military displays, for the game of the jerid, or javelin, on horseback, and as a camping ground for camels; hence it is never paved." *Van Lennep.*

[f] De. xxxiii. 17; Ps. xliv. 5; Da. viii. 4.

"O cursed ambition—thou devouring bird, how dost thou from the field of honesty pick every grain of profit or delight, and mock the reaper's toil!"—*Harvard.*

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waters, and the fires, to be his servants. He makes laws, hurls empires down upon empires in the fields of war, speaks words that cannot die, sings to distant realms and peoples across vast ages of time; in a word, he executes all that is included in history, showing his tremendous energy in almost everything that stirs the silence and changes the conditions of the world. Everything is transformed by him, even up to the stars. Not all the winds and storms and earthquakes and seas and seasons of the world have done so much to revolutionize the world as he has done since the day he came forth upon it, and received, as he is most truly declared to have done, dominion over it.—*Bushnell.*

"The hypocrite sets his watch, not by the sun, that is, the Bible, but by the town clock; what most do, that he will do."—*Gurnell* (1671).

Micaiah's adverse prediction

12—17. (12) **speak thou good;** he knows what is desired by king and court. (13) **my God saith,** he expects to be taught of God. (14) **and prosper,** he does not say, "*Ye shall prosper.*" He only says, if you prosper they shall be delivered, *etc.* An illus. of the equivocal character of an oracle. (15) **How many times,** then Ahab has often consulted Micaiah. **adjure,** Jos. vi. 26. **but the truth,** Ahab saw he was making game of him. (16) **I did see,**[a] He was taught, then, in a vision, *cf.* Nu. xxvii. 17. **no master,** the expedition would end in Ahab's death. (17) **but evil,** attributing the prophet's words to personal enmity.[b]

A faithful ministry.—1, The necessity imposed on faithful ministers to speak the truth. God requires it, needful to the welfare of the people, and consequences of neglect fearful. 2 The results of speaking truth. Hated by those in authority, ridiculed and opposed by rivals, treated with indifference, cruelty, and death.—*Hom. Com.*

Not afraid to be poor.—After Dr. Gill had written against a gentleman whose publications he considered erroneous, he was waited on by some of his friends, who endeavored to dissuade him from persevering; and among other things, they intimated to him that he might lose the subscriptions of some wealthy person. "Do not tell me of losing," said the doctor; "I value nothing in comparison with the Gospel. I am not afraid to be poor." *A faithful minister.*— "Soon after I began to preach the Gospel at Everton, the churches in the neighborhood were deserted, and mine so overcrowded that the squire, who 'did not like strangers,' he said, 'and hated to be incommoded,' joined with the offended parsons; and soon after, a complaint having been made against me, I was summoned before the bishop. 'Well, Berridge,' said his lordship, 'did I institute you to Eaton or Potten? Why do you go preaching out of your own parish?' 'My lord,' said I, 'I make no claim to the livings of those parishes. 'Tis true I was once at Eaton, and, finding a few poor people assembled, I admonished them to repent of their sins, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls. At that very moment, my lord, there were five or six clergymen out of their own parishes, and enjoying themselves on the Eaton bowling green.' 'I tell you,' retorted his lordship, 'that if you continue preaching where you have no right, you will very likely be sent to Huntingdon jail.' His lordship then pathetically entreated me, as one who had been and wished to continue my friend, not to embitter the remaining portion of his days by any squabbles with my brother clergymen, but to go home to my parish: and so long as I kept within it, I should be at liberty to do what I liked there. 'As to your conscience,' said his lordship, 'you know that preaching out of your parish is contrary to the canons of the church.' 'There is one canon, my lord,' said I, 'which I dare not disobey, and that says, Go preach the Gospel to *every creature!*'"—*Berridge.*

[a] "In the vision which he describes we feel that we are gradually drawing nearer to the times of the later prophets. It is a vision which might rank with those of Isaiah or Ezekiel."—*Stanley.*

[b] Comp. 1 Ki. xxii. 11-18.

"Go teach the eagle, when in azure heaven he upward darts to seize his madden'd prey, shiv'ring through the death circle of its fear, to pause and let 'scape, and thou may'st win man to forego the sparkling round of power when it floats airily within his grasp."—*Talfourd.*

Micaiah continues his reproof

18—22. (18) **Therefore hear,** in fuller, plainer terms the Divine will. **the Lord,** *etc.*, comp. Job. i. 6, 7; Is. vi. 1-4. (19) **entice,** persuade, deceive.[c] (20) **a spirit,** Heb. *the spirit;*[d] spirits are the instruments of God in His guidance of human events. "The spirit" spoken of here is in keeping with that Hebrew habit of representing even evil as permitted by God and guided to His own uses. Oehler called this the point of "transition to the doctrine of Satan." (*cf.* 1 Chr. xxi. 1; Job. i.; Zech. iii.). **Wherewith,** or in what way. (21) **lying spirit,** so that when he consults them he may be led to rush upon his ruin.[e]

Enticement is the deadly plague of life. The lying spirit has a subtle tongue; he does not proceed with broad dogmatic propositions, he has nothing of a violent nature to suggest or propose; it is, to the end of the line, to the turning of the corner, to the ascent of the hill; it is resting a while, then walking

[c] 1 Ki. xxii. 20.

[d] "Prefer rendering, 'the spirit' corresponding to the requirements in the preceding question of Jehovah."—*Spk. Com.*

[e] "The details of a vision cannot

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a while, or returning, and reascending — the liar by our side all the while watching the pulsation of the soul that he may know how the enticement is proceeding. Life itself is a temptation; to live is to die. How often have we laid down the doctrine that to be is to be in pain. This is the mystery of life. Life without pain would be life without joy; life without winter would be life without summer; heaven would be a surprise to us of an unwelcome kind if we had not made acquaintance with temptation and sin and sorrow whilst we were upon the earth. — *J. Parker.*

safely be pressed any more than the details of a parable."—*Spk. Com.*

23-28. (23) **smote,** prob. with his shoe; a most insulting thing to do.[a] (24) **an inner chamber,** or from chamber to chamber; wh. he would do fr. the wrath of Jezebel at what resulted fr. following his counsels. (25) **carry him back,** would seem to imply that he had been in the care of Amon before. **governor,** whose duty it was to arrange for prisoners. (26) **feed,** *etc.*, treat him with severity.[b] (27) **Hearken,** calling the whole assembly to witness to his words. (28) In spite of the prophecy which he had sought, Jehoshaphat goes to the war.

Zedekiah smites Micaiah

Lessons from Micaiah. — 1. The nobility of true courage. 2. The certainty that good men will suffer for their goodness. 3. The reality of an overruling Providence. 4. The infallibility of God's Word. — *Whitelaw.*

Test of faithfulness. — Bishop Hooper was condemned to be burned at Gloucester, in Queen Mary's reign. A gentleman with the view of inducing him to recant, said to him, "Life is sweet, and death is bitter." Hooper replied, "The death to come is more bitter, and the life to come more sweet. I am come hither to end this life, and suffer death, because I will not gainsay the truth I have here formerly taught you." When brought to the stake, a box, with a pardon from the queen in it, was set before him. The determined martyr cried out, "If you love my soul, away with it! if you love my soul, away with it!" *Fruits of faithful service.* — "After Mr. Hill had preached for the Missionary Society in Prince's Street Chapel, Davenport, two tall, venerable-looking men, upwards of seventy years of age, appeared at the vestry door. After a short pause they entered, arm in arm, and advanced towards Mr. Hill, when one of them, with some degree of trepidation, inquired, 'Sir, will you permit two old sinners to have the honor to shake you by the hand?' He replied, with some reserve, 'Yes, sir;' when one of the gentlemen took his hand, kissed it, bathed it with tears, and said, 'Sir, do you remember preaching on the spot where this chapel now stands, fifty years ago?' 'Yes, I do,' was the reply. The old man then proceeded to say, 'Oh, sir, never can the dear friend, who has hold of my arm, or myself, forget that sermon. We were then two careless young men in his Majesty's dockyard, posting to destruction as fast as time and sin could convey us thither. Having heard that a young clergyman was to preach out of doors, we determined to go and have some fun. We loaded our pockets with stones, intending to pelt you; but, sir, when you arrived, our courage failed, and as soon as you engaged in prayer we were so deeply impressed, that we looked at each other and trembled. When you named your text, and began to speak, the Word came with power to our hearts; the tears rolled down our cheeks; we put our hands into our pockets and dropped the stones one after another, until they were all gone; for God had taken away the stone from our hearts. When the service was over, we retired; but our hearts were too full to speak, until we came near to our lodgings, when my friend at my elbow said, 'John, this will not do; we are both wrong, — good night.' This was all he could utter: he retired to his apartment,— I to mine; but neither of us dared to go to bed, lest we should awake in hell. From that time, sir, we humbly hope we were converted to God, who, of His infinite mercy, has kept us in His ways to the present moment. We thought, sir, if you would permit us, after the lapse of half a hundred years, to have the pleasure of shaking you by the hand before we go home, it would be the greatest honor that could be conferred on us."— *T. Jackson.*

[a] "In contrast with this one sublime prophet in the vulgar advocate of the popular view of the moment, Zedekiah. He is the first of a type that we meet frequently afterwards, — one filled with a spirit of prophecy, not fr. any false doctrine, but from narrow and interested motives, leaning on the feeblest auguries, the most accidental tokens." *Stanley.*

[b] Comp. Ac. xvi. 23, 24.

"The great bell of Moscow is too large to be hung; the question arises, what was the use of making it? Some preachers are so learned that they cannot make themselves understood, or else cannot bring their minds to preach plain Gospel sermons; here, too, the same question might be asked."— *C. H. Spurgeon.*

29—34. (29) **disguise,** indic. his fear of the truth of Micaiah's words. **thy robes,** royal robes. This Jehosh. might do in safety, as no prophecy threatened him. Undoubtedly the two kings could be distinguished, each from the other, by the robes they were accustomed to wear. The king of Israel simply does not put on his royal robes. (31) **cried out,** called on God to help him, and He did so by showing them that this was not the king of

death of Ahab

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Israel. (32) **captains,** *etc.*, on whom it specially rested to secure Ahab. (33) **at a venture,** not "at random," nor without aim, but not knowing whom he was aiming at. **joints,** parts where the pieces of armor fitted together.[a] (34) **stayed,** *etc.*, nobly keeping the battle up.[b] In 1 Ki. xxii. 36, we are told that the battle closed with the cry "every man to his city and every man to his own country."

Bow at a venture. — 1. We do not know what harm we do by our most casual strokes. We "draw a bow at a venture," we "send an arrow through the air;" it is only a sentence, it is a very simple deed, we think; but it hits and wounds a sensitive human heart; it may even slay a soul. It may cause such grief as we would on no account have inflicted if we could have foreseen it; it may lead to the first declension of a valuable human life, and may end in such spiritual disaster as it would grieve us indeed to originate. 2. We cannot tell what good we do by our simplest efforts. Little did the Syrian soldier suppose that by that shot of his arrow he was to serve his royal master as he did. It is a most cheering and inspiring thought that we cannot tell what kind or measure of good we are effecting by our everyday service of our Lord. A kindly smile, a gracious recognition, an encouraging word, a neighborly kindness, a warning utterance, the taking of "a class," the giving of "an address," the conduct of "a service," perhaps under the humblest roof, or to the most unpromising audience, may prove to be a most valuable contribution to the cause of Jesus Christ, to the service of mankind. — *Clarkson.*

Bow at a venture. — It is marvellous to note on what small contingencies depends our life. An accidental blow, an unexpected fall, a mistake in drinking out of the wrong cup, a misstep in the dark, a fly, a fishbone, the smallest things often occasion its termination. This fact is serious enough to cool ambition, make us thoughtful in merriest moods, and watchful against any surprise that death may have in reserve for us. — *Hom. Com.*

[a] "The 'joints' were prob. pieces of armor wh. attached the breastplate to the helmet, or to the greaves. The arrow entered bet. the breastplate and one of these 'joints.' Breastplates made of metal scales were common both in Egypt and Assyria."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] 1 Ki. xxii. 29–36.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

Jehoshaphat is reproved by Jehu

1—4. (1) **in peace,** the Syrians not pressing their victory. (2) **Jehu,** 1 Ki. xvi. 1–4, 7, 12. **went out,** so taking the very moment of his return from Ahab. **ungodly,** *i. e.* Ahab. **wrath,** *etc.*, good men's sins do not pass unnoticed. (3) **good things,** ch. xvii. 4–6. **groves,** *R. V.*, "Asheroth."[c] **prepared thine heart,** art rightly disposed, though thou hast acted injudiciously. (4) **went out again,** he receives the prophet's rebuke humbly and sets at once to correct the ways of his people. Contrast with xvi. 10.

[c] 2 Chr. xvii. 6.

A merciful mitigation. — While condemning the king's sins, Jehu did not forget to make candid acknowledgment of the king's virtues. To praise another for good qualities is not so easy as to blame another for bad ones. In others, faults are more readily discerned than favorable points: in ourselves, the latter more quickly than the former. Happily, the great Heart-searcher, while noting His people's shortcomings, overlooks not their well-doings. If Jehoshaphat's conduct in contracting alliance with Ahab was denounced, his behavior in removing the groves from his land and preparing his heart to seek Jehovah was not forgotten. So of Christians, "God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labor of love" (He. vi. 10), even though obliged to correct them for doing wrong (He. xii. 10); while Christ, sending His messages to the churches in Asia, with one exception never omits to notice in each case excellences worthy of commendation (Re. iii. iv.). — *Whitelaw.*

"A man in the right, with God on his side, is in the majority, though he be alone; for God is multitudinous above all the nations of the earth." — *Beecher.*

The spirit of religion. — It must be understood that "being religious" is not a work apart by itself, but a spirit of faith and righteousness flowing out from the centre of a regenerate heart into all the enjoyments and intercourse of the world. Not merely the preacher in the pulpit, and the saint on his knees, may do the work of religion; but the mechanic who smites the hammer and drives the wheel; the artist seeking to realize his pure idea of the beautiful: the mother in the gentle offices of home; the statesman in the forlorn hope of liberty and justice; and the philosopher, whose thought treads reverently among the splendid mysteries of the universe. — *Chapin.*

We usually take three meals a day for the body. Would it not be as well to give the soul as many meals?

Jehoshaphat's reforms

5—11. (5) **judges,**[d] possibly he removed such as were negligent or unfaithful, and appointed new ones. (6) **in the judgment,** when you give a judgment. (7) **iniquity,** in its sense of inequality, or undue leaning to one side.[e] (8) **judgment,** a supreme court according to the injunction in De. xvii. 8, 9.

[d] De. xvi. 18; 1 Chr. xxiii. 4.

[e] De. x. 17; xvi. 19. "I like to be at my

controversies, ordinary civil cases. (9) **perfect heart,** not perfunctorily, but in the true spirit of service. (10) **blood and blood,** Ex. xxi. 12–23, "in cases of life and death. **law,** the ruling principle. **commandment,** precepts in particular. **statutes,** written laws. **judgments,** precedents for like cases. **warn,** advise in these matters." — *Murphy.* (11) **chief priest,** or high priest. **matters of the Lord,** as *vs.* 8. **king's matters,** same as controversies, *vs.* 8; two men appointed to preside over this court, one in ecclesiatical cases, the other in civil cases.

A just magistrate. — Peter the Great frequently surprised the magistrates by his unexpected presence in the cities of the empire. Having arrived without previous notice at Olonez, he went first to the regency, and inquired of the governor how many suits were depending in the Court of Chancery. "None, sire," replied the governor. "How happens that?" "I endeavor to prevent law-suits, and conciliate the parties; I act in such a manner that no traces of difference remain on the archives; if I am wrong, your indulgence will excuse me." "I wish," replied the Czar, "that all governors would act on your principles. Go on, God and your sovereign are equally satisfied." — *Whitecross.*

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post, doing my duty; indifferent whether one set or another govern, provided they govern well." — *Sir J. Moore.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

1—4. (1) **other beside the Ammonites,** *R. V.*, "some of the Ammonites," prob. an error for Mehunim[a] (*cf.* xxvi. 7), who appear to have lived near Mount Seir, on the south of the Moabites. (2) **beyond the sea,** the Dead Sea. **on this side Syria,** *R. V.*, "from Syria;" Heb. "Aram;" prob. should be "from Edom," the letters *r* and *d* being very like in the Hebrew character. Edom was southeast of Judah, from which these troops might readily come to En-gedi on the west shore of the Salt Sea." — *Murphy.* **Hazazon-tamar,** Ge. xiv. 7.[b] (3) **to seek the Lord,** the only right thing to do. **a fast,**[c] so that seeking the Lord might be national. (4) **they came,** to Jerusalem.

Lessons. — 1. The hostility of the world-powers to the church of God exemplified in this combination against Judah. 2. The distinction between fear and cowardice in front of danger, illustrated by the behavior of Jehoshaphat. 3. The place and value of fasting in religion. 4. The best defense for a nation in the time of peril — prayer and piety. 5. The duty and advantage of kings and peoples standing shoulder to shoulder when their safety is threatened. — *Whitelaw.*

Affinity with God in prayer. — It is a great truth, that if we desire to gain anything from the Most High, our minds must be set, more or less, to the same key as His. If two harps be strung to the same key, but not otherwise, when one of them is struck, the other gives a responsive sound. There must be some secret affinity in nature between the lightning of heaven and the conductor which draws it down — between the steel and the magnet which attracts it — between the light substances and the chafed glass or sealing wax, towards which they leap up and cling. And in grace there must be a secret affinity between God and the soul (this affinity itself being the effect of grace) before the soul can lay hold of God's will, and draw out a blessing from Him, yea, draw God Himself into it. This affinity stands in love.— *Goulburn.*

Jehoshaphat proclaims a fast

a Spk. Com. suggests *Maonites.*

b 1 Sa. xxiii. 29.

c Ju. xx. 26; 1 Sa. vii. 6.

Be just and fear not.
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
Thy God's, and truth's.
—*Shakespeare.*

"Whosoever denies that, spite of all hindrances from individual wickedness, right shall not ultimately prevail, impugns not alone human justice, but the justice of God."

"Seek God upon the way, and He will come to thee." —*Schiller.*

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5—9. (5) **the new court,** the outer court, which was open to the public, the inner court being that of the priests, which was anciently the only one. In this court, which was a place of public assembly, the king, in the midst of his people, sought the help of God for the nation. (6) **art not thou,** this questioning form naturally expresses the king's fears. (7) **thy friend,** El-Khalil.[d] (8) **sanctuary,** ref. is to Sol.'s temple. (9) **If, when evil,** *etc.*, comp. Sol.'s great prayer.[e]

Jehoshaphat's prayer. — What a prayer-meeting — a real one, a united one, with a definite object, and the king presiding! Notice the prayer (*vs.* 5). It is a pattern one. Jehoshaphat felt his weakness and need: but he recognized that God is all, and over all, and has all power and might. He brings forward every plea and argument. He appeals to God's power and promises, to his justice and love, and winds up with simple yet prevailing faith in God Himself. "We have no might, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee" (*vs.* 12). Placing all the responsibility on God, and they just looking to Him, waiting for Him: God answered at once. — *Capt. Dawson, in "Thoughts in the Valleys."*

Jehoshaphat's prayer

d Is. xli 8; Jas. ii. 23.

e 1 Ki. viii 22-53.

Christ's righteousness, pleaded in the court of justice, is our full and final discharge.

It lightens the stroke to draw near to Him who handles the rod.

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10—13. (10) **and mount Seir,** comp. *vs.* 1. **wouldest not,** *etc.* De. ii. 9. (11) **reward us,** evil for good. (12) **no might,** sense of helplessness to set them wholly leaning on Div. strength. **our eyes,** the attitude of dependence, prayer and expectancy.[a] (13) **with . . children,** the whole congregation, men, women, and children, join in the prayer. The little ones are the wives and children (Ex. xii. 37).

Jehoshaphat's prayer (*vs.* 12). — From this prayer we learn — I. That the demands made upon us by great afflictions and troubles are utterly beyond the power of self-help. II. That spiritual hostilities and temptations cannot be repelled by human sagacity and strength. III. That a consciousness of our own weakness is one of the most indispensable requisites to all spiritual success. IV. That in all straits and difficulties, temporal or spiritual, it is the path of safety and of peace to have a fixed eye on the Divine all-sufficiency. This includes — 1. A conviction of God's presence; 2. A spirit of importunate prayer; 3. A lively expectation of deliverance; 4. An acquiescence in the Divine will.

Jehoshaphat's prayer. — Meanwhile the great assemblage stood in the attitude of supplication before Jehovah, not a gathering of mighty men of valor praying for blessing upon their strength and courage, but a mixed multitude, men and women, children and infants, seeking sanctuary, as it were, at the temple, and casting themselves in their extremity upon the protecting care of Jehovah. Possibly when the king finished his prayer the assembly broke out into loud, wailing cries of dismay and agonized entreaty; but the silence of the narrative rather suggests that Jehoshaphat's strong, calm faith communicated itself to the people, and they waited quietly for Jehovah's answer, for some token or promise of deliverance. Instead of the confused cries of an excited crowd, there was a hush of expectancy, such as sometimes falls upon an assembly when a great statesman has risen to utter words which will be big with the fate of empires. — *W. H. Bennett.*

a Ps. xxv. 15; cxli. 8.

"There is no man's case so dangerous as his whom Satan hath persuaded that his own righteousness shall present him pure and blameless in the sight of God. The best things we do have somewhat in them to be pardoned. How then can we do anything meritorious, and worthy to be rewarded?"—*Hooker.*

"Prayer without watching is hypocrisy; and watching without prayer is presumption."—*Jay*

the message of Jahaziel

14—19. (14) **Jahaziel** is traced to Mattaniah or Nethaniah, son of Asaph (1 Chr. xxv. 2). This prophet is parallel with Amariah (1 Chr. vi. 11). **came the Spirit,** ch. xv. 1. (15) **but God's,** *i. e.* you have put the matter into God's hands, and He will wholly undertake it for you. (16) **cliff of Ziz,** *R. V.*, "ascent of Ziz," the pass wh. leads northwards, by an ascent fr. Engedi to Jerusalem, issuing a little below Tekoa. **brook,** *R. V.*, "valley." **wilderness of Jeruel,** this means that the enemy is to come from the coast up one of the valleys to the highlands, and there to be met by the forces of Judah, near Tekoa. (17) **stand,** *etc.*, do nothing; watch the Lord's doings.[b] (18) **face to the ground,** the extreme attitude of worship.[c] (19) **Korhites,** a family of the Kohathites specially distinguished for musical ability; "as the Levites sang when the foundations of the second temple were laid, and when Ezra and Nehemiah made the people enter into a new covenant with their God."—*Exp. Bib.*

b Ex. xiv. 13, 14; Nu. xiv. 9.

c Ex. iv. 31.

That eloquent statesman, Henry Clay, had just propounded a political scheme to an associate. "It will ruin your prospects for the presidency," suggested his friend. "Is it right?" said Mr. Clay. "Yes," was the answer. Mr Clay continued, "I would rather be right than president."

Victory the gift of God (*vs.* 15). — I. Let us therefore address our tribute of praise to God for every success in war. II. Let us remember that war, however it may, in answer to a nation's prayers, be crowned with victory, must be considered as a judgment. Learn — That we are all soldiers of Christ. That we have to be diligent at our posts. That if we succeed, it is God who giveth us the victory. — *J. B. Smith.*

The way of success. — The men whom I have seen succeed best in life have always been cheerful and hopeful men, who went about their business with a smile on their faces, and took the changes and chances of their mortal life like men facing rough and smooth alike as it came, and so found the truth of the old proverb, that "Good times and bad times, and all times pass over."—*C. Kingsley.* It is a great thought on this subject, that *the human race furnishes but a small part of the holy ministries of this world.* The ministry of angels probably swells what we call minorities to secret majorities. "Are they not *all* ministering spirits?" Invisible multitudes probably fill the air with their busy pinions in service to the right. One of England's great poets says of a noted champion of liberty:—

"In extemporary prayer, what men most admire God least regardeth — namely, the volubility of the tongue. Oh! it is the heart keeping time and tone with the voice which God listeneth unto."—*Thomas Fuller.*

> "Thou hast left behind
> Powers that will work for thee; air, earth and skies;
> There's not a breathing of the common winds
> That will forget thee. Thou hast great allies.

. . . Winds blow and waters roll
Strength to the brave."

B. C. 853-851.

But the friend of Christ has allies more imperial than skies and winds and waters. — *Prof. Phelps.*

Jehoshaphat's exhortation

20—25. (20) **wilderness of Tekoa,** the direction in wh. to meet the enemy. This was the act that tested their faith. **Believe,** literally "fasten, or stay your heart upon God, so shall ye be stayed." This and Is. vii. 9 are the best statements of O. T. *faith.* Comp. Ps. cxii. 7. (21) **consulted,** so that there might be unity in the work of praise. **beauty of holiness,** this is the spirit in wh. they should praise.[a] (22) **ambushments,** it was a miraculous overthrow. A foretaste of the final combat spoken of in Haggai ii. 21–22. "From what quarter they came is not stated. But it is not unlikely that they were men from Edom, through whose territory the foe had come. A panic ensued. Ammon and Moab attacked the Seirites, whom they regarded as traitors. And when they had made an end of them, they fell on one another." — *Murphy.* (24) **dead bodies,** by the time they arrived the conflict was over.

Faith the means of national and personal prosperity. — It is our intention to show — I. What is implied in the faith here recommended. I. A renunciation of all false confidences; 2. A simple affiance in God. Let us consider — II. Its influence on our welfare. It has a favorable aspect on — 1. Our national prosperity; 2. Our personal welfare. — *Simeon.*

A hallelujah victory. — If you ever go to the northern part of Wales, not very far from Chester, you may visit a place called Maes-y-garmon. or the field of Germanus, and may see an obelisk standing there to commemorate a victory said to have been won in the year 448 by Christian Britons over the heathen Picts and Scots. One of the generals on the British side was a missionary named Germanus. "Germanus," says Fuller, "chose a place surrounded by hills near the village, where he placed his men in ambush, with instructions that at a signal they should all shout 'Hallelujah' three times with all their might, which was done accordingly. The pagans were surprised with the suddenness and loudness of such a sound, which was multiplied by the echo, whereby their fear brought in a false list of the enemy's number. Without striking a stroke they confusedly ran away, and many were drowned for speed in the river Alen. That hallelujah, the song of the saints after conquest achieved, was here the forerunner and procurer of victory. So good a grace it is to be said both before and after a battle."— *S. Green.*

[a] Comp. 1 Chr. xvi. 29; Ps. xxix. 2.

"Ps. 83 seems to have been written on the occasion of the hallelujah victory." — *Perowne.* Perhaps also Ps 47. Ps. 82, "If not called forth by this step, corresponds exactly with this appeal of Jehoshaphat." — *Stanley.*

"The sense seems to be that God turned against the invaders the ambush wh. they had set against Israel. *Wordsworth.*

"Faith in God's presence, and God's promise, gives courage in conflict, and establishes peace and prosperity.—*Hom. Com.*

the valley of blessing

26—30. (26) **Berachah,** *blessing, Wady Bereikut,* 2 m. W. of Tekoa. (27) **forefront,** as leader. (28) **psalteries,** *etc.,* as 1 Chr. xiii. 8.[b] A most picturesque event. They marched against the enemy led by the Levites singing praises. They found the foe dead on the field, and after despoiling them they returned again singing. (29) **fear,** wh. brought further blessing to the land, confirming its security from attack. (30) **quiet,** fr. other invasions.

Asking a blessing. — Learn to ask God's blessing on little things as well as well as great. There is nothing which it is right for us to do, but it is also right to ask that God would bless it; and, indeed, there is nothing so little but the frown of God can convert it into the most sad calamity, or His smile exalt it into a most memorable mercy; and there is nothing we can do, but its complexion for weal or woe depends entirely on what the Lord will make it. A late physician, of great celebrity, used to ascribe much of his success to three maxims of his father's, the last and best of which was "Always pray for your patients."— *D. Hamilton.*

[b] Comp. Ne. xii. 43.

"Prayer draws all the Christian graces into its focus. It draws charity with her lovely train; Repentance with her holy sorrow; Faith with her elevated eye; Hope with her grasped anchor; Benevolence with her opened hand." — *Hannah More.*

end of the reign of Jehoshaphat

31—37. (31) **mother's name,** given to show that he was a genuine born Israelite. (32) **departed not,** wilfully, or wholly. Slips he made but no falls. (33) **high places were not,** *etc.,* comp. ch. xvii. 6, ref. may be to high places at wh. Jehovah worship was offered. **for as yet . . hearts,** *R. V.,* "Neither as yet had the people set their hearts." (34) **Jehu,** *see* ch. xix. 2. **who is mentioned,** *R. V.,* "which is inserted," *cf.* notes on xxxii. 32; xxvii. 7; xxxv. 27. See 1 Ki. xvi. 1. (35) **join himself,**[c] in a commercial alliance, needful to Ahaziah, as securing the trade of the Red Sea. (36) **Tarshish,** prob. Tartessus in Spain. **Ezion-gaber,** 1 Ki. ix. 26, *cf.* account in 1 Ki.

[c] 1 Ki. xxii. 44-49

"I want the Lamb's fountain every day, His intercession every

B. C. *cir.* 851.

xxii. 48, 49. The chronicler alone explains the cause of misfortunes which befell Jehoshaphat in his latter years. (37) **Mareshah,** Jos. xv. 44. **broken,** wrecked.

Heredity.— "Lord! I find the genealogy of my Saviour strangely checkered with four remarkable changes in four immediate generations. (1) Roboam begat Abia; *i. e.* a bad father begat a bad son. (2) Abia begat Asa; *i. e.* a bad father a good son. (3) Asa begat Josaphat; *i. e.* a good father a good son. (4) Josaphat begat Joram; *i. e.* a good father, a bad son. I see, Lord, from hence that my father's piety cannot be entailed: that is bad news for me. But I see also that actual impiety is not always hereditary; that is good news for my son."— *Thomas Fuller.*

Associates.— Do not choose your associates amongst those who do not fear the Lord. Always safest to keep under Christian influences. A man is rarely better than the company he keeps. Jehoshaphat may hope to bring Ahaziah up to his own level; but Ahaziah is much more likely to bring Jehoshaphat down. The lesson of the text bears also, and with peculiar point, upon all business alliances. You will do well even to sacrifice a measure of financial interest and worldly prospect rather than be associated in business with a man who is out of all sympathy with you in religion.— *J. Thain Davidson.*

moment; and would not give a groat for the broadest fig leaves, or the brightest human rags to cover me. A robe I must have of one whole piece, broad as the law, spotless as the light, and richer than an angel ever wore— the robe of Jesus."— *Berridge.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

Jehoram begins his reign

1—7. (1) **Jehoram,** comp. 2 Ki. viii. 16. He had been associated with his father in government for two years before his father's death. One of the worst kings of Israel. During his reign Edom (*vs.* 8) gained its independence (Jo. iii. 19) and about this time began *the captivity of Israel,* as many Jews were carried off by Philistines into bondage. Jo. iii. 3–6; Am. i. 6. (2) **Azariah,** 2 sons appear with the same name, in Heb.; however, one is spelt *Azariahu.* **Israel,** not the northern kingdom, but put for Judah. (3) **fenced cities,** of wh. they were governors:[a] so they were not dependent on, and would not trouble, the reigning king. **first-born,** this was the general law, though exceptions occurred as in case of Solomon and Abijah (2 Chr. xi. 22) and Jehoahaz, who was chosen by the people (2 Ki. xxiii. 30). (4) **slew . . sword,** an act so violent as to indic. the advice of Jezebel.[b] **of the princes,** suspected as belonging to the party. **Israel,** see note *vs.* 2. (5) **eight years,** only six sole kings. (6) **Israel,** here distinctly the northern kingdom. **the daughter of Ahab,** *i. e.* Athaliah, called the daughter (2 Ki. viii. 26), that is the granddaughter of Omri. (7) **not destroy,**[c] *i. e.* at once. This *vs.* explains God's patience with Jehoram.

a Comp. 2 Chr. xi. 23.

b "Similar tragedies have been sadly frequent in Eastern courts, where the heir of the crown looks upon his brothers as his most formidable enemies, and is therefore tempted to secure his power by their death." — *Jamieson.*

Slaughter of princes.— He was following the precedent set by Solomon when he ordered the execution of Adonijah; and, indeed, the slaughter by a new sovereign of all those near relations who might possibly dispute his claim to the throne has usually been considered in the East to be a painful but necessary and perfectly justifiable act, being, in fact, regarded in much the same light as the drowning of superfluous kittens in domestic circles. Probably this episode is placed before the introductory formula for the reign because until these possible rivals were removed Jehoram's tenure of the throne was altogether unsafe. — *Bennett.*

c 2 Sa. vii. 12-14; 1 Ki. xi. 36; 2 Ki. viii. 19; Ps. cxxxii. 11.

"There is nothing so cruel as the terror of a selfish man." — *Bennett.*

revolt of the Edomites

8—11. (8) **Edomites,** Ge. xxxvi. 9, 43.[d] Edom is especially pointed out by the prophets to be the object of judgment (Je. xlix. 7; Is. xxxiv.: lxiii. 1–6; Eze. xxxv.; Obadiah and Joel). (9) **by night,** compassed by Edom he fought his way out and escaped. (10) **so the Edomites,**[e] comp. 2 Ki. viii. 22. **Libnah,** Jos. x. 29. **because,** *etc.*, these national losses came as a punishment for idolatry. *etc.* (11) **made high places,** for the unlawful Baal worship. **fornication,** a common metaphor, signifying idolatry, or spiritual unfaithfulness.

d 1 Ki. xi. 14; 2 Ki. viii. 21; 1 Chr. xviii. 12, 13; 2 Chr. xxv. 19.

e Ge. xxvii. 40

Jehoram's sin.— It went far to undo all that a long and devoted life, all that a useful and brilliant reign, had done. It pulled down a large part of that which had been so carefully, so laboriously, so wisely constructed. How easily, and in how short a time, can a bad man undo what his predecessor, with infinite effort, has accomplished! The striking and the holding of a lucifer match may bring the stateliest structure to a heap of ruin. The deflection from the way of rectitude on the part of one prominent life, the wandering from God of one strong human spirit, may have the effect of

The heaviest load of guilt, if there is true and heartfelt repentance, cannot lay more weight upon the true and only "Foundation" than it will bear.

bringing to nought the labor of more than one lifetime. How true the proverb, "One sinner destroyeth much good!" There are among us the names of men who have reached that poor and most pitiful notoriety of not having attempted to do any good, but of having dragged down with themselves their family, their church, their community, to a dark depth of shame and ruin. — *Clarkson.*

B. C. *cir.* 851.

"The miserable hath no other medicine but only hope." — *Shakespeare.*

12—15. (12) **a writing,** the word used is not either of those for *a letter.*[a] **fr. Elijah,** "this prophet was distinct from the Tishbite in time, place, and circumstance. He lived in the reign of Jehoram; the Tishbite was translated in the lifetime of his father (2 Ki. iii. 11). He acted in Judah: the Tishbite had his sphere of action in the northern kingdom. He wrote a prophecy; the Tishbite was engaged in speaking and acting. His description as 'the prophet' is quite common, and his name is the same in letters as Elihu, and therefore not unusual. A writing from a prophet is nothing strange (1 Chr. xxviii. 19; Je. xxxvi.)."— *Murphy.* (13) **of Israel,** who were with extreme measures dishonoring Jehovah.[b] (14) **plague,** or *stroke, vs.* 17. (15) **disease,** *etc.*, kind of consumption. "He had no bowels of compassion for his own flesh and blood," *vs.* 4.

Elijah's letter to Jehoram

[a] "The document in question is not called a letter (*iggereth* or *sepher*) but simply a writing (*micetab*)." — *Wordsworth.*

[b] Ex. xxxiv. 12, 15; De. xxxi. 16; 1 Ki. xvi. 33.

Retribution. — A minister in a small seaport town in Scotland, several years ago, furnished an account of a man, who for many years was master of a coasting vessel, and an inhabitant of that place. In his younger days he made a profession of religion; and, among the small but respectable body to which he belonged, he was deemed an eminent Christian. He afterwards became a professed atheist, and made the existence of the Deity and a future state the subjects of his ridicule and profane mockery. For horrid swearing and lewdness he had perhaps few equals in Scotland. One night, in a public-house, when swearing awfully, in a rage, he was summoned into eternity in a moment, by the rupture of a blood-vessel.

"An old English proverb says: 'He must have a long spoon who would sup with the devil.' The saddest feature in the career of such men is that Satan most disastrously outwits them." — *Prof. Phelps.*

B. C. 851-843.

16—20. (16) **Arabians,** tribes lying south of the Philistines. This shows how far the sway of Jehoshaphat had extended. (17) **his wives,** except *Athaliah.* **sons,** "the male descendants of David were at this time grievously diminished, Jehoram having slain his six brothers (2 Chr. xxi. 4), and now lost all his own sons but one." — *Oehler.* **Jehoahaz,** *Ahaziah* or *Azariah.*[c] (18) **incurable disease,** severe dysentery. (19) **no burning,** bec. of the sins he had committed, the calamities of his reign, and perhaps also bec. of the humiliating nature of his death. (20) **without being desired,** *i. e.* without being regretted.

end of the reign of Jehoram

[c] 2 Chr. xxii. 1, 6.

"To 'desire' is only to look *forward* with longing now; the word has lost the sense of regret or looking back upon the lost but still loved. This it once possessed in common with *desiderium* and *desiderare*, from which more remotely, and *désirer*, from which more immediately we derive it." — *Trench's Glossary.*

Humiliation. — No man wanted him to live one day longer; no heart said, it will be a dark day when the king dies. Is there infamy equal to such an issue? It is possible for us to live so that people will be glad when we die. They may be decent enough not to express their joy hilariously; indeed, a tear full of pensiveness may moisten the eye; but underneath all that is decent and courteous there will be a feeling of relief. We know what men feel who have been relieved of a burden which has been too heavy for them; we know what travelers feel when the darkness vanishes because the light has come. — *J. Parker.* *Tombs of the kings.* — We descend into a trench sunk into the rocky level, and divided by a wall, consisting of the rock itself, and squared into shape, from a large court similarly sunk below the level, and of course open to the sky. The passage through the wall of rock is by an arch. The great court is about ninety feet square, and on its west side is a portico about twenty-five feet wide, excavated in its rocky wall. The facade was formerly supported by two pillars. The entrance is in the left-hand corner, by a very low door. The first room is an antechamber, square and plain. The two rooms south of this entrance contain small niches or crypts for sepulture, running into the rock. The general character of these chambers is the same. The apartment west of the antechamber, which is entered by a door in the centre of the wall, is the most extensive of any. A panelled stone door was formerly inserted by its stone tenon, at the corner, into the groove which is hollowed out into the angle of the doorway. All the doors around, except the centre one, lead into similar crypts to those in the other apartment. Through the centre arch is a passage into a low vaulted room, from which there is no issue, and which was probably the resting-place of honor in these sepulchral chambers. The sarcophagi, beautifully sculptured with wreaths of fruit and flowers, thrown from their niches, lie broken and tenantless on the

Death is like a postman, who knocks alike at the door of rich and poor; and brings to this man wedding-cards, and to his neighbor a funeral envelope; to one the pleasant news that his richly-laden vessel has arrived in port, and to another tidings of disaster and bankruptcy.

B. C. 843.

"Black ambition stains a public cause." — *Pope.*

rocky floor. From the extent of this noble sepulchre we should be disposed to accept the tradition of its being the burial-place of the kings of Judah; though the learned Robinson seems rather to consider it as that of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, who resided at Jerusalem, and built a very splendid sepulchre. — *Bartlett.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

Ahaziah is elected king

1—4. (1) **Ahaziah,**[a] called *Jehoahaz*, ch. xxi. 17. **had slain,** so they could not be ransomed. (2) **Forty and two,**[b] "an error of transcription for twenty and two (2 Ki. viii. 26), as Jehoram his father was not more than 40 at his death. (xxi. 20)." — *Murphy.* **Athaliah,** ch. xxi. 6. **daughter,** or granddaughter. (3) **He also,** as well as his father. **counsellor,** in her position as queen-mother. (4) **they,** *i. e.* Athaliah, and Jehoram, her brother.

A mother's influence. — Education begins sooner than parents imagine; long enough before they are responsible; even when they begin to see, feel, and observe. Hence great importance to have first teaching of a child. Early impressions are elementary principles out of which mature life is organized. "When should I begin the education of my children, now four years old!" asked a mother from a clergyman, who replied, "Madam, if you have not begun already you have lost those four years. From the first smile that gleams upon an infant's cheek your opportunity begins." — *Hom. Com.*

Evil companions. — Evil companions are the devil's agents, whom he sends abroad into the world to debauch virtue and to advance his kingdom; and by these ambasssadors he effects more than he could do in his own person. His own shape and appearing would fright rather than allure; and, well as men like sin, did they see the father of it, they would not be very fond of being his children; but acting in the children of disobedience, which are of the same flesh and blood with us, and creatures of the same shape, and from which we have no aversion, but rather, sometimes, a great affection to, the bait is easily swallowed." — *A. Horneck.*

a "Jehoram apparently had not designated Ahaziah as his successor. Hence he had to receive his investiture from the people."—*Spk. Com.*

b 2 Chr. xxi. 5, 20. "The words of the original are 'Ahaziah was the son of 42 years,' and his years are traced from the dynasty of Omri, on account of his connection with it on his mother's side." — *Lightfoot.*

Home influence affects societies, churches, and nations. "They that rock the cradle rule the world," said Napoleon.

Azariah's visit to the son of Ahab

5—9. (5) **went with,**[c] comp. 2 Ki. viii. 28, 29. (6) **Jezreel,**[d] the country residence of the kings of Israel. **Azariah,** "a slip of the pen for Ahaziah." — *Murphy.* (7) **of God,** as Div. judgment on his sin. **by coming to,** *R. V.*, "in that he went unto." **against Jehu,** *i. e.* to meet him. 1 Ki. xix. 16; 2 Ki. ix. 6–10. (8) **and found,** 2 Ki. x. 12–14. (9) **sought,** *etc*, 2 Ki. ix. 27–29. **brought him to Jehu,** this may be regarded as supplementing the account given in Kings.[e] **to keep still,** *R. V.*, "to hold." there was no one left of the royal house who could assume authority."

"*They buried him, because (they said) he is the son of Jehoshaphat.*" — He was Jehoshaphat's grandson; but though they had to go back two generations, the memory and the moral impression of the good king had not faded — at any rate, had not been effaced. "The *memory* of the just" abides: it is fragrant after many years have gone; and *the influence* of the holy lasts when the memory has disappeared. Knowledge in the memory, peace in the mind, soundness in the soul, beauty and usefulness in the life, — these are the fruits of the good man's life, though they are not traced to his hand and not referred to his working; they are influences which spread and widen as the years go on." — *Pul. Com.*

c Comp. rebuke of this union with idolatrous Israel, 2 Chr. xix. 2; xx. 37.

d Jos. xix. 18.

e Ahaziah fled first to the garden-house, and escaped to Samaria; but was here taken by Jehu's men who brought him to Jehu, by whose command he was slain."

Athaliah

10—12. (10) **seed royal,** every person who might possibly be made king. Comp. note on xxi. 17. (11) **Jehoshabeath,** a variation of Jehosheba (2 Ki. xi. 2). **daughter of the king,** Jehoram, and sister of Ahaziah. **Joash** was therefore her nephew. Jehoiada is supposed not to be the high priest, because his name is not in the line from Aaron to Jozadak (1 Chr. vi). But this is not a line of high priests, but only of the ancestors of Jozadak, the high priest, some of whom were and others were not high priests. His actions and his affinity with the royal house are strongly in favor of his being high priest, and there is nothing against it." — *Murphy.* **bedchamber,** or bed-closet.[f] (12) **in the house of God,** Jehoiada residing in one of the apartments of buildings in the outer temple-wall. **Athaliah reigned,** "the reign of a woman was contrary to all precedents; the reign of a foreigner, not of the seed of David, half Phoenician, was abhorrent to all Jewish notions. The nation must have been shocked and grieved; but it was also terrified." — *Rawlinson.*

f "In the portion of the ordinary apartment lying nearest the door, and several inches lower than the divan, a large cupboard, or closet, is built in the wall, where the bedding of the night occupants of the chamber is stored away." — *Van Lennep.*

B. C 836.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

1—5. (1) **strengthened himself,** expression for beginning to take action.[a] "Prepared his measures for a great stroke." **captains of hundreds,** centurions of the royal guards, who were loyal to the legitimate heir to the crown. The officers named are not otherwise known. **covenant,** for the overthrow of Athaliah's tyranny. (2) **the Levites,** not mentioned in the account in Kings, but here said to be the chief agents of this important revolution. This is one of a great number of passages which show that Chronicles was written in behalf of the church, by a Levite, probably. (3) **all the congregation,** regarded as acting thro' these leaders and representatives. **Lord hath said,** 2 Sa. viii. 12, 13. (4) **ye,** addressed to the Levites only. **entering,** for your weekly course.[b] **porters,** or watchmen. **doors,** Heb. thresholds. (5) **king's house,** or "the porch of the palace." **gate of the foundation,** poss. the gate *Sur.*[c]

The constituents of success.—It was no light work that Jehoiada had in hand. He had need to "strengthen himself," as we are told that he did (*vs.* 1). To effect a revolution in a kingdom is either a very guilty or a very noble deed. It can only be justified by the most grave conditions and by a reasonable prospect of success. When, as on this occasion, it is imperatively demanded, and when, as now, it is boldly and effectively accomplished, a very great work of patriotism and philanthrophy is wrought; and it is not only man who is served, but God also. On the other hand, to undertake such an achievement without adequate cause and without sufficient means, is to plunge a country into civil strife and to insure the spilling of much blood and the desolation of many homes. Jehoiada succeeded in his great undertaking, and his success was due to many things. These things are the constant constituents of prosperity everywhere. They are—I. A sense of sacred duty. II. Courage and command on the part of the leader (or leaders). III. The greatest possible co-operation. IV. A conscientious regard for what is right. V. The greatest possible wisdom in contrivance. VI. Boldness at the moment of execution. VII. A reverent attitude toward the great Disposer of events. —*Clarkson.*

Jehoiada the priest

[a] Ge. xlviii. 2; 2 Chr. xii. 1; xvii. 1; xxi. 4.

[b] 1 Chr ix 25.

[c] 2 Ki. xi. 6.

"More firm and sure the hand of courage strikes, when it obeys the watchful eye of caution."—*Thomson*

"It is a good thing to learn caution by the misfortunes of others."—*Publius Syrius.*

"High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect."—*Shakespeare.*

6—11. (6) **watch of the Lord,** see that no Baal worshippers forced their way in. (7) **the Levites,** those not engaged as indicated in *vss.* 4, 5. Comparing with 2 Ki. xi. 8, we find that the Levites were to form a guard for the king in the temple, and the soldiers in the court when he passed from the temple to the palace.—*Lumby.* (8) **all Judah,** as described in *vss.* 2, 3. **to go out,** the usual attendants were doubled by retaining those who were just completing their week's course.[d] (9) **spears,** *etc.*, thus arming them within the temple courts to avoid exciting any suspicion. **shields,** some think these may have been the shields of gold that King David took from the servants of Hadadezer (2 Sa. viii. 7, 11). (10) **all the people,** those joining in his enterprise; not the promiscuous worshippers. (11) **testimony,**[e] this was prob. the same as the Book of the Law of the Lord, 2 Chr. xxxiv. 15. *Cf.* custom of kissing the Bible when Pres. of the U. S. takes the oath of office. Probably has a similar significance. The testimony may have been placed on the head (*Rawlinson*) or in the hands. De. xvii. 18.

Jehoiada proclaims Joash

[d] 1 Chr. xxiv., xxv

[e] "Some think that a roll, containing a copy of the law, was placed in the king's hands, which he held as a sceptre or truncheon."—*Jamieson.*

Lessons from Jehoiada.—1. It is not always wrong for ministers of religion to take part in politics. 2. There are times when rebellion against the powers that be is a solemn duty. 3. Neither God's house nor God's day can be put to a better use than to set a crown upon the head of God's anointed. 4. In church and state alike each man has his own place and work. 5. Kings may expect their thrones to be stable if these are erected on the good will of their subjects. 6. No sovereign can rule well who takes not the Law of God for his guide. 7. A great and good man in troubled times invaluable to church or state. What could Judah have done without Jehoiada?—*Whitelaw.*

Pardon is sometimes granted to the criminal at the place of execution, but so rarely that it cannot be depended upon; no more can deathbed repentance and death-bed pardon.

Joash made king.—It is the first direct example of a *coronation.* The diadem, probably a band studded with jewels, was placed on his head by the high priest, and upon it the sacred "testimony," which, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, had been raised into new importance. It seemed like the intimation of a limitation to the king's despotic power—an indication that he was not to be, like David, above, but beneath the law of his country.—*Stanley. The crown and the testimony.*—Two important symbols. The crown the sign of power,

"I know of but two beautiful things; the starry heavens above my head and the sense of duty within my heart."—*Kent*

B. C. 836.

and the law the sign of theocratic wisdom. Finely are both the crown and the book presented to the king, that he might be not only mighty, but also wise, or (as we may say) know God's word and right. —*Luther.*

Athaliah is slain

12—15. (12) **praising,** *etc.*, the shout of the people's acceptance of the new king revealed what had occurred.[a] (13) **looked,** prob. rushing across the valley to see what was the matter. **at his pillar,** on his platform being a boy of seven years. **singers . . praise,** *R. V.*, "the singers also played on instruments of music, and led the singing of praise." (14) **forth of the ranges,** *R. V.*, "forth between the ranks," *i. e.* of soldiers. **followeth her,** with intent to defend her. (15) *R. V.*, "so they made way for her; and she went to the entry of the horse gate to the king's house; and they slew her there." **horse gate,** 2 Ki. xi. 16.

Disinterestedness. —

Mark but my fall, and that which ruined me.
Cromwell, I charge thee fling away ambition.
Love thyself last. Cherish the hearts that hate thee.
Be just, and fear not;
Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's,
Thy God's and truth's; then, if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr. — *Shakespeare.*

The fatal flower. — "Travelers who visit the Falls of Niagara are directed to a spot in the margin of the precipice over the boiling current below, where a gay young lady a few years since lost her life. She was delighted with the wonders of the unrivalled scene, and ambitious to pluck a flower from a cliff where no human hand had before ventured, as a memorial of the cataract and her own daring. She leaned over the verge, and caught a glimpse of the surging waters far down the battlement of rocks, while fear for a moment darkened her excited mind. But there hung the lovely blossom upon which her heart was fixed; and she leaned, in a delirum of intense desire and anticipation, over the brink. Her arm was outstretched to grasp the beautiful form which charmed her fancy; the turf yielded to the pressure of her light feet, and with a shriek she descended, like a falling star, to the rocky shore, and was borne away gasping in death." A life sacrificed for a flower! How like the case of many who, grasping at sin's fatal flower, sacrifice the soul!

Jehoiada's reforms

16—21. (16) **between him,** himself as representing Jehovah.[b] "Such a solemn covenant had been made first at Sinai, Ex. xxiv. 3–8. Again under Asa, 2 Chr. xv. 9–15; later by Hezekiah, xxix. 10; and Josiah, xxxiv. 41; such renewal being made necessary by the nation's backsliding." (17) **house of Baal,** temple prob. built by Jehoram. (18) **appointed,** *etc.*, restoring the true order of worship, and effecting an ecclesiastical reformation.[c] (19) **the porters,** 1 Chr. xxvi. 1–19. (20) **high gate,** or upper gate. (21) **quiet,**[d] it was a bloodless revolution, save in the case of Athaliah; quiet also from her tyrannies and idolatries.

Destruction of the House of Baal. — Compare the destruction of the Roman Catholic edifices in Perth on May 11, 1559, after a sermon by Knox. "The congregation (in the church of St. John's) was still undispersed, when a priest came in, went up to the altar, opened the tabernacle, and prepared to say mass. A boy who was present said something insolent. The priest struck him; and the boy, snatching up a stone, flung it at the crucifix, which fell broken to the ground. The common instinct shot through the gathered crowd; altar, ornaments, images, in a few moments lay in ruins on the chancel floor. The saints were flung from their niches, the storied windows dashed in atoms. Then the cry arose, "To the Greyfriars!" and in an hour or two the poor monks, started from their noonday dinner, were adrift upon the world, and their homes going up in smoke and flame into the sky." — *Froude's Hist. of England.*

a Comp. 1 Ki. i. 41. "True dispatch is a rich thing. For time is the measure of business, as money is of wares, and business is bought at a dear hand where there is small dispatch." — *Bacon.*

"The slightest emotion of disinterested kindness that passes through the mind improves and refreshes that mind, producing generous thought and noble feeling. We should cherish kind wishes, for a time may come when we may be enabled to put them in practice." — *Miss Mitford.*

b 2 Ki. xi. 17.

c Comp. 1 Chr. xxiii. xxiv. xxv.

d "So ended the troubled scenes of of the first Sabbath of wh. any detailed account is preserved to us in the sacred records." — *Stanley.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

Joash begins to reign

1—5. (1) **of Beersheba,** Ge. xxi. 14, (2) **all the days,** *etc.*, prob. Jehoiada lived to guide the king's counsels from 23 to 30 years. Notice here the dependence of Joash on some external support, which will explain his seemingly inconsistent life. (3) **two wives,** anxious to secure a succession to the throne

of Judah. Choosing only *two* showed his desire to limit the license which kings then permitted themselves.[a] (4) **to repair,**[b] Heb. *renew*, 2 Ki. xii. 4–16. This was practically a renovation in which carpenters and masons, timber and stone (2 Ki. xii. 12), "iron and brass" were used, *vs.* 12. (5) **money,** free-will offerings. **hastened it not,** showed no earnestness in the matter; perhaps explained by the fact that this tax was ordinarily used in support of the Levitical class. The delay was certainly discreditable to the Levites or a reason would be given.

The life and character of Joash. — We propose — I. To take a brief review of his history. 1. During the life of Jehoiada; 2. After Jehoiada's decease. Let us proceed to — II. Make some reflections on his character. From his character toward the close of his life we observe how awful is the state of those who, after hopeful beginnings, turn aside from the paths of piety and virtue. From his history in a collective view we observe how necessary Divine grace is to produce any radical change of heart and life.— *Simeon.*

Little crowns and how to win them.— What boy has not sometimes wished that he might become a king, and live in a splendid palace, all shining with gold and gems? I am going to tell you how you may all wear crowns, if you will only take the pains to win them. One of these crowns is self-government. II. Another crown is wisdom. III. Another is obedience to God. IV. Another crown, bright and beautiful, as if it had come straight from heaven, is love. V. I must tell you of one more crown, and it is bright as all the others can make it melted into one: the crown of glory that fadeth not away.—*J. A. Collier.*

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[a] 1 Ki. xi. 3; 2 Chr. xi. 21; xiii. 21.

[b] "Its treasures had been given away piecemeal to invaders, even by the most devout of the kings, and had been plundered twice over by the Egyptians and Arabs. Its very foundations had been injured by the agents of Athaliah in removing its stones for her own temple." — *Stanley.*

6—10. (6) **collection . . Moses,** *R. V.*, "the tax of Moses."[c] "Every one who at twenty years of age entered the army of Jehovah had to pay at the mustering the sum of half a shekel as propitiation (Ex. xxx. 11–16), the rich and the poor alike, because they are equal in God's sight. The money so raised was to be applied (Ex. xxxviii. 25) to the building of the sanctuary."— *Oehler.* There is no evidence of its having been paid from that time to this. Afterward (Neh. x. 33) a yearly contribution of a third of a shekel was required for the service of the sanctuary and in Christ's time the half shekel had reappeared (Mat. xvii. 24). (7) **sons of Athaliah,** *i. e.* Ahaziah and his elder brothers.[d] **broken up,** the stones of the temple had been used to build elsewhere, so that breaches were made in its walls (2 Ki. xii. 5). (9) **proclamation,** a message carrying the king's authority. (10) **made an end,** given all they could, and all had given who would.

Jehoiada institutes the treasury

[c] Comp. 2 Ki. xii. 4.

[d] 2 Chr. xxi 17.

Freewill giving.— 1. The duty of Christian giving, which may be inferred from this example of the Hebrew church. 2. The superiority of the voluntary over the compulsory system of raising money for religious purposes, even should the latter be deemed permissible. 3. The propriety of financial boards, especially those connected with the church, being above suspicion. 4. The wisdom of aiming at simplicity, in schemes for receiving the contributions of the faithful. 5. The advantage of adopting such measures as shall place church-treasures beyond the reach of temptation.— *Whitelaw.*

"Poss. *sons* may be taken here in the sense of *servants or followers.*" — *Wordsworth.*

Treasure in religion.— In the "green-room" at Dresden, where for centuries the Saxon princes have gathered their gems and treasures, ntil they have become worth millions of dollars, may be seen a silver egg, a present to one of the Saxon queens, which, when you touch a spring, opens, and reveals a golden yolk. Within this is hid a chicken, whose wing, being pressed, also flies open, disclosing a splendid gold crown studded with jewels. Another secret spring being touched, hidden in the centre is found a magnificent diamond ring. The treasures of religion are not discovered at the first view; but when laid open are found to be greater than any king ever possessed. Their value will appear greater and greater to all eternity.

"Joash seems to have been a prince of fine impulses, but he lacked independence and strength of character. He too readily took the impress of the influences around him."

11—14. (11) **king's office,** indic. that the king put the matter in the ordering of his civil officers, as the Levites had failed in duty. **king's . . officer,** acting as auditors. (12) **did the work,** or as we should say, *contracted* for it. (13) **the work was perfected,** the Heb. has a striking figure: "*the healing went upon the work.*" **state,** proper condition and grandeur. (14) **vessels to minister,** refurnish the temple with utensils, *etc.*

collections for the service of religion

Money. — We see here a distinct indication of a practice still followed in the East where large sums of money are concerned, as in the disbursements of the government, and in the taxes and tributes paid to the crown. The money

Col. A. J. Edgerton, while commanding a brigade in Louisiana, in which sickness and death were extremely prevalent,

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was requested to prohibit religious meetings, as "religion tended to depress the spirits of the men," and to injure their health. He caused a careful examination to be made, and learned that, while two fifths of the whole regiment had died, only one-eighth of the Christians in it had died.

in such cases is deposited in long narrow bags, each containing a certain sum, and carefully sealed with the official seal. — *Kitto.* In the East at the present time a bag of money passes (for some time at least) currently from hand to hand, under the authority of a banker's seal, without any examination of its contents. — *Burder. Advantage of sincere worship.* — In an early period of the ministry of the Rev. John Wesley, he visited Epworth, in Lincolnshire, where his father had formerly been minister, but found the people greatly opposed to what they considered his new notions. He tells us, in his journal, that many persons were convinced of the importance of the truths he delivered from the tombstone of his father, some of whom were conveyed in a wagon to a neighboring justice of the peace, to answer for the heresy with which they were charged. Mr. Wesley rode over also. When the magistrate asked what these persons had done, there was a deep silence; for that was a point their conductors had forgotten. At length, one of them said: — "Why, they pretend to be better than other people: and, besides, they pray from morning to night." He asked, "But have they done anything besides?" "Yes," said an old man; "an't please your worship, they have convarted my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue; and now she is as quiet as a lamb." "Carry them back, carry them back," replied the justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town."

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death of Jehoiada

15—19. *vss.* 15-22 are wanting in 2 Kings xii. (15) **full of days,** his age was very unusual in those times; there is, however, no good reason for challenging the number of years given to him in the text.[a] (16) **in the city,** an honor permitted only to kings. "As preserver of the royal dynasty, and as restorer of the Lord's house, this great high priest was granted a distinction never allowed to any other subject; he was buried in state, in the sepulchre of the kings." — *Rawlinson.* (17) **the princes of Judah,** led by Jehoiada they had joined in revolt against Athaliah, but now, 25 years later, were desirous of the freedom from restraint that would come with idolatry. **hearkened,** being weak-natured, and having lost the prop on which he had leaned. (18) **groves,**[b] *R. V.*, Asherim. (19) **prophets,** to warn them of danger, as *vs.* 20.

Worship. — A man's conception of worship really reaches his life. Let him lose his reverence for God, and his reverence for man, however much he may boast of it, will in that measure go down: the two commandments belong to one another, and are absolutely inseparable. Increase of true reverence towards God always means increase of real beneficence towards man, for there is a deep and mysterious sense, as well as a sense limited by the creation, that man is made in the image and likeness of God, so that when God is most feared, loved, and honored, man is blessed by the increase of religious conviction and emotion. — *J. Parker.*

a "His great age may explain his exhibiting a kind of passive character, enduring, for the sake prob. of quiet, evils which he might have been expected to prevent or remove. The high places were not abolished, and priests grossly misappropriated money." — *Kitto.*

b He. x. 3[c]

Zechariah succeeds Jehoiada

20—22. (20) **came upon,** Hebrew "clothed itself with." "The man is looked on as the covering of the Spirit, which rules, speaks, and testifies in him." For other accounts of the action of the Holy Spirit comp. Nu. ix. 25, 29; Ju. vi. 34; 1 Chron. xii. 18; Ju. xiv. 6, 19. **Zechariah,** who succeeded in the priesthood, possibly grandson of Jehoiada (*cf.* Matt. xxiii. 35, son of Barachias), his father may have died before his grandfather. **stood above,** prob. at the top of the steps leading to the priest's court, so in full hearing of the people. **prosper,** De. xxxviii. 1-14. (21) **conspired,** *etc.*, raising a public tumult, as in cases of Naboth and Stephen.[c] (22) **but slew,**[d] the first example of the martyrdom of a prophet given in the O. T. Joash did well as long as Jehoiada lived and guided him, but afterward he was led by evil counsellors. **The Lord,** *etc.*, God in O. T. is the proper avenger of blood, for man was made in God's image (Ge. ix. 5, 6. Joash was murdered by his own servants (ch. xxiv. 24-27).

"To resent the rebuke of the Lord is to inflict upon ourselves the most serious, and too often a mortal, injury." — *Clarkson.*

c 1 Ki. xxi. 13; Ac. vii. 57, 58.

Murder of Zechariah. — 1. Horrid outrage on a prophet of the Lord. A sacred person, a Hebrew patriot. 2. An instance of base ingratitude. To a family who had preserved his life. 3. A deed of violence involving great criminality. Illegal and unjust exercise of power, bringing retribution upon king and nation. The last words, "The Lord require it," not vindictive, but a prophetic warning to Jews (Matt. xxiii. 35) in time of Jesus and to us. — *Hom. Com.*

d "The prophet's denunciations appeared to Joash treasonable utterances, designed to produce the dis-

Stoning of Zechariah. — The act produced a profound impression. It was a later Jewish tradition, but one which marks the popular feeling, that this crowning crime of the House of Judah took place on the Sabbath day, on the

great Day of Atonement, and that its marks were never to be effaced. The sacredness of the person and of the place, the concurrent guilt of the whole nation — king, nobles, and people — the ingratitude of the chief instigator, the culmination of long tragedy of the House of Omri, the position which the story held in the Jewish canon, as the last great murder of the last Book of the Old Testament, all conspired to give it the peculiar significance with which it is recorded in the Gospels as closing the catalogue of unrighteous deaths, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah . . .. . who was slain between the temple and the altar. — *Stanley.*

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asters they announced as impending." — *Spk. Com.*

Matt. xxiii. 35.

23—27. (23) **end of the year,** or turn of the year, *i. e.* in the spring, when campaigns usually commenced. 2 Sa. xi. 1. **host of Syria came,** fr. Gath, as *see* 2 Ki. xii. 17. **destroyed,** *etc.*,[a] in battle. (24) **small company,** comp. 2 Chr. xiv. 9–15. **judgment,** the Div. judgment. (25) **great diseases,** or in a sore sickness. (26) **Zabad,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Ki. xii. 21. Not probably led by patriotic or religious zeal, but by other motives. Nevertheless they were the instruments of Divine retribution. (27) **laid upon,** or uttered by prophets against him.[b] **the story,** *R. V.*, "the commentary."

Joash's apostasy. — Possibly the brief and fragmentary records from which the chronicler had to make his selections unduly emphasize the contrast between the earlier and later years of the reign of Joash; but the picture he draws of the failure of best of tutors and governors is unfortunately only too typical. Julian the Apostate was educated by a distinguished Christian prelate, Eusebius of Nicomedia, and was trained in a strict routine of religious observances; yet he repudiated Christianity at the earliest safe opportunity. His apostasy, like that of Joash, was probably characterized by base ingratitude. At Constantine's death the troops in Constantinople massacred nearly all the princes of the imperial family, and Julian, then only six years old, is said to have been saved and concealed in a church by Mark, Bishop of Arethusa. When Julian became emperor, he repaid this obligation by subjecting his benefactor to cruel tortures because he had destroyed a heathen temple and refused to make any compensation. Imagine Joash requiring Jehoiada to make compensation for pulling down a high place! — *W. H. Bennett.*

the Syrian invasion

a "As the authors of the recent apostasy, and the instigators, in all probability, of the proceedings against Zechariah, a special judgment fell on them." — *Spk Com.*

b 2 Ki. ix. 25; Is. xiii. 1; xv. 1, *etc.*

"The human race resemble the withering foliage of a wide forest. While the air is calm, we perceive single leaves scattering here and there from the branches; but sometimes a tempest or a whirlwind precipitates thousands in a moment." — *Foster.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

1—4. (1) **Amaziah,** comp. 2 Ki. xiv. 1–3. Like his father, he began well but ended ill. He rejected the counsel of two prophets (unknown). He was defeated by the King of Samaria, who pillaged Jerusalem itself, and finally he was assassinated by his own servants. (3) **established,** would seem to imply that there was a faction back of the assassins of Joash, and it was some time before Amaziah gained firm control of the government. **his servants,** ch. xxiv. 26. (4) **not their children,**[c] as De. xxiv. 16. In many cases the families of traitors, *etc.*, were destroyed with them.

Right, but not with perfect heart. — Many good things in A., had respect for ordinances of religion, knew Scriptures, and had desire to do right. But failed because not thoroughgoing in principle and piety. 1. Much half-heartedness, levity, and superficial goodness. 2. A perfect heart required. Earnestness, consecrated feeling and energy. — *Hom. Com.*

A divided heart. — In every age and country, there are some found with divided hearts on the subject of religion. Such was Hiram, king of Tyre, who, while he blessed the Lord that Solomon was king, and gladly traded with him for some of the materials for building a temple to Jehovah, also contributed one hundred and twenty talents of gold towards its erection: and yet, in his own country, he dedicated a golden pillar to Jupiter, built the temples of Hercules and Astarte and enriched the shrines of the god and goddess by valuable gifts. So there are some people now who appear very religious at times, and yet their hearts go after covetousness, and they are quite at home in the circles of the gay and in the indulgence of sinful pleasures.

Amaziah succeeds Joash

c "With a mercy shown apparently for the first time in Hebrew annals their children were spared." — *Stanley.*

"He had a good name; it imported 'one strong in the Lord and in the power of his might;' but he was far enough from that." — *Trapp.*

Some hearts are like stiff soils, which require deep ploughing and much harrowing before they are capable of receiving seed.

5—10. (5) **according . . fathers,** as Nu. ii. 34. **from twenty,** the military age. In military and aggressive spirit, Amaziah was a contrast to his father. He set out at once to organize an army. (6) **hired,** an alliance with

Amaziah's alliance with Israel

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Israel was impossible, but he could hire individual soldiers. (7) **man of God,** prophet. (8) **if,** *etc.*, apparently ironical.[a] **do it,** *R. V.*, "do valiantly." "The authorized version here agrees with the original, 'But (if thou wilt take thine own way) go *thou* alone with thy God, do. Be brave for the war: it will be of no avail.'" — *Murphy.* (10) **anger,** *etc.*, at this sudden and apparently unreasonable dismissal.

Amaziah's hundred talents. — Rehearse the history and character of Amaziah. This text may — I. Suggest a reply to him who objects to the service of God on the ground of the loss that it may entail. 1. Men are not willing to give more than they can help of anything; 2. Especially of gains that cannot be squared with the religious profession. But God is able to make up to a man all that he gives up for the sake of religion. II. The text is suggestive of a lesson that may be useful to Christian men. God will not allow any servant of His to lose by his devotion to His service. 1. Have we not His word for it? 2. Loss is contrary to the very nature of religion, where all is gain; 3. What seems to be lost may be only capital invested in the best bank; 4. Suppose a Christian to go through life on the principle of acquiring all he can, will he not be a poor man after all, in spite of the hundred talents he may get?

What for the hundred talents? — This little episode carries with it a great principle. Every crusade against an established abuse is met with the cry, "What shall we do for the hundred talents?"—for the capital invested in slaves or in gin-shops; for English revenues from alcohol or Indian revenues from opium? Few have faith to believe that the Lord can provide for financial deficits, or, if we may venture to indicate the method in which the Lord provides, that a nation will ever be able to pay its way by honest finance. Let us note, however, that Amaziah was asked to sacrifice his own talents, and not other people's. — *Bennett.*

[a] "Some able critics read 'But if thou wilt go(alone), do be strong for the battle; God shall *not* make thee fall before the enemy'"—*Ewald, Bertheau.*

"There is little or nothing in this life worth living for, but we can all of us go straight forward and do our duty. — *Wellington.*

"Do your duty and leave the rest with God.— *R. Cecil.*

"Watch lest prosperity destroy generosity." — *Beecher.*

"Success at first doth many times undo men at last." —*Venning.*

Amaziah's idolatry

11—16 (11) **strengthened himself,** *R. V.*, "took courage." **valley of salt,**[b] south of Dead Sea. **children of Seir,**[c] the Edomites. (12) **top of the rock,** or height of Selah,[d] the capital of Edom. 2 Ki. xiv. 7 says that he took Selah and changed its name to Joktheel, *i. e.* "subjugated of God." (13) **soldiers,** *etc.*, *vss.* 6, 10. **cities of Judah,** they returned to Samaria, and then started out to revenge the insult they thought they had received. **from Samaria,** so destroying the towns and villages southward. **Beth-horon,** 6 m. N. of Jerusalem. Jos. x. 10, 11. (14) **gods,** *etc.*, the Edomites worshipped the sun under different forms. *Vss.* 14–16 not given in Kings. Evidently Amaziah held to the tribal idea of God. He had not lost faith in Jehovah, but worshipped other gods also. 15) **Why . . hand,** the absurdity of Amaziah's conduct is evident. His victory had proved the vanity of the Edomite gods. (16) **Art thou,** *etc.*,[e] *lit.* "have we made thee a king's counsellor?"

The declension of Amaziah.— I. The nature of it. A subsidence into idolatry. II. The motive of it. Probably political. III. The criminality of it. IV. The folly of it. V. The danger of it. 1. It aroused against the king Jehovah's anger. 2. It drew down upon him a prophet's rebuke. 3. It excited the king's own evil disposition. 4. It foreshadowed his ultimate fall.— *Whitelaw.*

Death by hurling. -- The Greeks and Romans condemned some of their criminals to be cast down from the top of a rock. In the time of Pitts, the inhabitants of Constantine, a town of Turkey, built on the summit of a great rock, commonly executed their criminals who had been guilty of more atrocious crimes, by casting them headlong from the cliff.— *Paxton.*

[b] 2 Sa. viii. 13; 2 Ki. xiv. 7; 1 Chr. xviii. 12.

[c] 2 Chr. xx. 10.

[d] "The battle was prob. fought not far from Selah (Petra); the captives were marched to Petra itself, and precipitated from the steep cliffs in its neighborhood." — *Spk. Com.*

[e] "Those who were invested with the prophetic character were intitled to counsel kings." —*Jamieson.*

Amaziah's message to Joash

17—20. (17) **took advice,** or counsel, but not fr. God, through his prophet. **see . . face,** a challenge to battle.[f] The cause of this challenge might be the events related in *vs.* 13. But quite as likely Amaziah, elated by his victory over Edom, was impelled by pride and self-conceit. (*Cf.* Ki. xiv. 8–14.) (18) **thistle,** a low shrub, furze-bush: a scornful image of Amaziah. **cedar,** the grand tree of the forest representing the king of Israel. **wild beast,** the Israelite army.[g] (19) **hast smitten,** *vss.* 11, 12. (20) **came of God,** overruled to accomplish the Div. judgment.

Ambition. — Ambition is like the sea, which swallows all the rivers and is none the fuller; or like the grave, whose insatiable maw forever craves for the bodies of men. It is not like an amphora, which being full receives no more, but its fulness swells it till a still greater vacuum is formed. In all

[f] 2 Ki. xiv. 8-14.

[g] "Without making a minute application, the parable may be explained, generally, as describing in a striking manner the effects of

probability, Napoleon never longed for a sceptre till he had gained the baton, nor dreamed of being emperor of Europe till he had gained the crown of France. Caligula, with the world at his feet, was mad with a longing for the moon, and could he have gained it the imperial lunatic would have coveted the sun. It is in vain to feed a fire which grows the more voracious the more it is supplied with fuel; he who lives to satisfy his ambition has before him the labor of Sisyphus, who rolled up hill an ever-rebounding stone, and the task of the daughters of Danaus, who are condemned forever to attempt to fill a bottomless vessel with buckets full of holes. Could we know the secret heart-breaks and weariness of ambitious men, we should need no Wolsey's voice crying, "I charge thee, fling away ambition," but we should flee from it as from the most accursed blood-sucking vampire which ever uprose from the caverns of hell." — *Spurgeon.*

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pride and ambition, towering far beyond their natural sphere, and sure to fall with a sudden and ruinous crash."—*Jamieson.*

"As hoodwinked falcons boldest pierce the skies, th' ambition that is blindest highest flies." — *Colton.*

21—24. (21) **they saw,** as Amaziah wished, *vs.* 17. **Beth-shemesh,** Jos. xv. 10. On the borders of Judah, Dan and the Philistines. (23) **took Amaziah,** prisoner. **brake down,** *etc.*, comp. the fig. of wild beasts treading down the thistle, *vs.* 18. **the corner gate,** *lit.* "the gate of the turning," at the N. W. corner of the wall. Through this breach of 200 yds. the conqueror rode (according to Josephus) into the city. (24) **with Obed-edom,** *i. e.* originally entrusted to him.[a] Prob. his family still retained the charge. **the hostages,** princes, or nobles, carried away as security for the quietness of the conquered country.

Greed of conquest. — I dare say Alexander the Great was somewhat staggered in his plans of conquest by Parmenio's way of putting things. 'After you have conquered Persia, what will you do?" "Then I shall conquer India." "After you have conquered India, what will you do?" "Conquer Scythia." "And after you have conquered Scythia, what will you do?" "Sit down and rest." "Well," said Parmenio to the conqueror, "why not sit down and rest now?" — *Haven.*

the meeting of Joash and Amaziah

[a] 1 Chr. xxvi. 15.

"Ambition is the dropsy of the soul, whose thirst we must not yield to, but control." —*Sedley.*

"There is a glare about worldly success which is very apt to dazzle men's eyes."—*Hare.*

25—28. (25) **lived after,** 2 Ki. xiv. 17. (26) **first and last,** before and after this defeat and humiliation. **the book . . Israel,** *cf.* xxviii. 7, note. The same book is referred to by three other titles, *cf.* xvi. 11: xxxv. 26; xxxiii. 18; xx. 34. (27) **did turn away,** as *vs.* 14. **Lachish,** Jos. x. 3. (28) **upon horses,** that is, they put him to death, but committed no further indignities. The body was brought back and buried with royal honors.[b]

Lachish, where he sought refuge, was an old Canaanitish royal city (Jos. x. 3–31; xii. 11), southwest of Jerusalem, in the lowlands of Judah (Jos. xv. 39). According to Micah (i. 13), it was the first Jewish town to be affected by Israelitish idolatry, which spread from it towards the capital. It would seem also to have been one of Solomon's chariot cities (1 Ki. ix. 19; x. 26–29). It had been fortified by Rehoboam (ch. xi. 9), and was subsequently captured by Sennacherib (ch. xxxii. 9) after a long siege (Je. xxxiv. 7). It should probably be identified with the modern *Um-Lakis,* a few miles west-southwest of the Eleutheropolis. Arrested here, the fallen monarch was dispatched by the daggers of assassins, as his father before him had been (ch. xxiv. 25). As conspiracy had set the crown on Amaziah's head, so conspiracy now took it off. — *Pul. Com.*

death and burial of Amaziah

[b] Comp. 2 Ki. xiv. 20.

"It is one of the greatest praises of God's wisdom that He can turn the evil of men to His own glory."—*Hall.*

"Heat not a furnace for your foe, so hot that it do singe yourself." — *Shakespeare*

"He who studieth revenge keepeth his own wounds green." — *Bacon.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

B. C. 782.

1—6. (1) **all the people chose,** it seems probable that he was not the eldest son but the favorite of the people. **Uzziah,** or *Azariah;*[c] 2 Ki. xiv. 21, 22, xv. 1–7, was only 16 yrs. old, but destined to be one of the greatest of the kings of Judah. Dean Stanley calls his reign "the most prosperous, except that of Jehoshaphat since the time of Solomon." (2) **Eloth,** or *Elath,* was a seaport on the Gulf of Akaba and enabled Uzziah to renew the commerce established by Solomon and lost under his father's reign. This was one of his first achievements. Uzziah *built* in the sense of rebuilt. **restored it,** it had been lost to the Jews in the revolt of Edom fr. Joram.[d] (4) **according . . did,** in the good part of his reign. (5) **he sought,** *R. V.*, "he set himself to seek," *i. e.* with earnestness. **Zechariah,** not otherwise known. (6) **Gath,** Jos. xi. 22. **Jabneh,**[e] or *Jabneel,* Jos. xv. 11. **Ashdod,** Jos. xv. 46, 47. "Three of the strongest fortresses of the Philistines, who were always unquiet neighbors and required to be chastised from time to time." — *Rawlinson.*

Uzziah is elected king

[c] "It is not too much to say that we are indebted to Chronicles for our whole conception of the character of Uzziah." — *Spk. Com.*

[d] 2 Ki. viii. 22

[e] "Known as *Jamnia* in Mac-

B. C. 782-757.

cabæan history, and was noted as a school of learning after the fall of Jerusalem. The modern uame is *Yebna*, 11 miles S. of Jaffa."—*Ayre*.

The prosperity of piety. — "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (*vs.* 5). 1. There is no prosperity worthy of the name, or worthy of our ambition and pursuit, outside the fear and the favor of God. "Who hath hardened himself against Him and prospered?" Many have seemed to do so, and have imagined that they did. But, in the light of Divine wisdom, they have miserably failed. 2. There can be no failure in the faithful service of the Supreme. What looks like it, there may be, there often is; but not the thing itself. For he who walks with God, and is the friend of Jesus Christ, must be what is right and good; must stand where he is secure from harm; must be witnessing for the truth of God; must be moving on towards deeper wisdom, purer joy, and a glorious estate beyond. — *Clarkson.*

the fame of Uzziah

a Ne. iii. 13.

b Ne. iii. 19, 24, 25.

"Wealth is a weak anchor, and glory cannot support a man; this is the law of God, that virtue only is firm, and cannot be shaken by a tempest." — *Pythagoras.*

Unblemished let me live or die unknown;
O grant an honest fame, or grant me none." — *Pope.*

7—10. (7) **Gur-baal . . Mehunims,** or Maonites, these names refer to various wild Arab tribes that were south of Palestine. It was necessary to subdue them to give tranquillity to the southern borders. (8) **gave gifts,** as acknowledgment of dependence. (9) **corner gate,** prob. N. W. of the city.[a] **valley gate,** W. of the city. **turning,** perhaps at the E. of Zion.[b] (10) **towers,** *etc.*, for the defense of his cattle and protection of his wells. **plains,** prob. E. of Jordan. **Carmel,** *R. V.*, "the fruitful fields." **husbandry,** all connected with agriculture.

Shepherds and husbandmen.— William of Tyre describes a country not far from the Euphrates, as inhabited by Syrian and Armenian Christians, who fed great flocks and herds there, but were in subjection to the Turks, who, though few in number, yet living in strong places among them, kept them under, and received tribute from these poor peasants, who inhabited the villages, and employed themselves in country business. I do not know whether this may not give us a truer view of the design of those towers that Uzziah built in the wilderness (mentioned 2 Chr. xxvi. 10) than commentators have done, who have supposed they were conveniences made for sheltering the shepherds from bad weather, or to defend them from the incursions of enemies; for they might rather be designed to keep the nations that pastured there in awe; to prevent their disputing with his servants about wells, and also to induce them quietly to pay that tribute to which the seventh and eighth verses seem to refer.— *Harmer.*

Uzziah's army

c "The army consisted of 307,500 picked men, under the command of 2,000 gallant officers, chiefs or heads of father's houses, so that each father's house formed a distinct band."—*Jamieson.*

d Ju. xx. 16; 2 Ki. iii. 25.

"In early times the slinger prob. found his own stones; and the supply of them to his soldiers by Uzziah is meant to mark the completeness of his equipment."—*Spk. Com.*

e "It is a remarkably corroborative fact that Pliny assigns a Syrian origin to these inventions; and in his view, as in ours, Palestine belonged to Syria."— *Kitto*

11—15. (11) **an host,** a strong body of militia, wh. served in companies. **their account,** or muster-roll. (12) **chief of the fathers,** or heads of families; these occupied positions as officers. "Recalling David's institution of the Gibborim, or 'mighty men of valor,' he raised the number from the 600 of David's time, to 2,600, thus more than quadrupling this important body of picked men."— *Rawlinson.* (13) **an army,**[c] for the number comp. ch. xv. 5. **the enemy,** the national enemy, whoever he might be. There was at this time special reason to fear Assyria. (14) **habergeons,** *R. V.*, "coats of mail." **slings,**[d] *etc.*, *R. V.*, "stones for slinging," to him may be attributed the introduction of the military engines long employed by the Assyrians and Egyptians. These he placed on the walls and towers of Jerusalem. We should say he provided *ammunition* as well as weapons. (15) **engines,** such as the Roman *balista* and *catapulta.* **invented,** the actual invention by Jews seems to be disputed without good reason.[e]

Uzziah's sin.— We have in this text — I. An example of extraordinary prosperity: "He was marvellously helped." 1. The character of Uzziah; 2. His position of power and prosperity; 3. The secret of success. II. His foolish presumption. Nature of his sin — pride, ingratitude, contempt of that great truth which permitted the kingly and priestly office to meet only in Christ; known disobedience. III. Solemn retribution. Improvement:— 1. Learn the true source of all real prosperity; 2. The peculiar dangers of prosperity; 3. The reason why God keeps His people in a low condition; 4. Sins of presumption are the worst sins; 5. They lead men either to forsake worship or to tamper with it; 6. Sorrow inevitably follows sin.

Engines of war.— There were various engines for casting arrows, darts, and stones of a larger size, of which the most remarkable was the balista, which hurled stones of a size not less than millstones, with so great a violence as to dash whole houses in pieces at a blow. Such were the engines which Uzziah, the king of Judah, planted on the walls and towers of Jerusalem, to defend it against the attacks of an invading force. Some of these inventions, however, had been in use long before, for in the reign of David, the battering-ram

was employed in the siege of Abel-Bethmaachah : (2 Sa. xx. 15.) These powerful engines, invented by Jewish artists, and worked by the skill and vigor of Jewish soldiers, were undoubtedly the prototypes of those which the celebrated nations of Greece and Rome afterward employed with so much success in their sieges. — *Paxton.*

B. C. 782 to 737.

16—23. (16) **to his destruction,** *R. V.*, "so that he did corruptly." **transgressed,** *cf.* Nu. xviii. 7. So in Judah the effort is made, as in the northern kingdom, to give to the kingly office the function of the priesthood. **to burn incense,** assuming the functions of the priest. (17) **fourscore priests,** prepared to resist the king by force. (18) **go . . sanctuary,** the king had no business even within the doors of the holy place. (19) **leprosy,**[a] a Divine judgment on his self-willed sacrilegious act. (20) **himself hasted,** humbled by this sign of Divine displeasure. (21) **several,** or separate : *lit.*, *the house of liberation.* **was over,** as practically the king. (22) **Isaiah,** describes the characteristics of the times in ch. ii. 5–8, 16, *ff.* v. 18–23. Idolatry, luxury, pride and oppression of the poor. (23) **in the field,** not in the sepulchres themselves, but in the field connected with the sepulchres.

Uzziah's sin

"Elated, according to the chronicler, by his success, but certainly in conformity with the precedents of Dav. and Solomon." — *Stanley.*

Comp. Nu. xvi. 1-35; xviii. 1-7.

[a] See 2 Ki. v. 27.

They withstood. — When Theodosius, the emperor, was at Thessalonica, in revenge for certain of his judges slain there, he made a great slaughter among the people by his soldiers, who destroyed 7,000 citizens. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, heard to his great grief, and when the emperor, afterwards returning to Milan, would have come, as his manner had been, to the holy assembly, he stoutly withstood him, saying, "With that face canst thou look upon Him who is Lord of all? With that face canst thou enter His house, whom thou hast so deeply displeased? How canst thou receive His body with those hands so drenched in Christian blood? or drink His blood with that mouth that commanded such inhuman slaughter? Depart, therefore, and go not about to add one wickedness to another, but stand thou excommunicate, till by repentance thou hast obtained pardon of God, and given satisfaction to His offended people." The good emperor — religiously bred, knew well what was fit for a king to do and what for a bishop — returned to his palace, acknowledged the greatness of his sin, and spent eight months in weeping and lamentation ; then coming to Ambrose, begged pardon and absolution, which after many rebukes, he obtained. — *Trapp.*

"Step out of your lawful calling, you create disorder, play the fool, and bring destruction upon yourselves and others."— *Hom. Com.*

This is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.
—*Tennyson.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

B. C. 737.

1—4. (1) **Jotham,** already for some time regent. **Zadok,** the priest, poss. a descendant of the famous priest of that name. (2) **entered not,** as ch. xxvi. 16–21. **corruptly,** *see* 2 Ki. xv. 32–35. "Isaiah announced in these days of Jotham, the coming of the day of the Lord upon all who were proud and lofty (Is. ii. 12 ; vii. 9–13)." (3) **high gate,** on the north of the temple,[b] (xxiii. 20). This led from the palace to the outer court of the temple. It was loftier in structure than the others. **Ophel** ("swell," "hill"), was an elevation in the hill south of the temple mount.[c] **built much,** as its position was important for the defense of the temple. (4) **mountains,** *R. V.*, "hill country." **castles and towers,** defenses to check and harass an invading army.

Jotham begins to reign

[b] Ezek. ix. 2; comp. Je. xx. 2.

[c] "The long, narrowish, rounded spar, or promontory, wh. intervenes between the central valley of Jerusalem the (Tyropœan) and the Kidron or valley of Jehoshaphat." — *Grove.*

The verdict of posterity. — The kings and princes of the Oriental regions are often subjected to trial after their decease by their insulted and oppressed people, and punished according to the degree of their delinquency. While the chosen people of God were accustomed to honor in a particular manner the memory of those kings who had reigned over them with justice and clemency, they took care to stamp some mark of posthumous disgrace upon those who had left the world under their disapprobation. The sepulchres of the Jewish kings were at Jerusalem, where, in some appointed receptacle, the remains of their princes were deposited, and from the circumstance of these being the cemetery for successive rulers, it was said when one died and was buried there, that he was gathered to his fathers. But several instances occur in the history of the house of David in which, on various accounts, they were denied the honor of being entombed with their ancestors, and were deposited in some other place in Jerusalem. To mark, perhaps, a greater degree of censure, they were taken to a small distance from Jerusalem and laid in a private tomb. It was, undoubtedly, with a design to make a suitable impression on the mind of the reigning monarch, to guard him against the

Habits influence the character pretty much as undercurrents influence a vessel, and whether they speed us on the way of our wishes or retard our progress, their power is not the less important because imperceptible.

B. C. 737–735.

abuse of his power, and teach him respect for the feelings and sentiments of that people for whose benefit chiefly he was raised to the throne, that such a stigma was fixed upon the dust of his offending predecessors. — *Paxton.*

end of the reign of Jotham

5–9. (5) **Ammonites,** comp. ch. xxvi. 8. They prob. revolted early in Jotham's reign. **wheat . . barley,** their tribute was paid in kind.[a] (6) **became mighty,** *i. e.* "fortified himself, strengthening his throne by other successful wars, referred to in *vs.* 7." — *Keil.* **prepared,**[b] *R. V.*, "ordered." (7) **his wars,** as *vs.* 5; comp. 2 Ki. xv. 37. **the book . . Judah,** "that this book is not the existing book of Kings is clear from the fact that the compiler cites it for particulars respecting matters not mentioned in that book." — *Driver.* (*Cf.* 1 Chr. ix. 1; 2 Chr. xxxiii. 18; xxxvi. 8 and note on xxv. 26). (9) **in the city of David,** *i. e.* in the usual kings' sepulchres. **Ahaz,** *possessor.*

The power of Jotham. — We have in this chapter — I. A history of his reign. It may be taken with 2 Kings xv. 32–38. II. We have also a particular reference to his might. His reign was marked by the buildings which he erected, and by the successful wars. III. But the chief thing to be noted is the secret of his power: "He prepared his ways before the Lord his God." For prepared, the margin would read established, and this implies that he took care to have God's blessing upon him as he proceeded.

From within outward. — First "he built the high gate" of the temple (*vs.* 3); that was beginning at the very centre, at "the house of the Lord," which was morally, if not geographically, the central spot in the kingdom. Then he made some additions to the wall of Jerusalem (*vs.* 3). Then, moving outward, he built fortified cities in the mountains, and castles in the forests of Judah. And then, going further afield, he warred with Ammon, and compelled it to pay a tribute (*vs.* 5). This is the true order. Let solicitude and activity begin at the centre; let them begin at the very centre — at a man's own heart and character; let them move outward — to those in the home circle, to the kindred, to the church; and then to those still further away — to fellow-countrymen, to fellow-men everywhere. A circumscribed activity is altogether a mistake; but we must begin with ourselves, becoming right at heart, and then we may and should move outward in our sympathies and our endeavors. — *Clarkson.*

[a] "The productiveness of the Ammonite country in grain, wh. is here indicated, has been remarked upon as extraordinary by modern travelers." —*Spk. Com.*

[b] Pr. xxi. 29.

"Holiness consisteth not in a cowl or in a garment of grey. When God purifies the heart by faith, the market is sacred as well as the sanctuary. Neither remaineth there any work or place which is profane."—*Luther.*

Without application the finest talents are worthless; and with it the humblest are valuable.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

B. C. 735.

Ahaz ascends the throne and sins

1–5. (1) **Ahaz,** on the Assyrian tablets he appears as Jahukhazi = Jehoahaz. **not that which was right,** comp. 2 Ki. xvi. 1–4. For picture of these times see Is. i. "Under the prosperous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, with the increase of wealth, power and luxury, false self-confidence and forgetfulness of God had prevailed." — *Keil.* (2) **ways . . Israel,**[c] adopting the symbolic worship instituted by Jeroboam. **for Baalim,** even admitting at last the gross idolatries of Phœnicia. (3) The valley of Ben-hinnom was south of Jerusalem. Who Hinnom was is not known. **burnt his children** (see on Le. xviii. 21). Though the Rabbis held passing through the fire to be merely a kind of lustration, yet we can scarcely doubt that Ahaz here practiced the more horrid rite of giving some of his children to be burned in the worship of Moloch.[d] — *Murphy. cf.* Ezek. xvi. 20 *ff.*; Jer. vii. 31, *etc.* **the heathen,** *i. e.* the Canaanites. (4) **every green tree,** intimating great extremes of superstition. (5) **king of Syria,** *Rezin.*[e] "The first great blow fell on the kingdom under the weak and idolatrous Ahaz, who became "the servant of the Assyrian (comp. Is. vii)." — *Oehler.* **Damascus,** Ge. xiv. 15. **king of Israel,** *Pekah,* see *vs.* 6.

In Ahaz we have — I. A son who rebelled against the maxims of his father. Instead of carrying forward the improvements that his father inaugurated, we find that he initiated an altogether new state of things. II. A father who was devoid of natural affection towards his children. "He burnt his children in the fire." III. The wicked sons of good fathers may, one of these days, be fathers themselves; and the evil they have done will be repaid to them again.

A well-ordered life. — Taking a ride one day, Frederick, king of Prussia, surnamed "Old Fritz," espied an old farmer ploughing his acres by the wayside, and cheerily singing his melody. "You are well off, old man," said the king; "does this one acre on which you so industriously labor belong to you?" "No, sir," replied the old farmer, who knew not that it was the king; "I am

[c] 1 Ki. xvi. 31; 2 Ki i. 2; 2 Chr. xxi. 6; xxii. 3; xxiii. 17.

[d] "The worship of Moloch was now established in the valley of Hinnom, in a spot known by the name of Tophet, close under the walls of Jerus. There the brazen statue of the god was erected, with the furnace within, or at its feet, into which the children were thrown. To this dreadful form of human sacrifice Ahaz gave the highest sanction by the devotion of one or more of his sons." — *Stanley.* Comp. 2 Ki. xvi. 3.

[e] Comp. 2 Ki. xvi. 5; Is. vii. 1.

not so rich as that. I plow by the day for wages." "How much do you get?" asked the king. "Eight groschen (about 18 cents) a day," said the farmer. "That is not much," returned the king; "can you get along with it?" "Yes, and have something to spare." "How is that?" The farmer smiled, and said, "Well, if I must tell you, two groschen are for myself and wife, with two I pay my old debts, two I lend away, and two I give away for the Lord's sake." "That is a mystery which I cannot solve," remarked the king. "Then I will solve it for you," said the farmer. "I have two old parents at home, who kept me when I was weak and needed help and, now that they are weak and need help, I keep them. This is my debt, toward which I pay two groschen a day. The third pair of groschen, which I lend away, I spend for my children, that they may receive Christian instruction. This will come handy to me and my wife when we get old. With the last two groschen I maintain two sick sisters, whom I would not be compelled to keep; this I give for the Lord's sake." The king, well pleased with his answer, said, "Bravely spoken, old man. Now I will also give you something to guess. Have you ever seen me before?" "Never," said the farmer. "In less than five minutes you shall see me fifty times and carry in your pocket fifty of my likenesses." "That is a riddle which I cannot unravel," said the farmer. "Then I will do it for you," rejoined the king. Thrusting his hand into his pocket, and counting him fifty brand new gold pieces into his palm, stamped with his royal likeness, he said to the astonished farmer, who knew not what was coming, "The coin is genuine, for it also comes from our Lord God, and I am His paymaster. I bid you adieu."

B. C. 735.

"There be many that deal with God's word and His religion as doth the butterfly with the sweet flowers; and that is even to dye their wings with them, that they may seem to be of a fair painted color; these think that holiness consisteth in much hearing, how little soever they practice." — *T. Timme.*

6–10. (6) **son of Remaliah,** 2 Ki. xv. 25.[a] **slew . . day,** these vast numbers of slain indicate a complete route and panic. (7) **king's son,** or brother, prob. a son of Jotham. **the house,** or palace, *cf.* 1 Ki. iv. 6; 2 Ki. xviii. 18. **next to the king,**[b] or chief councilor. The loss of so many great officers made this defeat a national calamity. (8) **of their brethren,** this aggravated the distress.[c] (9) **Oded,** not the same man as xv. 1, *etc.* This was a prophet ministering in Samaria. The incident is not related in Kings. **before the host,** *i. e.* to meet the returning victors. **reacheth . . heaven,**[d] *i. e.* which is seen of God and will be punished by Him. (10) **bondmen,** *etc.*, which Jewish law forbade, *cf.* Lev. xxv. 45, 46. **with you, sins,** comp. Christ's teaching, Mat. vii. 1–5.

The evil of sin. — We might illustrate the evil of sin by the following comparison:— "Suppose I were going along a street, and were to dash my hand through a large pane of glass, what harm would I receive?" "You would be punished for breaking the glass." "Would that be all the harm I should receive?" "Your hand would be cut by the glass." "Yes; and so it is with sin. If you break God's laws, you shall be punished for breaking them; and your soul is hurt by the very act of breaking them." — *J. Inglis.*

Pekah and Zichri; Oded, the prophet

a "Pekah appears to have been almost better known by his patronymic, *Ben-Remaliah*, than by his own proper name (Is. vii. 4, 5)." — *Spk. Com.*

b Est. x. 3.

c Ps. lv. 12, 13.

d Ob. 10-16; Re. xviii. 5. See also Le. xxv. 39, 42, 43, 46.

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11–15. (11) **deliver,** *etc.*, send them back.[e] (12) **of the heads,** the patriarchal chiefs who formed the king's council; nothing more is known of these men. **against,** *etc.*, strongly feeling the shame of having their own brethren in bondage. (13) **hither,** *i. e.* to Samaria. **whereas . . trespass,** *R. V.*, "Ye purpose that which will bring upon us a trespass against the Lord to add unto our sins and to our trespass." (14) **left . . spoil,** yielded it to them to deal with as they pleased. (15) **with the spoil,** wh. was, of course, their own national property. **carried,** *etc.*, an indication of tender considerateness.[f] **city of palm trees,** De. xxxiv. 3.

Human pity. — Instead of slaughtering their prisoners, which in that age might have been done without pity or remorse, we have these soldiers of Israel showing all possible kindness to them. It is a common thing now for men to show a magnanimous kindness to their fallen enemy even on the battle-field. But the teaching of the Lord of love has done its work to some extent, and has mercifully modified the cruelties of war. The scene of the text was something of an anticipation of the injunction, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." — *Clarkson.* *Misplaced clemency.* — The Duke de Montausier, preceptor to the dauphin, son of Louis XIV., is said to have been the only one of that monarch's courtiers who had the courage to speak the truth to him. When Louis one day told him that he had pardoned a man who had killed nineteen persons, after having been pardoned for the first murder he committed, "No, sire," said Montausier, "he killed but one; your majesty killed the nineteen." — *Percy Anec.*

Oded's message

e Ja. ii. 13.

f 2 Ki vi. 22; Pr. xxv. 21, 22; Lu. vi. 27.

"The record of this act of compassion of these Israelites towards the captives of Judah is to be noted as affording a refutation of the allegation of some modern critics, that the writer of the Chron. was swayed by partiality for Judah, and by prejudice against Israel." — *Wordsworth.*

B. C. 735–715.

Ahaz seeks aid of Assyria

16–21. (16) **kings of Assyria,** plural for singular. Ref. is to *Tiglath-Pileser.*[a] (17) **Edomites,** who had been subdued by Amaziah and Uzziah, taking advantage of the war with Israel, cast off their yoke, and made a raid into the country.[b] (18) **Beth-shemesh,** Jos. xv. 10. **Ajalon,** Jos xix. 42. **Gederoth,** Jos. xv. 41. **Shocho,** 1 Sa. xvii. 1. **Timna,** Jos. xv. 10. **Gimzo,** *Jimzu,* "a large village in the maritime plain, about 2½ m. fr. Ludd (the ancient Lydda)." — *Robinson.* (19) **made Judah naked,**[c] *R. V.,* "dealt wantonly in Judah." (20) **king of Assyria,** he seized a considerable part of Pekah's kingdom (2 Ki. xv. 29). He also took Damascus and slew Rezin (2 Ki. xvi. 9). But he merely made a tributary of Ahab. The Assyrian monuments testify to this. — *Murphy.* **distressed,** *etc.,* by taking heavy tribute, and not rendering the help Ahaz wanted. (21) **took away,** *etc.,* to make up the tribute.

The conduct of Ahaz in his distress. — I. The very evil imputed to Ahaz, of trespassing yet more in his distress, may be committed by us in our troubles. 1. By indifference; 2. By obstinacy; 3. By murmuring; 4. By despondency. That we may be afraid of following the steps of Ahaz, let us consider — II. The stigma fixed upon him. There is an extraordinary force and emphasis in the expression, "This is that king Ahaz." — *Simeon.*

No man suffers alone for his sin. — Sages of old contended that no sin was ever committed whose consequences rested on the head of the sinner alone; that no man could do ill and his fellows not suffer. They illustrated it thus: "A vessel, sailing from Joppa, carried a passenger, who beneath his berth, cut a hole through the ship's side. When the men of the watch expostulated with him, saying, 'What doest thou, O miserable man?' the offender calmly replied, 'What matters it to you? The hole I have made lies under my own berth.'" This ancient parable is worthy of the utmost consideration. No man perishes alone in his iniquity; no man can guess the full consequences of his transgression. — *Spurgeon.*

a "Entering Syria at the head of an army, he fell first on Damascus, where Rezin met him in battle, and was defeated and slain. Next he attacked Pekah, and the 2½ transjordanic tribes were carried away captive by the conqueror; and some cities (*e.g.* Megiddo and Dur) on the other side Jordan were taken" — *Rawlinson.*

b For the character of the Edomites *see* Am. i. 11; Eze. xxxv. 5; Ob. 10–14.

c Hos. ii. 3, 10–13.

continued trespass of Ahaz

22–27. (22) **is that king,** *R. V.,* "this same king." Comp. expression Nu. xxvi. 9. (23) **gods of Damascus,** Hadad, Rimmon, *etc.*[d] **all Israel,** here for Judah. "The judgments which the Assyrians were commissioned by God to inflict upon Judah are regarded by the historian as peculiarly the effect of the idolatry of Ahaz." — *Keil.* (24) **shut up,** so actually seeking to put an end to the worship of Jehovah. **altars in every corner,** as if he would secure the help of all the idol-gods. The work of demolition is more particularly described in 2 Ki. xvi. 17, in conjunction with the preceding verses narrating the construction of an altar after the model of one seen at Damascus. (25) **several,** or separate. (26) **written,** *etc.,* 2 Ki. xvi. **book . . Israel,** not the present book of Kings, *cf.* notes on xxvii. 7 and xxv. 26. (27) **not into the sepulchres,** as if he were an honored king.

d *See* 2 Ki. xvi. 10–16.

"This may be paralleled by the prayer of Camillus to the Veientine Juno, and the custom of the Romans, related by Macrobius, of enticing the tutelary gods from the cities with wh. they were at war, by supplications and vows." - *Spk. Com.*

Ahaz. — I. The character of Ahaz. 1. He was one of those whose iniquity is enhanced by the contempt of spiritual privileges; 2. His downward career was rapidly progressive; 3. He reached the lowest point of human obduracy. II. The illustration he affords of the appalling power of sin. 1. Evil habits strengthen by indulgence; 2. The world increases its power over its votaries as they advance in life; 3. Sinners of mature years lose the perception of religious truth; 4. There is a limit to Divine endurance, and hardened transgressors are often left to perish in their sin.

Ahaz. — King Ahaz is one of the stupendous monuments of guilt in Israelitish history. He is one of the few men in any history of whom not one good thing is recorded. His career was one uniform and unmitigated stream of iniquity from beginning to end. Not one virtue or virtuous act is thought worthy of mention in his whole life. So black and disgraceful was his reign, that when he died, the indignant and revolted conscience of the nation refused him burial in the royal sepulchre. The career of this wretched prince illustrates the distinction which it is possible for a man to gain in this world as a monument of guilt. "He did trespass more against the Lord. This is that king Ahaz!" Such is the reflection of the annalist, after enumerating the monarch's crimes. "This is that king Ahaz. Look at him; mark him! let him stand in history as a monster of iniquity; let the world stand aghast at him." Such seems to be the spirit of the inspired recorder. — *Prof. Phelps.*

"The way of sin is down hill; a man cannot stop where he would, and he that will be tampering with dangerous occasions in confidence of his resolution, shall often find himself carried beyond his purpose." — *Abp. Leighton.*

Sin, a boomerang. — There is an Australian missile called the boomerang, which is thrown so as to describe singular curves, and to return at last to the hand of the thrower. Sin is a kind of boomerang, which goes off into space curiously, but turns again upon its author, and with tenfold force strikes the guilty soul that launched it. — *Spurgeon.*

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CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

Hezekiah

he begins to reign

1—6. (1) **Hezekiah,** *Jehovah strengthens.* "The authorities for the history of Hezekiah's 29 yrs. reign are 2 Ki. xviii.-xx.; Is. xxxvi.-xxxix.; 2 Chr. xxix.-xxxii.; and the book of Micah, which was composed during the first six yrs. of this reign. Hezekiah zealously pursued two objects,—one, the elevation of the moral and religious condition of the people, the other the independence of the kingdom, throwing off the Assyran yoke.—*Oehler.* **Zechariah,** poss. the person mentioned Is. viii. 2. (2) **right,** his father's extravagant idolatry seems to have induced in him a revulsion of feeling. (3) **in the first,**[a] *etc.*, at the earliest moment possible. **repaired them,**[b] suggesting that Ahaz had damaged the sacred building. (4) **east street,**[c] *R. V.*, "the broad place on the east." (5) **sanctify . . yourselves,** so only could they be fit to purify the house of God. **the filthiness,** chiefly the relics of idolatry introduced by Ahaz.[d] (6) **turned their backs,** figure for utterly neglecting and despising.

All for the best.—Bernard Gilpin, accused of heresy before Bishop Bonner, set out for London for trial. His favorite maxim was, "All things are for the best." Upon his journey, he broke his leg. "Is all for the best now?" said a scornful companion. "I still believe so," he replied. So it proved; for before he was able to resume his journey, Queen Mary died, and instead of going to London to be burned, he returned home in triumph.

a *Abib* or *Nisan*, the month of the passover.

b 2 Ki. xviii. 16.

c "The court of the priests wh. fronted the eastern gate of the temple."—*Jamieson.*

d Ki. xvi. 15.

he proposes to restore the worship of God

7—11. (7) **shut up,** ch. xxviii. 24. (8) **delivered . . hissing,**[e] *R. V.*, "delivered them to be tossed to and fro, to be an astonishment, and an hissing." *see* Mic. vi. 16. (9) **in captivity.**[f] (10) **make a covenant,** *see* ch. xv. 12. This could be but the renewal of the old national covenant. (11) **My sons,** a hearty and affectionate appeal to the priests and Levites. The manner is characteristic. **negligent,** the king was anxious for immediate attention to the matter. **chosen you,** the family of Levi.[g]

The snares of sin.—Among the first settlers of Brunswick, Me., was Daniel Malcolm, a man of undaunted courage, and an inveterate enemy of the Indians. Early in the spring, he ventured alone into the forest for the purpose of splitting rails, not apprehensive of Indians so early in the season. While engaged in his work, and having opened a log with small wedges about half its length, he was surprised by Indians, who crept up, and secured his musket standing by his side. "Sungurnumby," said the chief, "now me got you; long me want you; you long speak Indian; long time worry him; me have got you now; look up stream to Canada." "Well," said Malcom, "you have me; but just help me open this log before I go." They all (five in number) agreed. Malcolm prepared a large wooden wedge, carefully drove it, took out his small wedges, and told the Indians to put in their fingers to the partially clefted wood, and help pull it open. They did; he then suddenly struck out his blunt wedge; and the elastic wood instantly closed fast on their fingers, and he secured them all.

e Comp. 1 Ki ix. 8; 2 Chr. xxiv. 18; Je. xviii. 16, xix. 8; xxv. 9, 18; xxix. 18;

f "War was, doubtless, both the first cause, and the ever-fertile source of slavery, for the theory of the Asiatics has always been, and continues to be, that the conqueror has a right to the life and the property of the conquered."—*Van Lennep.*

g Nu. iii. 6; viii. 14; xviii. 2, 6.

the Levites prepare for their duties

12—15. (12) **Kohathites,** Nu. iii. 27-31, iv. 2-15, 34-37. **Merari,** Nu. xxvi. 57.[h] **Gershonites,** Nu. iii. 17-26.[i] (13) **Elizaphan,** Ex. vi. 22.[j] **Asaph,** 1 Chr. vi. 39.[k] (14) **Heman,** 1 Chr. vi. 33. **Jeduthun,** or *Ethan,* 1 Chr. vi. 44. (15) **sanctified themselves,** Ex. xix. 10, 22.[l]

Hezekiah.—The experience of Hezekiah illustrates the fact that the conversion of men is often assisted by their natural recoil from extreme wickedness. Even irreligious men are shocked by wickedness which exceeds their own. A young man's first knowledge of the world, when he goes out from the innocence of his childhood's home, often produces a recoil from the world's depravity. He did not know before that sin was so vile a thing. He starts back from it, and begins to feel his need of prayer. Not long ago a young man who had just entered college wrote home to his father, saying, "I did not know how wicked young men could be till I came here. I shall not get through without a wreck unless I commit myself as a follower of Christ." From that time he consecrated his life to God. God used the very enormities of sin to save him from sin. So the child of vicious parents is often saved from vice by his early knowledge of vice. Many a drunkard's child has never tasted a drop of intoxicating drink. The Holy Spirit is ingenious in devising ways of alluring men to heaven. He draws men in backward in their recoil

h Nu. iii. 33-37; iv. 29-33; vii. 8.

i Nu. iv. 22-28, 38-41; vii. 7; x. 17; xxvi. 57.

j Nu iii. 30; 1 Chr. xv. 8.

k See titles of Psalms l., lxxiii.-lxxxiii. Comp 1 Chr. xxv. 1-6; 2 Chr. v. 12.

l 1 Chr. xxiii. 27, 28.

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from hell. He uses sin to defeat sin. When a prairie is on fire, and the traveler is in danger of being surrounded and suffocated by the roaring flame, he has a way of fighting fire with fire. So the Spirit of God sets guilt against guilt. Temptation is checkmated by the very ghastliness of the crime which it proposes. — *A. Phelps.*

the priests cleanse the house of God

16—19. (16) **inner part,** *i. e.* the temple building; all within the porch; into the temple itself the Levites might not enter.[a] **uncleanness,** so long shut up, dust, *etc.*, had gathered in the holy house. Comp. *vs.* 5. **brook Kidron,** was on the east of the temple mount (2 Ki. xxiii. 12; xxx. 14). (17) **sixteenth day,** taking eight days for each portion of the work. There was a great deal of metal work to clean, *etc.* (18) **altar,** "the new fangled altar of Ahaz (2 Ki. xvi. 10) was no doubt removed and the old altar of Solomon restored to its place in front of the porch."[b] — *Rawlinson.* (19) **cast away,** ch. xxviii. 24.

Undisturbed by the unpleasantness of duty. — This duty laid upon the Levites and upon the priests was not inviting work. To "bring out all the uncleanness" from the temple, and to "carry it out into the brook Kidron," could not be very agreeable occupation. But they did not hesitate to do it. And, indeed, they could not possibly have been better occupied. In that act they were carrying forth a curse; they were bearing away the wrath of their God. They were not merely cleansing an edifice; they were clearing their conscience; they were righting their record in the books of heaven. No fair hand was doing that week in Jerusalem any work of refinement that more graced its owner than did the hands of those Levites as they stripped the false altar of its clothing, or as they swept the accumulated dust from the courts of the sanctuary. Let us not despise any true work of any kind. Even if it is not of a kind that answers to our taste or to our training; even if it should be uncongenial to our spirit. If it be that work which the emergency requires of us, or if it be that which Divine providence assigns us at the time; if it be that which our Master himself asks of us in order to serve His cause or to help one of His little ones, it is honorable employment, it should be accounted holy in our esteem. — *Clarkson.*

a "Beginning with the outer courts, the cleansing of these occupied 8 days, after which they set themselves to purify the interior; but as the Levites were not allowed to enter within the walls of the temple, the priests brought all the sweepings out to the porch, where they were received by the Levites, and thrown into the brook Kedron" — *Jamieson.*

b 2 Ki. xvi. 14. 15.

Hezekiah's sin-offering

20—26. (20) **early,** the very next morning after receiving information that the cleansing work was done. Setting example of the earnestness in God's service wh. He demanded, *vs.* 11. **rulers of the city,** he would not wait to gather the representatives of a nation. (21) **sin offering,**[c] Le. iv. 14. His burnt-offering is spoken of in *vss.* 24, 27. (22) **they killed,** "the slaughtering of the beast of sacrifice is executed at private offerings by the offerer himself; but when a sacrifice was offered for the whole nation (*vs.* 24) the killing was done by the priests." — *Oehler.* **sprinkled,** Le. viii. 14, 15.[d] (23) **laid their hands,** Le. i. 4; iv. 15, 24. (24) **reconciliation,** *R. V.*, "a sin offering," *cf.* Le. iv. This is added to the burnt-offering for all Israel. **all Israel,** this term is frequently used for the kingdom of Judah only. Hez. may have intended spiritual service on behalf of all Jehovah's people. (25) **according,** *etc.*, 1 Chr. xxv. 1; 2 Chr. v. 12. (26) **instruments,** 1 Chr. xxiii. 5.

Instruments.— Music has a most humanizing effect. The cultivation of the art has a favorable influence upon public morals. It furnishes a source of pleasure in every family. It gives home a new attraction. It makes social intercourse more cheerful. Father Mathew followed up his temperance movement by a singing movement. He promoted the establishment of musical clubs all over Ireland, for he felt that, as he had taken the people's whisky from them, he must give them some wholesome stimulus in its stead. He gave them music. Singing classes were established, to refine the taste, soften the manners, and humanize the mass of the Irish people. But we fear that the example set by Father Mathew has already been forgotten. — *Smiles.*

c "The sin-offering; wh. was to make the worshipper acceptable in the sight of God, always preceded the burnt-offering, wh. was a representative self-dedication of the worshipper to God's service. Hence it is best to consider that Hez. commenced with an unusually comprehensive sin-offering to atone for sins of the people, *etc.*" — *Spk. Com.*

d He. ix. 21.

Hezekiah's burnt-offering

27—31. (27) **the burnt offering,** "As soon as the act of offering began, the choir of Levites struck up a psalm, in which they were joined by the trumpets of the priests. During the whole service the assembled congregation stood praying; at the close they threw themselves upon their knees, and then, most likely, received the priestly blessing." — *Oehler.* (30) **to sing praise,** *i. e.*, he probably revived at this time the use of the psalms in public worship. (31) **consecrated yourselves,** Heb. "filled your hand" (*cf.* Ex. xxxii. 29), *i. e.* brought something to offer to the Lord as an expression of self-surrender. **thank offerings,** Le. vii. 12.

"Aspirations after the holy — the only aspiration in which the human soul

Reverent joy. — "And they sang praises with gladness" (*vs.* 30); "And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people" (*vs.* 36). What was more fitted to fill their hearts with overflowing joy than the feeling that they, as a nation, had returned unto the Lord, and had renewed their covenant with Him; that He had accepted them; that "His anger was turned away;" that they might now look forward to a time when they would dwell in the light of His countenance and walk in His loving favor? It was an hour for the exuberance of the people's heart, from the heart of the king to that of the humblest citizen of Judah. And there is no time when joy, reverent joy, is more becoming to ourselves than when we are worshipping in the sanctuary of Christ. There we are conscious of our reconciliation to our heavenly Father, in Him who is our Divine Saviour; there we feel the nearness of our glorious Redeemer, who is "present in the midst of us;" there we pour forth our gratitude and love, and there we renew our happy bonds of holy service unto "Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood;" there we realize our substantial and abiding union with all His people, our fellow-citizens in the kingdom and fellow-workers in the vineyard of Christ; and there we anticipate the purer joys and the nobler service of the heavenly land. Sacred joy is the true key-note of the strain when we meet in the sanctuary and engage in the worship of Christ. — *Clarkson.*

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can be assured that it will never meet with disappointment." — *Maria M'Intosh.*

"Sing aloud old songs, the precious music of the heart!" — *Wordsworth*

"It is a quaint saying of the Jewish rabbis, that 'God could not be everywhere, and therefore he made mothers.'"

32—36. (32) **burnt offerings,** wh. were wholly devoted to God. In some kinds of sacrifices part of the victim belonged to, and was consumed by the worshipper. (33) **consecrated things,** "thank-offerings, which were eaten before the Lord." — *Murphy.* (34) **too few,** prob. many had yielded to idolatry, and these would not readily accept the new reforms of Hezekiah.[a] **the other priests,** *R. V.*, "the priests." (35) The burnt-offerings and the fat of the other offerings (Lev. iii. 3–5) were burnt on the altar by the priests.[b] The libations are prescribed in Num. xv. This completed the restoration of the sacrificial worship. — *Murphy.* (36) **all the people . . people,** *R. V.*, "all the people, because of that which God had prepared for the people." This reformation was of God. **suddenly,** immediately on his coming to the throne.

the order of the service completed

[a] See 2 Ki. xvi. 10-16.

[b] Le. iii. 16.

If you wish to know Christ as your Saviour you must behold Him, by the eye of faith, hanging on the cross, an atoning sacrifice.

Atonement for sin. — A certain man on the Malabar coast, having inquired of various devotees and priests, how he might make atonement for his sins, was directed to drive iron spikes sufficiently blunted, through his sandals: and on these spikes he was enjoined to place his naked feet, and to walk about four hundred and eighty miles. If, through loss of blood or weakness of body, he was obliged to halt, he might wait for healing and strength. He undertook the journey, and while he halted under a large shady tree, where the gospel was sometimes preached, one of the missionaries came and preached in his hearing from these words: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." While he was preaching, the man rose up, threw off his torturing sandals, and cried out aloud, "This is what I want;" and he became a lively witness that the blood of Jesus Christ does indeed cleanse from all sin. — *Whitecross.*

"Atonement is the reconciliation of God to man by the death of His Son. Satisfaction expresses the relation which the work of Christ sustains to the demands of God's law and justice." —*A. A. Hodge.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

Hezekiah proclaims the Passover

1—5. (1) **all Israel,** the king desires to restore the great national festivals, gathering not only the two but the 10 tribes also. It is supposed that the king of Israel may have been a prisoner in Assyria at this time. 2 Ki. xvii. 4. **Ephraim and Manasseh,**[c] the leading tribes of the northern kingdom. (2) **second month,** the proper time was the *first* month.[d] It was provided (Nu. ix. 9–13) that those who were prevented from celebrating the regular Passover might do so at the next full moon. (3) **at that time,** *i. e.* at the proper time. Hez.'s accession to the throne seems to have taken place in the first month of the eccles. year. **sufficiently,** *R. V.*, "in sufficient number." (5) **all Israel,** the king of Israel, if not a captive (*cf. vs.* 1), may have been favorable to such a great religious festival, or wished to keep on good terms with Hezekiah.[e] He had not a strong hold on the government. **of a long time,** *R. V.*, "in great numbers."

[c] "This was before the captivity of the Ten Tribes, wh. did not take place till the ninth year of Hoshea, king of Israel, wh. was the sixth year of Hezekiah. 2 Ki. xviii. 9, 10."—*Wordsworth.*

[d] Nu. ix. 1-5.

Hezekiah's zeal for the glory of God. — Influence a talent of vast importance; often abused where it exists in the highest degree. I. The efforts he used in the service of God. II. The object he sought to accomplish — one of the

[e] "Hoshea is described as, though

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evil in some respects, yet more favorably disposed to religious liberty than any of his predecessors since the separation of the kingdom. This is thought to be the meaning of the mitigating clause in his character. 2 Ki. xvii. 2."—*Jamieson.*

Hezekiah sends posts through the land

a 2 Sa. xviii. 19-32; 2 Chr. xxx. 10; Jer. li. 31; Job. ix. 25, 26.

b 2 Ki. xv. 19, 20; 1 Chr. v. 26.

c De. x. 16.

d Ro. vi. 13; xii. 1.

e Is. xvii. 3-11; Hos. v. 1-4.

the feast of the Passover kept

f 2 Chr. xxix. 22; 34.

Though at present you have not the sweet assurance of acceptance in your heart it does not therefore follow that all your sins are not blotted out by the precious blood of Christ.

Hezekiah prays for imperfect worshipers

g Comp. 2 Ki. xix 20; xx. 5.

h Ezra x. 11

As in the body diseases are incapable of cure till you discover the nature of them; so

highest importance. III. The way in which he endeavored to accomplish his end— peculiarly amiable and praiseworthy. IV. The success with which his efforts were attended. — *Simeon.*

Zeal for God. — "I know," says Mr. Fenner, "an old man that used constantly to go to the laborers in the fields, and talk to them about religion as they were reaping and working. He would go to men's shops where he was acquainted, and stir them up to the care of their souls; and, by this means, brought about forty men and women to seek for heaven, who before had no more care that way than if they had been a company of beasts. Wouldst thou not be glad to do good? Thou wilt never be able to do it, except thou be zealous. Paul had women and sundry private Christians who labored with him in the Gospel. This — this — beloved, would cause religion to thrive here amongst us!" — *Whitecross.*

6—12. (6) **posts,** runners, couriers,[a] 2 Ki. xi. 4. **saying,** in addition to the written letters, they were to say this to the people. **remnant of you,** several Assyrian invasions had already been made, and portions of the people had been removed.[b] **kings of Assyria,** Pul and Tiglath-Pileser. (7) **like your brethren,** the 2½ trans-Jordanic tribes; 1 Chr. v. 26. (8) **stiffnecked,** Ex. xxxii. 9.[c] "Hardening the neck is the gesture of disobedience (Deut. x. 16), as giving the hand (1 Chr. xxiv. 24) is that of submission."— *Murphy.* **yield yourselves,** *lit. give the hand.*[d] (9) **gracious,** *etc.*, Ex. xxxiv. 6. (10) **Zebulun,** in the extreme north of the country. **laughed,** *etc.*, 2 Chr. xxxvi. 16.[e] (11) **divers,** certain individuals. The response was not very hearty. National jealousy prevented acceptance. (12) **one heart,** a united national feeling.

There is no danger of repulse. — "The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away His face from you, if ye return unto Him" (*vs.* 9). The people of this idolatrous realm might well ask whether they had not hopelessly separated themselves from Jehovah, whether their rebelliousness had not gone such lengths that mercy was not to be looked for. But Hezekiah charged them to dismiss all such fears from their minds; their repentance would meet with a gracious response from the forgiving God of their fathers. — *Clarkson.*

13—17. (13) **in the second month,** *see* on *vs.* 2. (14) **the altars,** ch. xxviii. 24, 25. Before the festival they cleanse the city, as Hezekiah had the temple, *cf.* 2 Ki. xxiii. 6. (15) **ashamed,** "this word, occurring in one conjugation or another thirty-eight times, expresses in every instance a genuine shame. It now was the forerunner of a practical repenting." — *Pul. Com.* **into the house,** into the priests' court, not within the temple building. (16) **manner,** *R. V.*, "order," *cf.* Le. i. 11-13, *etc.* **of the hand,** *etc.*, the Levites being obliged to help in slaying the numerous victims.[f] (17) **had the charge,** bec. these unsanctified people could not do it for themselves.

Real repentance. —

> What better can we do, than, to the place
> Repairing where He judged us, prostrate fall
> Before Him reverent, and there confess
> Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
> Watering the ground, and with our sighs the air
> Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
> Of sorrow unfeigned, and humiliation meek? — *Milton.*

18—22. (18) **otherwise,** *i. e.* not in strict accordance with Mosaic rules, which prescribed that the uncleansed must not eat the Passover (Nu. ix. 6). The uncleanness specially applied to those who had journeyed to the Passover from the districts of Israel. (19) **prepareth his heart,** so is sincere; heart-clean, though not ceremonially clean. (20) **healed,** "pardoned their uncleanness, and overlooked it." Poss. Isaiah brought some message to this effect.[g] (21) **seven days,** Ex. xii. 15; xiii. 6. **loud instruments,** such as suited triumphant praise. (22) **spake comfortably,** comp. xxix. 11, characteristic of the kindliness of this great king. **taught the good knowledge,** *R. V.*, "were well skilled in the service." **making confession,** *i. e.* the confession or uttering forth of praise.[h]

The love of God. — The Lord is larger than any law. Love infinitely transcends any regulation. Say to the most eccentric minds, there is a place for

you at God's feast. Say to those who cannot find brotherhood on earth, by-and-by even your peculiarity shall be explained, and you shall constitute an element in the last eternal harmony. If any man keep himself away from the feast of God's love, let him blame himself. The invitation included him, and honors his manhood by allowing him the liberty, not the right, to decline the invitation. — *J. Parker.*

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it is with regard to the soul. O Lord, show me myself!

23—27. (23) **other seven days,** in imitation of Solomon's feast at the dedication of the temple.[a] (24) **did give,**[b] *R. V.*, "did give for offerings." (25) **congregation . . Israel,** Israelites who had settled in the land of Judah when idolatry was introduced into Israel. **strangers,** those responding to the invitation of Hez. (26) **since,** *etc.*, comp. what is said of Josiah's Passover, 2 Ki. xxiii. 22, 23. The Passover was annually celebrated by a few. But such a national celebration had not occurred since the time of Solomon at the Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 9). — *Murphy.* (27) **blessed,** Nu. vi. 24–26.

Universal joy. — I am not unmindful of the assertion that the God of the Hebrews is usually thought of as a being of preternatural severity, overwhelming men by his majesty, begetting profound and soul-filling awe by his greatness, dwelling in the thick darkness, making clouds his chariot, and sweeping down on his foes like a cyclone. But this representation is one-sided and unfair to a religion which had more festivals than fasts, more psalms than prophecies, and more triumphs than despairs. By the side of intolerance of sin there is mercy that reacheth to the very heavens, and near to the righteousness that is like the great mountains there is a forgiveness that inspires hopeful petition, even out of depth of sufferings and misfortune. — *J. Clifford.*

the priests and Levites bless the people

a 1 Ki. viii. 65.

b 2 Chr. xxxv. 7, 8.

"He only sees well who sees the whole in the parts, and the parts in the whole. I know but three classes of men: those who see the whole, those who see but a part, and those who see both together." — *Lavater.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

1—4. (1) **all Israel,** the entire congregation, inflamed with zeal. **in Ephraim also,** first the temple was cleansed, then Jerusalem, then Judah, then the rest of Israel. Hoshea was still a prisoner, probably. 2 Ki. xvii. 4; xviii. 1–7. **every . . cities,** this indicates that the captivity was not yet accomplished. (2) **courses,** as laid down by David.[c] **of the tents,**[d] *R. V.*, "of the camp." "The service of the doorkeepers was organized in military fashion, the idea of the camp of Jehovah, in the wilderness, being transferred to the sanctuary." 1 Chr. ix. 19. — *Oehler.* (3) **king's portion,** "the royal contribution from the king's demesnes and revenues.[e] (4) **encouraged in,** *R. V.*, "give themselves to." "Having set the example, he calls upon the people to do their part as prescribed in Ex. xxiii. 19, and Nu. xviii. 21." — *Murphy.*

Reform. — Men cannot strike finally if they only act as reformers. Reform is an active word, and is to be regarded with great favor, and is the only word that is permissible under some circumstances; but the greater word is regeneration. Reform that does not point to regeneration is a waxen flower that will melt when the sun is well up in the heavens. It is not in man to regenerate, therefore; this is the mystery of God's action in the soul. When the man is new the action will be new. The great process does not begin with the action, but with the soul. Make the tree good, then the fruit will be good. — *Parker.*

Hezekiah puts down idolatry, and professes for worship of God

c 1 Chr. xxiii. 6; xxiv. 1.

d "The square enclosure, with its gates and stations, its guards and porters, its reliefs, its orderly arrangement and its tabernacle, or tent, of the great commander in the midst, very much resembl'd a camp." — *Spk. Com.*

e For Hezekiah's riches, see 2 Chr. xxxii. 27-29.

5—10. (5) **honey,** or dates. **the tithe,** Le. xxvii. 30.[f] (6) **by heaps,** or as Heb. *heaps, heaps.* (7) **seventh month,** wh. would complete the harvesting.[g] "The Feast of Weeks, about the sixth of the third month, was the close of the grain harvest. After this the tithe would begin to be paid in kind. Hence the heaps. In the seventh month was the Feast of Ingathering, when the vintage was over." — *Murphy.* (8) **they blessed,** rendered thanksgiving for such grace from God, and such liberality in the people. (9) **questioned,** what to do with these abundant gifts. (10) **Azariah,** ch. xxvi. 17.

They blessed the Lord. — The source of all good. 1. For a bountiful year. 2. For disposition to consecrate its gifts. 3. For abundance which is left (*vs.* 10). Nothing should be wasted, only right use of everything brings blessings. — *Hom. Com.*

the offering of the firstfruits

f Ex. xxii. 29; De. xviii. 1-4; Ne. xiii. 12.

g "They began before Pentecost, and ended at Tabernacles."—*Wordsworth.*

Hezekiah.—He was reckoned one of the three perfect kings (2 Ki. xviii. 5), the other two being David and Josiah.—*Todd.* He was one of the noblest princes

"When once enthusiasm has been turned into ridi-

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cule, everything is undone, except money and power."—*Comme.*

who ever adorned David's throne. His reign of twenty-nine years offers an almost unmarred picture of persevering warfare against the most intricate and most difficult circumstances, and of glorious victory.—*Ewald.* Ready for war when necessary, and alike brave and skillful in its conduct, he gave his heart rather to the promotion of the internal welfare of his kingdom.—*Gelsie.* He took for his counselor Isaiah, the prophet, who, the Jewish rabbis say, was his tutor.—*Peloubet.*

Hezekiah provides store-chambers

11—19. (11) **chambers,** prop. *storehouses, granaries.* Some of the chambers built round the temple were used for this purpose.[a] (12) **faithfully,** honestly: not appropriating any of the store to common uses. (13) **overseers,** keeping watch over and directing the workmen employed. (14) **toward the east,** *R. V.*, "at the east gate." **most holy things,** Le. vi. 17. (15) **next him,** *R. V.*, "under him." **cities of the priests,** their places of residence: all received their support by careful distribution of the tithe.[b] (16) **Beside,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "beside them that were reckoned by genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, even every one that entered into the house of the Lord, as the duty of every day required for their service," *etc.*; the meaning of this *vs.* is that the Levites while in attendance at the temple received rations there for themselves and their children. (17) **Both to the genealogy,** *R. V.*, "and them that were reckoned by genealogy." **Levites from twenty years,** priests entered on their office at 30.[c] (18) **And to,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "and them that were reckoned by genealogy." This is the register of "the little ones" (xx. 13), namely, the wives, sons, and daughters of the priests and Levites. Thus the distribution in *vs.* 15 is to those in the cities in general; excepted from it are those in attendance at the temple with their male children of three years and upward, who have a distribution in Jerusalem; and included in it are the wives and daughters and male children under three years. **in their set office,** in their faithfulness, as before in *vs.* 12. The distributors were conscientious in the discharge of their duty.—*Murphy.* (19) **Also of,** *R. V.*, "also for." **the men,** *R. V.*, "there were men," *i. e.* "all the priests and Levites were provided for."

a 1 Ki. vi. 5; Ne xiii. 4, 5

b "Officers were appointed to distribute equal rations to all in the cities of the priests who, from age or other reasons, could not repair to the temple."—*Jamieson.*

c Comp. Nu. iv. 3; viii. 24; 1 Chr. xxiii. 27.

Systematic collection of church finance.—While considerable room was left under the law for spontaneous liberality and for special offerings under peculiar circumstances, there were certain regulations as to tithes and firstfruits (*vs.* 5). These latter were not optional, but obligatory; at the same time, they do not seem to have been recoverable by legal process: but they point to systematic contribution not unattended with special and spontaneous bestowments. And this surely is the right principle in the Christian church. 1. Let every man consider what proportion of his income, considering (1) the amount of his receipts, and also (2) the measure of his liabilities, he can possibly devote to the cause of God and man, of religion and philanthropy; and let him set that apart. 2. Let every one of us be prompted to give special help whenever some specially powerful appeal is made to our spiritual convictions or our human sympathies.—*Clarkson.*

"Blind zeal is a sword in a mad man's hand. No persecutor like a conscientious one."—*Flavel.*

Hezekiah's thoroughness in the service of God

20—21. (20) **truth,** *R. V.*, "faithful." (21) **to seek his God,** or the favor of his God. **all his heart,** sincerely and earnestly.[d]

d 2 Ki. xx. 3; Is. xxxviii. 3.

The godly son of an ungodly father.—One of the most successful clergymen in the history of the New England pulpit was the son of a drunkard and a thief. His youth was spent in extreme poverty and disgrace. The family name was a byword. When he resolved to work his way to college and to the pulpit, his father overwhelmed him with parental curses. In that man's boyhood, his ruin for this world and the next seemed to human view well-nigh certain. "Like father, like son," said his neighbors. But God had other plans for the unfortunate youth. That masterly pulpit was preparing for him, and he preparing for it. The earthly father's curses and the heavenly Father's blessing were pitted against each other. God brought him safely through those fires of Moloch. He called him to stand in a place more honorable than the courts of kings. He became greatly successful in revivals of religion. Before his death, more than twelve hundred persons were known to him who attributed their conversion to his ministry.—*A. Phelps.*

"Let us take heed we do not sometimes call that zeal for God and His Gospel which is nothing else than our own rashness and stormy passion. True zeal is a sweet, heavenly, and gentle flame, which maketh us active for God, but always within the sphere of love."—*Endicott.*

B. C. 701.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

Sennacherib invades Israel

1—5. (1) **and the establishment thereof,** *R. V.*, "and this faithfulness." **Sennacherib,** in 1 Ki. xviii. 9-12 is an account, not contained here, which terminates the Biblical history of the 10 tribes, and prepares the way for this narrative of the chronicler; also 1 Ki. xviii. 13–16 should be read with *vs.* 1 in this chapter, and 1 Ki. xviii. 17–25 with *vss.* 2–10, *cf.* also Is. xxxvi. 1–10. **fenced cities,** those repaired by Jotham, ch. xxvii. 4. (2) **against Jerusalem,** as the capital city. (3) **stop the waters,** or hide them, so as to secure a supply of water to the besieged.[a] (4) **the brook,** "not the Kidron, but the natural watercourse of the Gihon, wh. ran down the Tyropœan valley."—*Spk. Com.* See *vs.* 31. (5) **strengthened,** *etc.*, by fortifying the city, and preparing weapons, *etc.* **Millo,** 1 Chr. xi. 8, an elevated place of military importance.

The invasion of Sennacherib. — Assyria at this time was at the height of its arrogant power. It was a nation of warriors. Sennacherib, their king, about B. C. 701, marched from Nineveh with an immense army like the Huns and Saracens of later history. Their march was almost a triumphal procession for them, but desolation and death for the conquered. They took city after city by storm, till the cities of the Philistines and the south of Judah were in their power, and little was left to Hezekiah but his capital, Jerusalem. Hezekiah tried to buy off the invaders by the payment of the former tribute, and other immense and costly gifts, to obtain which he stripped the gold plating from the temple doors, and despoiled his palace. Sennacherib was not content with tribute. He was marching against Egypt, the only other great power in the world at that time; and it was not safe to leave such a fortress in his rear. He therefore divided his army into two corps, one of which was to lay siege to Jerusalem, the other went on to Lachish, the next fortress on the way to Egypt, about thirty miles southwest of Jerusalem. "At Jerusalem we are within a day's journey of any part of the territory of Judah. We feel the kingdom throb to its center at Assyria's first footfall on the border. . . . Gradually the visitant came near, over the thirty miles which lay between the capital and the border. Signs of the Assyrian advance were given in the sky, and night after night the watchers on Mount Zion, seeing the glare in the west, must have speculated which of the cities of Judah was being burned. Clouds of smoke across the heavens, from prairie and forest fires, told how war, even if it passed, would leave a trail of famine; and men thought with breaking hearts of the villages and fields, heritage of the tribes of old, that were now bare to the foot and the fire of the foreigner. Then came touch of the enemy, the appearance of armed bands, vistas down Jerusalem's favorite valleys of chariots, squadrons of horsemen emerging upon the plateaus to north and west of the city, heavy siege-towers and swarms of men innumerable." — *Geo. Adam Smith.*

[a] "Hez.'s plan was to cover the fountain heads, so that they might not be discovered by the enemy, and to carry the water by subterranean channels or pipes into the city." — *Jamieson.*

"We possess in duplicate, on the Taylor cylinder, found at Nineveh in 1830, and now in the British Museum, and on the great inscription of Kouyunjik, Sennacherib's own account of the stages of his campaign." — *Driver.*

Hezekiah encourages his people

6—8. (6) **street of the gate,** *R. V.*, "broad place at the gate." **comfortably,** encouragingly. (7) **more with us,** *R. V.*, "a greater with us." read with this verse Is. xxii. 4–14. (8) **arm of flesh,** Jer. xvii. 5 *cf.* Is. xxxi. 3. Note that the king is not comparing gods, that of the Hebrew with the gods of Sennacherib, but God on the one hand and human strength on the other.

Sennacherib's invasion. — The annals of Sennacherib contain a full account of this campaign: — "And because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms, and by the might of my power, I took forty-six of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about I took and plundered a countless number. And from these places I captured and carried off as spoil 200,150 people, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates so as to prevent escape. . . . Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem, with thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty. . . . All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government. Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, and as a token of his submission to my power." — *Rawlinson.*

There are two ways by wh. the heart may be filled "with overmuch sorrow:" the one, when it is too full to express its misery and seek relief in prayer; the other, when sin is more looked at than the Saviour.

"Christian zeal is an earnest and ardent disposition of heart for the promotion of all the interests of vital Christianity."—*Bate.*

[b] 2 Ki. vi. 16; comp. 1 Jno. iv. 4. "Rested, *vs.* 8. The margin has, for rested upon, 'leaned.' 'I lean on the words of that good man.' 'All people gladly lean on the words of that Just Judge.' 'Who would lean on the words of that false man?' 'Must We leaned upon his words, and have fallen into troubles.' — *Roberts.*

B. C. 701.

Sennacherib tries to seduce the people from their loyalty

9—14. (9) this passage, ending with *vs.* 21, represents the much fuller parallel (2 Ki. xviii. 17 — xix. 37), where the language of defiance on the part of Sennacherib and his appointed officers is narrated at length, and the matter of his subsequent letter; also the prayer of Hezekiah; and his application to Isaiah, with the reply of the latter to it. **Lachish,** Jos. x. 3; xv. 39.[a] (10) **abide in the siege,**[b] *R. V.*, "abide the siege," that is "endure the distress of siege." Jerusalem was not at this time actually besieged. (11) **to die,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Ki. xviii. 27. (12) **his high places,** Sen. confuses the false gods and the true. (13) **my fathers,** or predecessors. "The original words are not found in Is. x. 8–11, but Is. xxxvi. 20, and more particularly Is. xxxvii. 11–13, appear to have floated before the mind of the historian." — *Keil.* (14) **your God,** assumed to be on an equality with the gods of other lands.[c]

Assaults on Christian faith. — The Rabshakeh's plausible speech and Jerusalem's faith, greatly distressed by him, are typical. Still as men hang moodily over the bulwarks of Zion, doubtful whether life is worth living within the narrow limits which religion prescribes, or righteousness worth fighting for with such privations and hope deferred, comes upon them some elegant and plausible temptation, loudly calling to give the whole thing up. Disregarding the official evidences and arguments that push forward to parley, it speaks home in practical tones to men's real selves — their appetites and selfishness. "You are foolish fellows," it says, "to confine yourselves to such narrowness of life and self-denial! The fall of your faith is only a matter of time; other creeds have gone, yours must follow, and why fight the world for the sake of an idea, or from the habits of discipline? Such things only starve the human spirit; and the world is so generous, so free to every one, so tolerant of each enjoying his own, unhampered by authority or religion." — *G. A. Smith.*

Sennacherib writes blasphemous letters

15—20. (15) **how much less,** the king of Asshur probably measured the power of the national god by the extent of the territory and resources of the nation.— *Murphy.* (16) **yet more,** 2 Ki. xviii. 19–25, 27–35. (17) **letters,** 2 Ki. xix. 14. (18) **in the Jews' speech,** so that all might understand; they did not regard their mission as merely a diplomatic one. Their object was to produce panic. (19) **as against,** the very classing of Jehovah with idols is an offense to the writer of this narrative. (20) **prayed,** comp. 2 Ki. xix. 4, 14–19. First he sought the counsel and prayers of Isaiah (2 Ki. xix. 2). For the prophet's answers *cf.* also Is. x. 5–34; xiv. 3–27.

The answer of the Rabshakeh was truly Assyrian in its utterly brutal and ruthless coarseness. Taking up his position directly in front of the wall, and ostentatiously addressing the multitude, he ignored the representatives of Hezekiah. Who were they? asked he. His master had not sent him to speak to them, or to their poor little puppet of a king, but to the people on the wall, the foul garbage of whose sufferings of thirst and famine they should share. And to all the multitude the great king's message was: — Do not be deceived. Hezekiah cannot save you. Jehovah will not save you. Come to terms with me, and give me hostage and pledges and a present, and then live in happy peace and plenty until I come and deport you to a land as fair and fruithful as this. How should Jehovah deliver them? Had any of the gods of the nations delivered them out of the hands of the king of Assyria? "Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have the gods of Samaria delivered Samaria out of my hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" — *Farrar.*

the Assyrian host destroyed

Hezekiah's sickness

21—26. (21) **all the mighty men,** means the common soldiers. *cf.* xvii. 14. In 2 Ki. xix. 35 the slain are reported as 185,000.[d] **they,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xix. 37. (22) **the Lord saved,** "this event probably occurred in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and may have been effected by a pestilence. (So Josephus,) Ps. xlvi. and lxxv. apparently refer to this deliverance. It is described by Herodotus, also from the Egyptian standpoint and represented as the result of the prayer of the priest-king of Egypt." — *Oehler.* (23) **magnified,** these were prob. recognitions of the fact that he had successfully withstood the Assyrian monarch who was threatening all the surrounding kingdoms. (24) **sick,** *etc.*, with a disease likely to have a fatal termination.[e] **a sign,** 2 Ki. xx. 1–11. His song of thanksgiving is recorded in Is. xxxviii. 10–20. (26) **humbled himself,** possibly the language of the nineteenth verse in the parallel (2 Ki. xx. 19.) is the one surviving historic trace of this. The language found in Jer. xxvi. 19 may be also a note of the same. — *Pul. Com*

a "Lachish was evidently at this time one of the strongest fortresses of Judah."— *Stanley.*

b Comp. 2 Ki. xviii 17–37; xix. 1-35.

c "The gasconading language of these commissioners, as recorded in the pages of Isaiah, well marks the arrogant and boastful character of the Assyrians." — *Kitto.*

"As I have known an infant bear such striking resemblance to his father that what the tongue could not tell, his face did; and people, struck by the likeness, remarked of the nursling, He is the very image of his father:—so the Christian life, without any occasion for his lips talking it, should proclaim him to the world a child of God." — *Guthrie.*

d Berosus says the agency was pestilence. *Kitto* favors the idea that it was the simoon. Cambyses, king of the Medes, lost fifty thousand men by one of these dreadful winds.

e Is. xxxviii. 1.

B. C. 686.

Sennacherib's fall. — The effect not confined to the times and country of Hezekiah. The Egyptian general, Tirhakah, advancing from the south, as well as Hez. in Jerusalem, heard the results with joy. Three centuries afterwards, the Psalmist's exulting language (Ps. lxxvi.) was repeated by Egyptian priests. The Maccabees were sustained by the recollection of Sen.'s fall in their struggle against Antiochus (1 Macc. vii. 41), and in the churches of Moscow the exultation over the event is still read on the anniversary of the retreat of the French from Russia. — *Stanley.* "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." — *Hom. Com.* He was the last of the great Assyrian conquerors. No Assyrian host again ever crossed Jordan. Within a few years from that time the Assyrian power suddenly vanished from the earth. — *Stanley.*

end of the reign of Hezekiah

27—33. (27) **exceeding much,** 2 Ki. xx. 13; Is. xxxix. 2. (28) **stalls,** or stabling. **cotes for flocks,** *R. V.*, "flocks in folds." (29) **God had given,** temporal rewards of his religious faithfulness. (30) **Gihon,** *vs.* 3.[a] He conveyed the water to the west of the city of David, either into the eastern hill to issue at length in Siloam, or into the pool in the fore city which he had enclosed with "another wall." This serves to show that the city of David was on the eastern ridge south of the temple mount. — *Murphy.* (31) **business,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xx. 12–19. **left him,** to form his own judgment. "God sometime permits one who habitually walks in God's ways to fall into sin, in order to reveal to the man the hidden curse that was in his heart." — *Oehler.* (32) **vision of Isaiah,**[b] Is. xxxvi.–xxxix. **book . . Israel,** comp. xx. 34 and notes on xxvii. 7; xxxv. 26. (33) **chiefest,**[c] *R. V.*, "ascent" either on the ascent to the tombs of the kings or in a higher excavation.

Hezekiah's death and burial. — 1. His death appointed. Though life prolonged, yet its length decreed. None exempt. Death ends joys, sorrows, and probation. 2. His burial a national honor. Funeral marked with unusual respect. Royal tribe of Judah and the whole population of Jerusalem present, and a marked epoch in royal interments. — *Hom. Com.*

Hezekiah's reign. — "The enemies of Judah were conquered (2 Ki. xviii. 6, 7), the Philistines driven out of the country, and the yoke of Assyria thrown off. '*Peace and truth*' were the watchwords of his reign." — *Stanley.* There was great outward prosperity. "The palace at Jerusalem was a storehouse of gold, silver, and jewels; the porch of the palace was once more hung with splendid shields (2 Chr. xxxii. 27). Towers and enclosures sprang up for the vast herds and flocks of the pastoral district. The vineyards, olive yards, and cornfields were again cultivated. The towers and fortifications of Jerusalem, the supply of water to the town, both by aqueduct from without, and by a reservoir hewn out of the solid rock, were for centuries connected with his name." — *Stanley.*

[a] "He stopped the upper outflow of the waters of Gihon, and led them down westward to the city." — *Williams.*

[b] Is. i. 1.

[c] "In this new phrase we have an indication that the catacomb of David was now full; and, in accordance with this, we find that the later princes have sepulchres quite distinct from the old burial places." — *Spk. Com.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

Manasseh

1—6. (1) **Manasseh,**[d] *who makes forget.* Born after Hez.'s recovery fr. sickness. (2) **evil,** prob. thro' the influence of those who superintended his education, and ruled the kingdom during his minority. (3) **built again,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xviii. 4. **groves,** *R. V.*, Asheroth, *i. e* wooden images of the goddess Asherah, 2 Ki. xxi. 7. (4) **in the house,** *i. e.* within the temple precincts. (5) **two courts,** that of the priests and that of the people. This seems to be the first time that the worship of sun, moon and stars was introduced in Judah. There were altars not only in the temple, but on the roofs of the houses also (*cf.* Je. xix. 13). (6) **through the fire,**[e] ch. xxviii. 3, 4. **also . . spirit,** *R. V.*, "and he practiced augury, and used enchantments, and practiced sorcery, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits."

Manasseh. — The fall of this young monarch illustrates the power of high station and worldly prosperity to counteract the influence of a religious education. When the sons of godly parents go astray, it is found, more frequently than otherwise, that they fall before the enticements created by their father's wealth, and the ease and luxury with which wealth surrounds them. I ask the principal of a large academy, what is the chief cause of the ruin of boys from religious homes; and he answers without a moment's hesitation, "Too much money." I ask the president of one of the largest colleges in New

[d] 2 Ki. xxi. 1.

[e] One son only is mentioned in 2 Ki. xxi. 6.

"Manasseh was sublimely energetic in evil. He did not serve the devil with a slack hand." — *Parker*

"Man without a conscience is a machine without a regulator; sometimes too fast, sometimes too slow, and seldom right."

B. C. *cir.* 686.

England, what is the surest protection to young men against the perils of college life; and he responds, "Poverty." — *A. Phelps.*

the people led into idolatrous practices

Many persons who appear to repent are like sailors who throw their goods overboard in a storm, and wish for them again in a calm.

7—10. (7) **in the house of God,** (Jer. vii. 30, and viii. 1–2). Even the temple was dedicated to the worship of the stars and the service of Ashera. Priests and prophets participated in the universal degeneration (*cf.* Zeph. iii. 4; Jer. ii. 8, 26 *ff*). Some prophets, however, raised their voices against the idolatry (2 Ki. xxi. 10) and were among the innocent blood with which Manasseh filled Jerusalem. No priest is said to have resisted! (9) **made . . to err,** his example, and his actions, leading them astray. **worse,** bec. of the knowledge and privileges wh. they had. (10) **spake,** 2 Ki. xxi. 10–16.

Reformation and reaction. — There is a remarkable similarity in some respects between the work of Savonarola and the rulers under his influence at Florence (1495), and that of Isaiah and Hezekiah. For a time the whole city was dominated in a marvelous way by the spiritual reformation. "So long as it lasted (two years) immorality and luxury were out of fashion in Florence. The vileness which calls itself pleasure was paralyzed, and immodesty and impurity scared into corners out of sight." "The millennium itself must have arrived in Florence in the end of the fifteenth century, had that great voice continued dominant, as it was for a time." In two years all this was changed. Savonarola was burned. "Florence, preternaturally tranquilized for a moment by one great influence, had returned to her old use and wont, and felt herself at ease in it, breathing flames and slaughter more easily than blessings." — *Peloubet.*

"Manasseh is unique alike in extreme wickedness, sincere penitence, and thorough reformation."

Manasseh's captivity and release

11—17. This section is not in Kings. (11) **king of Assyria,** Esar-haddon,[a] or his son Assur-bani-pal, 667–647 B. C. **among the thorns,** *R. V.*, "in chains." **fetters,** two chains of brass. **Babylon,** Ge. xi. 1–9. (12) **in affliction,** a prisoner, and doomed. (13) **prayed,**[b] "the conversion, however, seems to have had no effect whatever upon the people" (*cf.* Zeph. i. 5). (14) **built a wall,** wh. may have been damaged when the king was taken prisoner. **Gihon,** ch. xxxii. 4. **fish gate,** near N. E. corner of the lower city. **Ophel,** the S. part of the temple hill.[c] **captains of war,** *R. V.*, "valiant captains." This was not for aggression, but to make Jerusalem secure from attack, and "it may be owing to these precautions that in B. C. 640 Ashdod and not Jerusalem was assailed by the forces of Egypt." — *Rawlinson.* (15) **strange,** *etc.*, as put by him (*vss.* 3–5). (16) **repaired,** *etc.*, wh. he had himself desecrated. (17) **high places,** ch. xxxi. 1. Manasseh's reform compares unfavorably with that of his father.

The Assyrian invasion referred to here is partially confirmed by the fact that the name of Manasseh occurs amongst the tributaries of Esar-haddon and his successor, Assur-bani-pal. The mention of Babylon as his place of captivity rather than Nineveh may be accounted for by supposing that Manasseh was taken prisoner in the reign of Esar-haddon. This king of Assyria rebuilt Babylon, and spent much of his time there. He is said to have been of a kindly disposition, and to have exercised towards other royal captives the same clemency which he extended to Manasseh. — *Bennett.*

[a] "Esar-haddon mentions Manasseh among his tributaries; and he was the only king of Assyria who, fr. time to time, held his court at Babylon." — *Spk. Com.*

[b] Ac. ix. 11.

[c] 2 Chr. xxvi. 9; xxvii. 3; Ne. iii. 26. "Such a repentance gives us hope for the most abandoned."—*Bennett.*

B. C. *cir.* 641.

end of the reign of Manasseh

18—20. (18) **prayer,** a prayer of Manasseh is found in the Sept., but cannot be authentic. **in the book,** *R. V.*, "among the acts." (19) **among the sayings of the seers,** *R. V.*, "in the history of Hozai," one of the many "original documents" of which no trace remains, that were the sources of our sacred histories. (20) **in his own house,** bec. the king's sepulchres were full. **Amon,** *the hidden;* name of one of the eight principal deities of Egypt.[d]

God hears prayer. — Introduce by referring to the anxious question, which is awakened in many minds. Wherewithal shall I appear before God? and then proceed to discuss these points: — I. Who was entreated? God. II. Who prevailed with God? Manasseh. III. How is it that the entreaty of the sinner can prevail with God? — *Sarah Martin, the Prison Preacher.*

God's mercy. — A wonderful display of God's mercy. A proof "that the Divine mercy," says Stanley, "far exceeds the Divine vengeance, and that even from the darkest reprobation the free will of man and the grace of God may achieve a deliverance. If Manasseh could be restored, there was no one against whom the door of repentance and restitution was finally closed." *Sepulchres in gardens* (*vs.* 20). — It is probable that they buried him in the garden of his house. This was comformable to the practice of the Jews (2 Ki.

[d] "The only name of an Egyptian deity that we find in the Jewish annals." — *Stanley.*

"The grave is a common treasury to which we must all be taken." — *Burke.*

Prayer is a creature's strength, his very breath and being; prayer

xxi. 18). In such a place Christ was buried. The Romans had sometimes sepulchres in their gardens. Galba, the emperor, was buried in his garden; and so was Cyrus, king of Persia. The Greeks and Romans frequently buried the dead in their own houses. It was enjoined by the Thebans, before they built a house, to build a sepulchre in the place.

B. C. 641.

is the golden key that can open the wicket of mercy.

21—25. (21) **two years,** 2 Ki. xxi. 19. (22) **sacrificed,** *etc.*, fully restoring the idolatrous worship; he was born and trained while his father was an idolater. (24) **his servants,** *i. e.* a palace conspiracy, as in case of Joash, 2 Ki. xii. 20. (25) **the people of the land,** that is the common people, as distinguished from the princes and higher classes. **Josiah,** *whom Jehovah heals.* The parallel passage, 2 Ki. xxi. 19–26, adds, "the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles?" *etc.*, a passage which shows that our book is not the Chronicles referred to in the Scripture, but an earlier document, one of the sources for our books of Chronicles.

the reign of Amon

Hezekiah and Manasseh. — A contrast. We have in the end of the one and the beginning of the other a magnificent sunset, and a sunrise of quite an opposite description. We have a good father and king closing life in Hezekiah; a bad son and successor commencing life in Manasseh. I. Consider Hezekiah, and what we learn about him. 1. We learn that genuine goodness shall not want appropriate record and remembrance; 2. God, the inspirer of goodness in the hearts of men, will not forget it; 3. The beneficiaries of goodness will not be unmindful of their benefactors; 4. Sympathetic imitators will mirror forth their goodness from whom they have derived its idea and impulse. II. Now turn to Manasseh, and what the history says about him. 1. A youthful king; 2. A long reign; 3. A life of great wickedness. Application: — What may parents learn from the son of such a father? Hezekiah hoarded up wealth for his son. Did he undervalue the moral element in him? — *J. Spencer Hill.*

"How then was Manasseh dead? In what sense was Manasseh buried? Here is an active boy who has caught his mantle, and is working with redoubled industry."—*Parker.*

Did evil. — Manasseh might repent and reform — ay, and be accepted by God; but could he undo the consequences — the effects upon others — of his life and wickedness? May as well expect to prevent the appearance of disease after having used every effort to spread infection. The father may turn to God in true sorrow, but the son he begat shall follow in his parent's course of evil and never turn from it. Oh, how fearful a thing is sin! If we put our hands to it, we know not what we do. The thought of the irrevocable, irremediable consequences of sin should help to keep us from sinning.

"Those who give themselves up to the service of sin, enter the palace of pleasure by wide portals of marble, which conceal the low wicket, behind which leads into the fields, where they are in a short time sent to feed swine."—*James D. Burns.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

B. C. 639

1—7. (1) This account is superior to that in 2 Ki. xxii. *ff.* as a history of Josiah, who reigned 639–609 B. C. Comp. Jer. i–xii. and Josephus Ant. x., iv. 5.[a] **eight years,** so the kingdom must have been governed by a regency. (2) **declined,** *R. V.*, "turned not aside," the only king of whom such words are spoken. (3) **eighth year,** when he was 16 years old, the age at which Hebrew kings attained their majority.— *Geikie.* **twelfth year,** when he was about 20. Then he was strong enough to act an independent part. (4) **images,** *R. V.*, *sun-images.* **groves,** *R. V.*, "Asherim." See references to condition of the times in Zephaniah (i. 9, iii. 1, 3). Nahum or Habakkuk and Ps. xxxvii. may have been written in this period. **strowed it,** 2 Ki. xxiii. 6. (5) **priests,** *i. e.* the idolatrous priests, removing them from their graves, thus defiling them and the altars which they had builded. A terrible punishment to a Hebrew. (6) **cities of Manasseh,** *etc.*, Josiah claimed authority over the whole country, as there was now no Israelite king. **with their mattocks,**[b] *R. V.*, "in their ruins round about." (7) **he had,** *etc.*, showing that the king personally superintended the business.

Josiah — revival of true religion

Josiah, or early piety.— His example is worthy the imitation of all young persons. Notice — I. His early piety. 1. While young he sought God; 2. Young persons may become religious under great disadvantages; 3. His early piety gave him great stability of character; 4. His religion secured him honor and happiness. II. His eminent piety. Early piety leads to eminent piety. It gave him opportunity for improvement as he grew in age. III. Josiah's peaceful death and honorable burial (2 Chr. xxxv. 24–27). *Eight years old.*— There is at the top of the Queen's staircase in Windsor Castle a statue

a "This prince was the best and most beloved of the kings who had sat upon this throne since David, and was approached by none in his zeal against idolatry, and in his devotedness to the Lord."—*Kitto.*

"His character had early shown a decided bias in favor of elevation, and manliness of life."—*Ewald.*

b Le. xxvi. 31, 33.

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from the studio of Baron Triqueti, of Edward VI. marking with his sceptre a passage in the Bible, which he holds in his left hand, and upon which he earnestly looks. The passage is concerning Josiah. "J. was eight years old when he began to reign . . . and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left." The statue was erected by the will of the late prince, who intended it to convey to his son the Divine principles by which the future governor of England should mold his life and reign on the throne of Great Britain.— *T. Hughes.*

"The sick man's sacrifice is but a lame oblation. Pious treasures laid up in healthful days, excuse the defect of sick non-performances, without which we must needs look back with anxiety upon the lost opportunities of health."— *Sir Thomas Browne.*

Prophetic aid to reformation.— Jeremiah began his ministry in B. C. 627, in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign (Je. i. 2), and just about the time the reformation commenced, and continued till after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. Professor Kent thinks that Jeremiah "delivered the sermons in chaps. 2 to 6 soon after the prophet's call in 627 B. C., and they represent his noble contributions to the reformation."

"*Zephaniah* was the first to raise his voice in denunciation of the sins inherited from Manasseh's reign." *Huldah,* we learn, was a prophetess at this time (2 Ki. xxii. 14).— *Peloubet.*

Josiah orders the repair of the house of God

8—13. (8) **to repair,** "three stages of Josiah's reform are noted.[a] In the 8th year of his reign he began to show decision in personal religion (*vs.* 3). In the 12th yr., being 20 yrs. old, he began to remove the high places (*vss.* 3–7), and now in the 18th yr., when he was 26 yrs. old, he began to repair the house of the Lord. Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office when Josiah was 21 years old (*cf.* Je. i. 2)."— *Murphy.* (9) **money,** 2 Ki. xxii. 4. **they returned to Jerusalem,** *R. V.,* "of the inhabitants of Jerusalem." (10) **workmen,** *etc.,* 2 Ki. xxii. 5. (11) **to floor,** *R. V.,* "to make beams for." **the kings of Judah,** Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon. (12) **faithfully,** or skillfully, and diligently. (13) **scribes,** now first spoken of as a class, forming distinct division of the Levitical body.

a "The exact chronological order is not followed either in Kings or Chronicles." — *Jamieson.*

Early piety. — The most important ten years of life are from 5 to 15 years of age. The great majority of those who pass twenty, irreligious, are never converted at all. Dr. Spencer tells us that out of two hundred and thirty-five hopeful converts in his church, one hundred and thirty-eight were under twenty years, and only four had passed their fiftieth year. I have been permitted during my ministry to receive nearly one thousand persons into the church on confession of their faith and not one dozen of these had outgrown their fiftieth year. — *Theodore Cuyler. Zeal for the Master* (*vs.* 12). — The late Rev. John Campbell, of Kingsland, used to relate an anecdote illustrative of the devotedness of Mr. Townsend to the cause of Christ. Finding him, one Tuesday morning, leaning on the balustrade that led to the breakfast room of the Religious Tract Society, and unable to proceed from a difficulty of breathing, Mr. C. remarked, "Mr. Townsend, is this you? Why should you come in this state of body to our meetings? You have attended them for a long time, and you should now leave that work for younger men." Looking upon his friend with a countenance, brightened by the sentence or thought that was struggling for utterance, his words were, "O Johnny, Johnny, man, it is hard to give up working in the service of such a Master!"

Pr. xxv. 1.

"A heavenly awe overshadowed and encompassed, as it still ought, and must, all earthly business whatsoever."—*Carlyle.*

"We are reminded of the walls of Thebes, which rose out of the ground while Orpheus played upon his flute."— *Bennett.*

Hilkiah, the priest, finds a copy of the law

14—17. (15) **the book,**[b] Hilkiah speaks of it as a book known to him. Plainly this was the copy kept in the most holy place (De. xxxi. 26). 2. Shaphan, the scribe, was able to read the book (2 Ki. xxii. 8). He was in fact the chief of the scribes, whose duty it was to have the book of the law re-written when necessary. If this were the very autograph of Moses or his scribe, it would not be more than 830 years old. Manuscripts exist of nearly twice this age. — *Murphy.* "The book" may have been the Pentateuch, but more probably was the book of Deuteronomy. (16) **back again,** when the repairing work was completed. (17) **gathered together,** *R. V.,* "emptied out."

b "It would seem that the book of the law was found by Hilkiah in the treasury, where they stowed the money for security." — *Bertheau.*

The Bible and the bullet. — Samuel Proctor, a class-leader in the Methodist Society, was formerly a grenadier in the First Regiment of Foot Guards, and took part in the struggle on the plains of Waterloo. He always carried a small Bible in one pocket, and a hymn-book in the other. In the evening of June 16th his regiment was ordered to dislodge the French from a wood, of which they had taken possession, and from which they annoyed the allied army. While thus engaged, he was thrown a distance of four or five yards, by a force for which he could not account at the time; but when he came to examine his Bible, he saw, with lively gratitude to the Preserver of his life,

what it was that had thus driven him. A musket-ball had struck him where his Bible rested, and penetrated nearly half through the volume. All who saw the ball said that it would undoubtedly have killed him, had it not been for the Bible, which served as a shield. *The Bible placed in the churches.* — Formerly a large Bible was chained in some convenient place in every parish church. Cranmer, the first Protestant archbishop, and afterwards a martyr, who was appointed to the see of Canterbury during the reign of Henry VIII., was very desirous of obtaining a translation of the Scriptures into English. He often solicited this favor of the king, and, at length, secured it. When some printed copies were put into his hands, he blessed God, and sent one to his majesty, and begged that all his subjects might have liberty to read it. An injunction was forthwith issued, which required an English Bible, of the largest size to be procured for the use of every parish church, at the expense of the minister and churchwardens, and prohibited the common people from being discouraged to read or hear the Scriptures. The book was everywhere received with inexpressible joy, every one that was able perused it, and the poor eagerly flocked to hear it read. Some aged persons learned to read on purpose to peruse it, and even little children crowded to hear it.

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"The Bible is a rock of diamonds, a chain of pearls, the sword of the Spirit; a chart by which the Christian sails to eternity; the map by which he daily walks; the sundial by which he sets his life; the balance in which he weighs his actions." — *T. Watson.*

Theodosius, the Second, dedicated a great part of the night to the study of the Scriptures."

Shaphan, the scribe, reads the book of the law to Josiah

18—22. (18) **a book,** "the implication on the face of this verse as of the parallel (2 Ki. xxii. 10), is that Shaphan leaves the king to surmise (which he very quickly does), from hearing a portion of the book, what it was." — *Pul. Com.* (19) **rent his clothes,** the usual sign of grief and alarm. (20) **Ahikam,** appears as the friend of Jeremiah, Je. xxvi. 24; and father of Gedaliah, Je. xxxix. 14; xl. 5, *etc.* **Abdon,** or Achbor,[a] *cf.* Je. xxvi. 22: xxxvi. 12. (21) **of the Lord,** through His prophet. (22) **Huldah,** *etc.*, 2 Ki. xxii. 14. **wardrobe,** prob. the royal garments. **college,** *R. V.*, "second quarter," apparently the fore city enclosed by the second wall. The Targ., however, regarded it as the school of the prophets. In the emergency the nearest advice is sought. Jeremiah was probably at Anathoth, his native place. — *Murphy.*

[a] 2 Ki xxii. 12.

"The intellect has only one failing, which, to be sure, is a very considerable one; it has no conscience. Napoleon is the readiest instance of this." — *Lowell.*

Effect of the printed Bible. — Green, in his *Short History of the English People*, chap. viii., gives a marvelous testimony to the effect of the printed Bible in Elizabeth's reign. "No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible." Its literary and social effects were great, "but far greater was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large." "One dominant influence told on human action." "The whole temper of the nation felt the change." "A new conception of life, a new moral and religious impulse spread through every class." — *J. R. Green.* *The study of the Bible.* — How utterly impossible it would be in the manhood of the world to imagine any other instructor of mankind than the Bible. And for that reason, every day makes it more and more evident that the thorough study of the Bible, the investigation of what it teaches and what it does not teach, and the determination of the limits of what we mean by its inspiration, the determination of the degrees of authority to be ascribed to the different books, if any degrees are to be admitted, must take the lead of all other studies. He is guilty of high treason against the faith who fears the result of any investigation, whether philosophical, or scientific, or historical. And therefore nothing should be more welcome than the extension of knowledge of any and of every kind — for every increase in our accumulations of knowledge throws fresh light upon the real problems of the day. If geology proves to us that we must not interpret the first chapters of Genesis literally; if historical investigation shall show us that inspiration, however it may protect the doctrine, yet was not empowered to protect the narrative of the inspired writers from occasional inaccuracy; if careful criticism shall prove that there have been occasionally interpolations and forgeries in that Book, as in many others — the results should still be welcome. Even the mistakes of careful and reverent students are more valuable now than truth held in unthinking acquiescence. The substance of the teaching which we derive from the Bible will not really be affected by anything of this sort; while it holds upon the minds of believers, and its power to stir the depths of the spirit of man, however much weakened at first, must be immeasurably strengthened in the end, by clearing away blunders which may have been fastened on it by human interpretation. — *Abp. Temple.*

"I use the Scriptures, not as an arsenal to be resorted to only for arms and weapons, but as a matchless temple, where I delight to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry, and the magnificence of the structure." — *R. Boyle.*

"I have many books that I cannot sit down to read; they are indeed good and sound; but, like halfpence, there goes a great quantity to a small amount. There are silver books, and a very few golden books; but I have one book worth them all, called the Bible."—*J. Newton.*

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message of Huldah, the prophetess

Keep your conscience tender—tender as the eye that closes its lids against an atom of dust, or as that sensitive plant which I have seen shrink and shut its leaves, not merely at the rude touch of a finger, but at the breath of the mouth.

"Millions now in heaven derived the strongest and most invaluable consolation from this book; and scarcely can we fix our eyes upon a single passage in this wonderful book which has not afforded comfort or instruction to thousands, and been wet with tears of penitential sorrow or grateful joy, drawn from eyes that will weep no more."—*Payson.*

"The dispute about religion and the practice of it seldom go together."—*Young.*

23—28. (24) **I will bring,** *etc.*, "it appears from this *vs.* that such passages as De. xxviii.-xxxiii had been read to the king."—*Murphy.* (25) **poured out,** Sept. and 2 Ki. xxii. 17, have "kindled" which agrees better with the words that follow. (26) **king of Judah,** this was the part of the message special to him. (27) **rend thy clothes,** *vs.* 19. (28) **in peace,** in fact he was slain in battle (xxxv. 23, 24), but the expression is used even of such violent death (*cf.* 1 Ki. xxii. 34–40) and means rather that he shall be laid in his grave in peace, without witnessing great national calamities. The calamities fell upon the reigns of his two sons and his two grandsons.

A tender spirit.—I. Give a general account of a tender heart. 1. It implies a quick and ready sense of feeling in spiritual things—quickness of apprehension—ready reflections of conscience—a disposition to be easily and suitably affected; 2. A pliable disposition to yield to Divine influence. II. The way in which such a temper should express itself. 1. In relation to the Word of God; 2. In relation to sin; 3. In relation to providential events; 4. In relation to the honor of God. III. What foundation is laid for such a temper in Christianity. 1. Good men in the ancient church were not strangers to it; 2 The recompenses of the life to come are more fully revealed; 3. Richer discoveries of grace are made to us; 4. Ceremonial observances have given way to substantials of religion; 5. The softening Spirit is more plentifully communicated.—*Evans.*

Personal responsibility.—Wrath was to be poured out upon Judah, but Josiah was to be treated mercifully because he had acted rightly. Whatever penalties are due to our country, however we may be, as we are, suffering as the members of a guilty race, we may be quite sure that God has regard to the life *we* are living, to the choice *we* are making. If *our* heart is tender, and if our will is obedient and submissive, we also shall find mercy of the Lord. God has His dealings with communities and with churches; but His most constant relation is with men, with individual souls. "The Lord looketh upon *me;*" "Christ died for *me;*" "What wilt thou have *me* to do?" And according to our individual choice will be our destiny. "Every man must bear his own burden."—*Clarkson. The slavery of sin.*—At the close of the meeting, many asked me to pray for them, saying they wished to be Christians for the rest of their lives. As I left them, promising to be down on Sunday, I noticed a man following me. Stopping me, he began, "My friend, I want a discharge." Supposing he meant a discharge from the army, I said I was afraid that would be hard to obtain, as he appeared to be recovering. "Oh," said he, "that's not what I mean; I want a discharge from the *devil's army.* I've been fighting and serving in his ranks for twenty-five years, and I'm tired and sick of his service. I want to leave his ranks and enlist under the banner of the cross, and fight for Jesus the balance of my life." I told him he could have that discharge by *deserting* the devil's ranks and coming over to the Lord Jesus. I talked and prayed with him, leaving him some suitable reading. On Sunday, at the close of the evening meeting, he told me he had come over, and was a "soldier of the cross."—*Christ. Work on the Battlefield.*

Josiah reads the book of the law to the elders

29—33. (29) **all the elders,** as representatives of the nation. (30) **Levites'** parallel passage says "prophets." Probably both were there. **he read,** or caused to be read.[a] De. xxxi. 9–13 says that the priests are thus to read the law, and Josiah would be particular to obey the directions. (31) **in his place,** *i. e.* upon his royal pedestal, or platform. (32) **stand to it,** as Asa (2 Chr. xv. 12) and perhaps Hezekiah, xxix. 10. (33) **all . . fathers,**[b] full account in 2 Ki. xxiii. 4–20.

The Bible the savior of the church.—Men say that the church has saved the Bible. I say that the Bible has saved the church ten thousand times over. You shall find that when great questions come up in a community churches do not go ahead. You cannot make them. Churches are like the baggage-wagons of an army. They carry the provisions and indispensable things; but, after all, baggage-wagons never go first in a march. And the church is so busy taking care of the things which it carries, that it has no time to devote to new things that present themselves. Reforms hardly ever originate in churches. I am not speaking against churches; I am merely putting them where they put themselves, and saying that tendencies to unusual conduct in the application of Gospel principles to new questions are oftentimes ridiculed by ministers, and rejected from pulpits, and refused places in conference meet-

[a] 2 Ki. xxiii. 1–3.

[b] "So far as to abstain fr. open idolatry, but in their hearts they still inclined to the worship of other gods, as the prophet Jeremiah testifies, Je. xiii. 10; xxv. 3; xl, xiii." *Wordsworth.*

ings, and stigmatized by church members as being fanatical. — *H. W. Beecher. Destruction of the Bible.* — Destroy this volume, as the enemies of human happiness have vainly endeavored to do, and you render us profoundly ignorant of our Creator, of the formation of the world which we inhabit, of the origin and progenitors of our race, of our present day and future destination, and consign us through life to the dominion of fancy, doubt, and conjecture. Destroy this volume, and you deprive us of religion, with all the animating consolations, hopes, and prospects which it affords, and leave us nothing but the choosing (miserable alternative!) between the cheerless gloom of infidelity and the monstrous shadows of paganism. Destroy this volume, and you unpeople heaven; bar forever its doors against the wretched posterity of Adam; restore to the king of terrors his fatal sting; bury hope in the same grave which receives our bodies; consign all who have died before us to eternal sleep or endless misery; and allow us to expect nothing at death but a similar fate. In a word, destroy this volume, and you take from us at once everything which prevents existence becoming of all curses the greatest; you blot out the sun, dry up the ocean, and take away the atmospheres of the moral world, and degrade man to a situation from which he may look up with envy to that of the brutes that perish. — *Payson.*

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"God is light. So is the religion of the Bible. It has no fellowship with darkness Not one of its graces springs from stupidity or ignorance, but all of them from the knowledge of God. The religion of the Bible, like its Author, dwells in light God also is love, and so is the religion of the Bible." — *G. Spring.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

Josiah keeps the passover

1—6. (1) **a passover,** 2 Ki. xxiii. 21-23, at the appointed date, Ex. xii. 6. (2) **in their charges,**[a] as ordered in 1 Chr. xxiii. 32. (3) **that taught,** they were the instructors of the people in all matters pertaining to the Divine worship. **Put,** *etc.*,[b] as in case of David, 1 Chr. xxiii. 26. **not be a burden,** *i. e.* not their duty to move it. Other duties of administration and instruction now devolved on them. (4) **by the houses,** *etc.*, 1 Chr. ix. 10. (5) **holy place,** *i. e.* the priests' court. **and after . . Levites,** *R. V.*, "and let there be for each a portion of a father's house of the Levites." "A section of the Levites was to attend to each division of the families of the people."— *Murphy.* (6) **prepare . . according,** *R. V.*, "prepare for your brethren, to do according to the word of the Lord." The Levites were to kill the paschal lambs for the various divisions of the people. For this purpose they were to sanctify themselves and prepare their brethren, so that everything might be regular in the approaching solemnity.— *Murphy.*

Religion stronger than science.— Skill and science have wrought wonders. The world stands amazed at their achievements. They have tamed fierce beasts of prey, and brought even the elements of nature into subjection. They have spanned the ocean, annihilated distance, joined remote continents, given life to steam, a tongue to the wire, and a voice to the lightning. But there are passions in the human heart more fierce than beasts of prey, and disturbing forces more tumultuous than nature's stormy winds and tempests, and more difficult of control than the subtle but omnipotent element of electricity. No mere human skill can master these. The science taught in the school of Christ alone can enable you to obtain the mastery here.— *Roberts.*

a 2 Chr. xxxi. 2.

b "It is imposs. to say whether it had been cast out by Amon, to make room for the idolatrous emblems with wh. he seems to have defiled the temple. (2 Ki. xxiii. 4-6), or had only been temporarily removed by Josiah while he effected necessary repairs." — *Spk. Com.*

Josiah gives the passover offerings

7—12. (7) **Josiah gave,** comp. ch. xxx. 24. It is evident here, as in other places, that the slaying of the victims must have been done by the laity. "The number of Levites would not have sufficed."— *Oehler.* (8) **gave willingly,** *R. V.*, "gave for a freewill offering." **Hilkiah,** ch. xxxiv. 9. **Zechariah,** the second priest. **Jehiel,** poss. head of the line of Ithamar, and chief of the Levites. (9) **passover offerings,** *i. e.* for thank-offerings. (10) **in their place,** to receive the sacrifices. (11) **the blood from,** *R. V.*, "the blood which they received of." **flayed,** removed the skins. (12) **removed,** better *separated* the portions intended for burnt-offerings,[c] and gave it to the priests to be offered for the worshipers.

c Le. iii. 6-17

Preparation for religion. — Some persons, in thinking of religion, imagine that they should bring themselves into a certain condition of moral excellence before they seek religion; which is very much like a person sick, waiting until he is well before he send for the physician; or an invalid convalescent waiting until he fully recover before he seek a change of air and place; or a hungry man waiting until his appetite is satisfied before he sit down to eat; or a person shivering with cold waiting until he is warm, before he go to the fire. You go to the physician because you are sick; to the fresh air or place

"Or the sense may be that fr. the lambs contributed by the king and by the priest, they separated the burnt-offering to be wholly consumed by fire, as the burnt-offering was. Le. i. 6-9." — *Wordsworth.*

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because you need it; to the food because you are hungry; to the fire because you are cold. In the same way you should seek religion and the Saviour, as you are, because you have need. — *J. Bate.*

celebration of the Passover

13—19. (13) **roasted,** Ex. xii. 8, 9. **other holy offerings,** the peace-offerings. **sod they,** comp. 1 Sa. ii. 13–15. **all the people,** apparently private individuals could not find the means of cooking the bountiful provision made for them; and, to meet the necessity of the case, the temple courts were made kitchen as well as slaughterhouse for the assembled worshipers. The other offerings would not be eaten with the Passover lamb, but would serve for the remaining days of the feast. — *Bennett.* (14) **therefore,** *etc.*, bec. the priests were too much engaged to prepare food for themselves. (15) **they might not,** *R. V.*, "they needed not." Note the importance of these singers and their service, *cf.* 1 Chr. vi. 33–47. **prepared for them,** that they might not be called away fr. their official duties. (16) **the same day,** getting both matters into the one day made all concerned so unusually busy. (17) **seven days,** comp. Hez.'s. 14 days.[a] (18) **no passover like to that,** the Passover in Hezekiah's time was great (xxx. 26); but this was greater. For it was kept on the proper day in the first month, and was not a mere supplementary Passover; it was observed with due regularity, and not by worshipers, some of whom were unclean; and if we allow thirteen persons for each lamb or kid, there were upwards of 500,000 communicants, while, so far as we know, there were only 17,000 sheep presented by Hezekiah and his princes (xxx. 24), which would not supply more than half the number of partakers. (19) **eighteenth year,** 2 Ki. xxii. 3.

Singers in their place. — Song in God's house. 1. Its nature. Spiritual, appropriate and spirited. 2. Its leaders. Numbered, stationed and qualified. 3. Its design. Not a musical performance for gratification of the people; not to display ability, culture and efficiency in singers: but to please God (Phil. ii. 8–10), and praise Christ. Pliny found in worship of Bithynians a hymn, "to Christ as God." — *Hom. Com.*

Influence of religion. — Just as the sun gleams over the palace and into the cottage, flushing alike with its splendor the council chamber of the monarch and the kitchen of the peasant; as the all-pervasive light fills the vast dome of the sky, and the tiny cup of the flower; so religion illumines at once the heaven of our hopes, and the earth of our cares. Secularities become hallowed; toil brightens with the smile of God: business becomes crystalline; light from God comes through it to us; glances from us; goes through it to God.

[a] 2 Chr. xxx. 23.

The nearer we live to Jesus and the closer our walk is with Him, the less inclination we have for pursuits and pleasures in which He is not the object.

"The essence of true holiness consists in conformity to the nature and will of God." — *Lucas.*

Life is a short day, but it is a working day. Oh! my Father, help me to finish my work in Thine honor." — *Livingstone's Journal, Jan.* 1, 1871.

"Religion is the only metaphysic that the multitude can understand and adopt." — *Joubert.*

Josiah is killed at the battle of Megiddo

20—24. (20) **After all this,** some 13 years after. **Necho,** son of *Psammeticus* reigned B. C. 611–595. **came up,** "the maritime plain till he turned into the plain of Esdraelon, thence to penetrate into the passes of Lebanon." — *Stanley.* Nineveh had been destroyed about B. C. 615, the whole of W. Asia was disorganized, and the king of Egypt thought he saw an opportunity of conquest. **Carchemish,** a city on the Euphrates, commanding the passage of that river.[b] (21) **against the house,** or nation of Assyria. **God . . haste,** references to a single supreme God are found in the Egyp. inscriptions. (22) **disguised himself,** better *equipped himself.* **valley of Megiddo,** "at the S. W. edge of the plain of Esdraelon, the battle-ground of Palestine." — *Rawlinson.* (23) **archers,** "the light troops of the Egyptians were chiefly archers." (24) **second chariot,** not a war-chariot, but one more comfortable for traveling. **mourned,** "with him fell the last hope of the state, and the mourning for Josiah became a proverb for the heaviest affliction (comp. Zech. xii. 11)." — *Oehler.*

[b] "It has generally been supposed identical with *Circessium*; but *Rawlinson* places it higher up the Euphrates, close to *Hierapolis* or Mabug." — *Ayre.*

B. C. 609.

2 Ki. xxiii. 29, 30.

The invasion of Necho. — Strengthened by influx of northern nations, Babylon now rising into overwhelming predominence. Necho, the vigorous king of Egypt, wished to anticipate that growth by securing himself on east and north. Kingdom of Judah between these contending powers. Necho advanced through Palestine towards passes of Lebanon on his way to the great battle-field of Carchemish. In the plain of Esdrælon, the scene of so many combats in earlier history of Israel, Josiah determined, with a rashness which appeared to be against the counsels of Providence (2 Chr. xxxv. 21; 1 Esdras i. 27, 28), to stay the progress of the Egyptian army. No details given of the battle. Everything absorbed in one tragical event which closed it. — *Stanley. Haste.* — These are remarkable words in the mouth of a heathen;

"Then to side with truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust, ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just." — *Lowell.*

B. C. 609.

but they are not without a parallel in the remains of ancient Egypt that have come down to us. Piankhi, for instance, king of Egypt, about B. C. 750, says in an inscription which has been translated by the Rev. Canon Cook, "Didst thou not know that the Divine shade was over me? I have not acted without His knowledge; He commanded my acts." — *Spk. Com.*

25—27. (25) **Jeremiah,** prob. he composed a special dirge, wh. is lost to us. **an ordinance,** *i. e.* a certain day was appointed for the lamentation of Israel for Josiah. "He was perhaps the most blameless of the kings of Judah. But he was certainly not a strong nor a very wise king, and his reign did not advantage his country."— *Rawlinson.* **in the lamentations,** not the Bk. called by this name in our Bible, but a national collection of dirges. (27 **book . . Judah,** not the present Book of Kings. See notes on xxvii. 7 and xxv. 26.

Jeremiah's lament for Josiah

"They sorrowed for him with such an intensity of heartfelt anguish that even after the captivity 'the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon' became a proverbial expression for the deepest and truest grief (Zech. xii. 11)."

Premature death of the good. — Why did God not interpose to prevent Josiah from throwing his life away? Why did He let darkness come down at noon, and put an end to this bright and useful day? Why does He not now intervene between us and the death we speak of as premature? Why does He permit the young statesmen to overtax his strength and die in his prime; the young minister to commit himself to the treacherous tide and be drowned in the very fulness of his powers and the midst of his usefulness; the young missionary to expose his life to the savages who pierce him with the poisoned spear? We ask such questions, wondering, if not complaining, at the Divine inaction. But we might very justly and more properly ask: Would it be really wise or kind of our Heavenly Father if He were always interposing to prevent us from suffering the natural consequences of our error or our negligence, because we were right at heart with Him? Would that be the way to discipline, to purify, to perfect his children? No! when God lets death "Descend in sudden night on manhood's middle day," He is not unrighteous, nor is He really unwise or unkind.— *Pul. Com.*

"Either take Christ in your lives, or cast Him out of your lips; either be that thou seemest, or else be known for what thou art."— *Dyer.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

1—4. (1) **Jehoahaz,** also called *Shallum.*[a] (2) **three months,** only this short time bec. Necho took advantage of his victory at Megiddo. (3) **put him down,** *R. V.*, "deposed him." He wanted a creature of his own on the throne. **condemned,** *R. V.*, "amerced," they were to pay this heavy war indemnity. (4) **Eliakim,** the elder brother. **Jehoiakim,** *i. e.* "he whom God has set up!" For his history *cf.* 2 Ki. xxiii.-xxiv.; Je. xxii., xxvi., xxxvi. **to Egypt,** where he died.[b] He was an idolater (2 Ki. xxiii. 32) and lawless (Ezek. xix. 3).

Jehoahaz

a Je. xxii. 10-12; 2 Ki. xxiii. 33-34.

b Je. xxii. 10-12.

Jehoahaz. — Something there had been in his character, or in the popular mode of his election, which endeared him to his country. A lamentation, as from his father, went up from the princes and prophets of the lands for the lion's cub (Eze. xix. 34), that was learning to catch his prey, caught in the pitfall, and led off in chains — by a destiny even sadder than death in battle. "Weep not for the dead, nor bemoan him, but weep sore for him who goeth away." He was the first king of Judah who died in exile. "He shall return no more to see his native country — his native land no more" (Je. xxii. 10-12). — *Stanley.*

"As the dial is of no use in telling the observer the time of the day unless it be correctly set and the sun shine upon it, so the Christian conveys no Scriptural impressions of the Saviour's religion, unless his heart be made right by grace, and his life be shone upon by the light of the Sun of Righteousness."— *John Bate.*

The power of sin felt in resistance. — Peradventure some synner wyll saye, I perceyve nor feyl ony weyght in myself, do I never so many synnes. To whom we answere that yf a dogge hauynge a grete stone bounde aboute his necke be caste downe from an hygh toure, he felethe no weyght of that stone as longe as he is fallynge downe, but whan he is ones fallen to the grounde he is brasten all to peces by the reason of that weyght. Soo the synner goynge downe towarde the pyt of hell feleth not the grete burden of synne, but when he shall come in to the depens of helle he shall fele more payne than he wolde. Also every creature which is aboute to put away the yoke of synne feleth the grete and grevous weyght of it. — *Fischer.*

5—10. (5) **Jehoiakim,** was two years older than his brother and of a different mother; 2 Ki. xxiii. 31-36. (6) **Nebuchadnezzar,**[c] this prob. was first expedition of *Nebu.* during the lifetime of his father, *Nabopolassar,* who was the conqueror of Nineveh. (7) **vessels,** *etc.*, comp. Dan. i. 2, v. 2, and

Jehoiakim

c "Nebuc. defeated the Egyp. at Carchemish and drove them out of Asia, and

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reduced all the provinces west of the Euphrates to obedience, among the rest the kingdom of Jehoiakim, who became a vassal of the Assyrian empire." — *Jamieson,*

Ezra i. 7. (8) **abominations,** in restoring idolatry,[a] also *cf.* 2 Ki. xxiv. 3–4. (9) **Jehoiachin,** or *Jeconiah;* comp. 2 Ki. xxiv. 8, 9. **eight years,** as Nebuchadnezzar carried away this king's wives (2 Ki. xxiv. 15), it is plain that eight is here a slip of the transcriber for eighteen, the number found in 2 Ki. xxiv. 8; Jehoiachin is otherwise Jechonia (1 Chr. iii. 16), and even Coniah (Je. xxii. 24). His reign of three months and ten days can scarcely be called a reign at all, as he merely claimed the crown until he was taken away by Nebuchadnezzar. — *Murphy.*

An unlamented death. — We learn more of Jehoiakim in the prophetic writings of Jeremiah than in these brief annals. There we learn that his foreign policy was not less condemnable than his conduct of home affairs. When his treasury was low by reason of heavy payments to the foreign powers, he must needs build for himself a splendid and costly mansion (Je. xxii. 14), and in order to do this he had to impress the labor of his subjects (Je. xxii. 13); he thus excited a strong feeling of just resentment and natural disaffection among them, and brought down upon himself the severe rebuke of the prophet of the Lord. We also learn from Jeremiah that the king acted in daring defiance of God's holy law, presuming to cut in two and to burn in the fire the sacred roll (Je. xxxvi. 23). By this wanton and impious action he still further drew down upon him the wrath of Jehovah, and by that act he terribly prejudiced and injured his country. We have in him a melancholy instance of an unlamented death (Je. xxii. 18). — *Clarkson.*

"The chronicler had no motive for lingering over the last sad days of the monarchy. Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah pass over the scene in rapid and melancholy succession." — *Bennett.*

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Zedekiah

11—16. (11) **Zedekiah,** a son of Josiah, whose proper name was *Mattaniah,*[b] "the last king of Judah, a weak prince who lived in shameful dependence upon the low upstarts who had now seized upon power." — *Oehler.* (12) **before Jeremiah,** his prophecies delivered at this time are preserved to us. (13) **rebelled,** Eze. xvii. 13, 18. **swear,** *i. e.*, take a solemn oath of allegiance. **hardened,** *etc.*, this is the O. T. term for the highest degree of sin (1 Sa. vi. 6; Ps. xcv. 8; Ex. viii. 15, 28, *etc.*) (14) **polluted,** *etc.*, comp. Eze. viii. (15) **his messengers,** *i. e.* Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, *etc. cf.* Je. xxv. 3–7; xxxv. 12–15, *etc.* (16) **misused,** *R. V.*, "scoffed at," *see* Matt. xxiii. 37. **no remedy,** comp. Prov. vi. 14; xxix. 1; Je. xiv. 19; xxxiii. 6–8.

b 2 Ki. xxiv. 17, 18.

Judah's sin. — The present Scripture offers matter of most solemn reflection, in summarizing the long indictment of centuries that lay against Judah, and in a most pathetic rehearsing of the compassionate, forbearing, ever-forgiving ministration of Divine love which had for equal length of time striven to prevail over her infidelity, yet all in vain! Her day of visitation had been not *one* day only; it had been many a day! She "knew" them not, and "now they are hid from her eyes." Judah's long-drawn sin, of many a day, year, generation, and even century, had been, in one word, idolatry. That sin incurs the guilt of the first two commandments set at nought. There is a sense, only too obvious and too certain, in which it is the world's fundamental source of sin and snare of sin. No age, no people, exempt from the danger, and every individual *exposed*, at any rate, to it. — *Pul. Com.*

"No remedy," not on God's account, but your own; not in God's want of will to save you, but in your own incapacity to will your own salvation" — *Vaughan.*

the captivity of Judah

17—21. (17) **the Chaldees,** whose centre was Bablyon. **slew,** *etc.*, Eze. ix. La. ii. (18) **all the vessels,** 2 Ki. xxv. 14, 15. (19) **burnt,** *etc.*, this unusual severity was the consequence of the king's revolting. Described more fully 2 Ki. xxv. 1–10 and Jer. xxxix. 1–8. (20) **escaped,** in the great slaughter. **kingdom of Persia,** Da. v. 28, 31. (21) **To fulfil,** *etc.*, *see* Je. xxv. 9, 12. **sabbaths,**[c] "the omission of the institutions of the Sabbatic year was contemplated in Lev. xxvi. 35 and how far they were ever carried into practice does not appear. But from this passage it is evident that it had been omitted for centuries. If the number is taken exactly it points back about 500 years, *i. e.* to the days of Solomon," since wh. time this Sab. year had not been observed. — *Oehler.*

c Le. xxvi. 34, 35, 43.

"There is no economy in keeping back what is due to God."—*Bennett.*

Lessons. — 1. Transgressors cannot escape from appointed judgments. 2. The bitterness of sin is seen in the overthrow which it creates. 3. Since we have not otherwise any guarantee against national humiliation, what need to have the Lord on our side. — *Hom. Com.*

There is no sin a man can be tempted to but he will find greater comfort in resisting than in indulging. Then a man shows himself to be a Christian when he chooses rather to suffer than sin. By suffering we avoid sinning; but by sin-

Exiles. — Those that had escaped the sword were driven off, like gangs of slaves, to become exiled in a strange land, and servants to the kings of Babylon, "until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths," viz. for three score and ten years (*vss.* 20, 21). Such transplantations of conquered populations were common in the ancient Orient. "Sargon transported the Samaritans to

Gozan and Media; Sennacherib carried off two hundred thousand Jews from Judæa; Esarhaddon placed Elamites, Susianians, and Babylonians in Samaria. Darius Hystaspes brought the nation of the Pæonians from Europe into Asia Minor, removed the Barcæans to Bactria, and the Eretrians to Ardericca near Susa." — *Rawlinson.* *The bondage of sin.* — Just so when the morning sun is bright, and the summer breezes gently blowing from the shore, the little river boat is enticed from the harbor to start on her trip of pleasure on the clear, calm sea. All nature seems to enlist in her service. The fair wind fills her sails, the favorable tide rolls onward in her course, the parted sea makes way for her to glide swiftly and merrily on her happy voyage. But, having thus been her servants and carried her whither she would, these soon become her masters and carry her whither she would not. The breeze that swelled her sails has become a storm, and rends them; the waves that quietly rippled for pleasure, now rise in fury, and dash over her for her destruction; and the vessel which rode in the morning as a queen upon the waters, sinks before night comes on, the slave of those very winds and waves which had beguiled her to use them as her servants. — *Morse.*

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ning we cannot avoid suffering. Get this principle into your hearts; there is nothing got by sin nor lost by holiness."—*Mason.*

"There is no harder work in the world than sin."—*South.*

Cyrus liberates the captive

22—23. This is given only in Chronicles. An interval of fifty years since events in *vs.* 21. (22) **Cyrus,** *see* Ezr. i. 1-3.[a] (23) **All the kingdoms,** the usual boastful language of the East, but nearly true. **Lord God of heaven,** this does not imply that Cyrus was an intelligent and thoroughgoing adherent of the true God. It carries him, however, so far that he considers himself charged with the building of a house to God in Jerusalem, and accordingly permits and invites His exiled people to return free. Such is the finale of Chronicles. It thereby shows itself to be an introduction to the history of the returning exiles of Judah and Israel, which is contained in Ezra and Nehemiah, and an exposition of the peculiar principles by which the restored people had to be governed. — *Murphy.*

a Comp. Da. vi. 28, x. 1; Is. xlv. 1.

Lessons. — 1. The ability of God to fulfil his promises no less than his threatenings. 2. The secret access which God has to the hearts of men — of kings no less than of common men. 3. The certainty that God can raise up at any moment a fitting instrument to do his will. — *Whitelaw.*

The Jew. — With the proclamation of Cyrus begins in fact the manhood with all its mystic, its wonderful, and its still non-progressing struggles, of the Jew. His simple childhood, wilfull youth, are indeed for ever gone. But he and his nation are with unspeakably painful travail born. Now begins the new period of Jewish life, with fiercer probation, with unbounded and various trial, and probably of world-length continuance. No life of nation that is or ever has been merits the devout observation and study that this unchallengeably does. — *Pul. Com.*

"We are too apt to misjudge the dispensations of Providence when we desire to have them tally with our own wishes." — *Skelton.*

Kings of Israel and Judah. — The dates of the beginning of each reign are according to the latest authorities and differ materially from the dates usually given in the margins of our Bible. It is to be remembered that the reigns of the kings in repeated instances overlapped each other. For this and other reasons, the figures here given do not always agree with the length of the reigns as given in Kings and Chronicles.

"Cyrus, who was probably a polytheist, was exceedingly tolerant to all religions."

KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH.

B. C.	ISRAEL.	B. C.	JUDAH.
937.....	Jeroboam.....	937.....	Rehoboam.
915.....	Nadab.....	920.....	Abijah
913.....	Baasha.....	917.....	Asa.
889.....	Elah.....	876.....	Jehoshaphat.
887.....	Zimri	851.....	Jehoram.
887.....	Omri.....	843.....	Ahaziah.
875.....	Ahab	842.....	Athaliah.
853.....	Ahaziah.....	836.....	Joash.
851.....	Jehoram	796.....	Amaziah.

"*Go up.*" Jerusalem was on a much higher level than Babylonia.

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"The final editor of Chronicles has shown himself unwilling that the book should conclude with a gloomy record of sin and ruin, and has appended a few lines to remind his readers of the new life of faith and hope that lay beyond the Captivity. In so doing, he has echoed the key-note of prophecy: ever beyond man's transgression and punishment the prophets saw the vision of his forgiveness and restoration to God."—*Exp. Bib.*

KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH — (*Continued*).

B. C.	ISRAEL.	B. C.	JUDAH.
842.....	Jehu	782.....	Uzziah.
814.....	Jehoahaz.....	737.....	Jotham.
797.....	Jehoash	735.....	Ahaz.
780.....	Jeroboam II.....	715.....	Hezekiah.
740.....	Zachariah	686.....	Manasseh.
739.....	Shallum.....	641.....	Amon.
739.....	Menahem	639.....	Josiah.
736.....	Pekahiah.....	609.....	Jehoahaz.
735.....	Pekah.....	609.....	Jehoiakim.
734.....	Hoshea.....	597	Jehoiachin.
.....	....	597.....	(First captivity).
721.....	(Captivity).....	597... ..	Zedekiah.
.....	....	586.. ...	(Final captivity).

THE BOOK OF EZRA.

[147]

Introduction.

This Bk. and Nehemiah, were by the Jews united in one vol., and called the First and Second Bk. of Ezra. This combined book embraced a period from the return of Zerubbabel (B. C. 536) to the second visit of Nehemiah (B. C. 432); it was probably compiled long after this. The mention of Jaddua (afterwards high-priest in the time of Alex. the Gt.) in Neh. xii. 11, 22, seems to prove that the work was composed later than the time of Nehemiah, possibly later than 320 B. C. The book of Ezra is evidently a compilation. Although tradition ascribes it to Ezra, it rests on no trustworthy foundation. If such were the case, there would be no occasion for the sudden transition from the first to the third person in describing scenes in which the writer himself was an actor. From a consideration of its structure, the more natural inference is that a later compiler, perhaps the same one who compiled Chronicles, gathered the memoirs of Ezra, with a view of preserving particular records; not necessarily the weaving of an artistic history. Other documents were also used, among them one having an Aramaic origin. The letter to Artaxerxes and the reply are written in Aramaic. The book naturally falls into two sections (*a*) chap. i.–vi. treats of the return of the exiles under Zerubbabel (B. C. 536). The period is described in the contemporary records of Haggai and Zechariah. (*b*) The second portion (chap. vii.–x.) relates events occurring a half century later. The second expedition, of which Ezra was leader, occurred in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus (B. C. 458–57). On this occasion the expulsion of the foreign wives took place.

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

PART I. — From the return under Zerubbabel to rebuilding of the Temple.

Sec. I. — Edict of Cyrus..... i., ii.
Sec. II. — Temple begun..... iii., iv.
Sec. III. — Temple finished..... v., vi.

PART II. — Arrival of Ezra at Jerusalem, and reformation under him.

Sec. I. — Ezra sets out..... vii.
Sec. II. — His retinue and arrival..... viii.
Sec. III. — The reformation..... ix., x.

(*According to Rawlinson.*)

PART. I. (ch i.-vi.) First return from captivity.

Sec. I. — Decree of Cyrus, with numbers of those who went, i.–ii.
Sec. II. — Altar of burnt-offering set up and feasts of Booths, iii. 1–7
Sec. III. — Rebuilding of temple and opposition to it.. iii. 8–vi. 15
Sec. IV. — Dedication and Feast of Passover ..... vi. 16–22

PART. II. — (ch. vii.-x.) Second return under Ezra.

Sec. I. — Degree of Artaxerxes, those who went, and chief men..... vii. viii.
Sec. II. — Reformation under Ezra.. ix., x.

B. C. *cir.* 538.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

proclamation of Cyrus

1—4. (1) **Now,** "and," the resumption not the commencement of a history. The fact that the same passage is used to close Chr. and open Ezra signifies that both books come fr. the hands of the same compiler. **first . . Persia,**[a] first year after capture of Babylon. **Lord . . Persia,** men are sometimes doing God's will when they think only of pleasing themselves. **put . . writing,** thus giving it a place among the official documents. The decree itself would have been written in Persian or Aramaic. The following *vss.* (2–4) contain the substance of the decree translated into Hebrew and adapted to Jewish readers. It is a popular reproduction rather than a literal translation. — *Cam. B.* (2) **saith . . Persia,** *etc.* Cyrus found Daniel in Babylon and fr. him prob. learned about the Jews.[b] **The Lord,** *R. V.*, "the Lord, the God, *etc.*" This expression has called forth much controversy regarding the worship of Cyrus. The explanation of Rawlinson is as follows: "The use of the term 'Jehovah,' instead of Ormuzd, is remarkable, and was probably limited to the Hebrew transcript of the proclamation." (3) **Who . . you,** my subjects. **of . . people,** proc. limited to the people of Judah and Benjamin, since Cyrus could hardly have known much of the deportation of the ten tribes; *vss.* 3–5 include the proclamation. (4) **whosoever . . sojourneth,**[c] some might have ties fr. wh. they could not be immediately released. "The following paraphrase will give the meaning. 'In any place where survivors of the Jewish captivity are to be found sojourning, there let the natives of the place, the non-Israelite neighbors, render him all assistance.'" — *Cam. B.* **freewill offering,** "individually, he was about to send 'a freewill offering,' consisting of a number of gold and silver vessels for the service of the temple. His words suggest that his subjects might follow this good example."

The decree of Cyrus. — I. With many afflictions, there go a consolation and a support II. We have a striking example of the fulfilment of prophecy. III. God, when He has a purpose to perform, can easily bring it to pass. IV. This God, who thus fulfilled His word in this wonderful manner, is our Father.

Favor of Cyrus to the Jews. — There is some reason for believing that the privilege Cyrus offered to the Jews was one in which other nations shared. On a small, broken, clay cylinder, some four inches in diameter, discovered quite recently and now deposited in the British Museum, Cyrus is represented as saying, "I assembled all those nations, and I caused them to go back to their countries." . . . Until a few years ago it was commonly supposed that Cyrus was a Zoroastrian, who was disgusted at the cruel and lustful idolatry of the Babylonians, and that when he discovered a monotheistic people oppressed by vicious heathen polytheists, he claimed religious brotherhood with them, and so came to show them singular favor. Unfortunately for his fame, this fascinating theory has been recently shattered by the discovery of the little cylinder already referred to. Here Cyrus is represented as saying that "the gods" have deserted Nabonidas — the last king of Babylon — because he has neglected their service; and that Merodach, the national divinity of Babylon, has transferred his favor to Cyrus; who now honors him with many praises. If we are driven to the conclusion that Cyrus was not solely or chiefly actuated by religious motives, or even if we take his action to be *purely* one of state policy, the ascription of this inferior position to Cyrus only heightens the wonderful glory of God's overruling providence. — *Expos. Bib.*

the people provide for the return

5, 6. (5) **chief . . Benjamin,**[d] in whose inheritance the temple was situated (6) **besides . . offered,** they gave them due proportion, and a free-will offering beside

Zerubbabel's return (*vss.* 5, 6) — Mentioned by Matt. i. 12. — Among the ancestors of the Saviour, Zerubbabel has been regarded as a type of Him. I. Like him our Saviour was born in a strange land. II. Like him, a king in disguise, our Saviour dwelt among the people He came to save. III. Like him our Saviour seeks to gather the faithful together, and lead them forth into the glorious liberty of the children of God. IV. Like him our Leader meets and overcomes many difficulties. Some questions for us concerning our Leader. (1) Have we recognized His presence? (2) Have we obeyed His voice? (3) Are we following His leadership? (4) Do we propose in all things to do His bidding?

[a] 2 Ch. xxxvi. 22–23.

"The Book of Chron. ends with hist. of destr. of temple, and with recital of edict for building of second temple. The Bk. of Ezra describes its restoration."—*Bp. Wordsworth.*

[b] Da. ii. 37.

[c] "Many of the richer Jews preferred to remain at Babylon" (*Jos. Ant.* xi. 1). The Book of Esther gives us a view of them and their condition.

[d] Some of Ephraim and Manasseh also returned and settled at Jerus. 1 Ch. ix. 3. "One of the blessings resulting fr. cap. was, that the schism between Judah and Israel was healed, and the temple at Jerus. bec. the com. centre of unity to those who had been formerly separated as rivals and enemies, and they were all joined together in the com. name of Jews."—*Bp. Wordsworth.*

B. C. *cir.* 538.

the temple vessels restored

7—11. (7) **which . . Jerusalem,**[a] when he pillaged the temp. **put . . gods,** esp. in the temple of Bel.[b] (8) **Mithredath** (*given by Mithras*) *i. e.* genius of the *sun*, wh. was object of Persian worship.[c] **Sheshbazzar,**[d] *i. e.* Zerubbabel. "He was the son of Pedaiah, brother of Salathiel, who was the legal heir of Jehoiachin, king of Judah. He appears to have been adopted by Salathiel as his son, and to have been recognized as the legitimate heir to the throne of David. Thus he did not owe his appointment to the mere favor of Cyrus, but was the natural leader of the people."—*Pulp. Com.* (9) **chargers,** basins to receive blood of victims. **knives,** sacrificial knives. (10) **basons,** with lids; *R. V.*, "bowls," like our tankards. **of . . sort,** *i. e.* an inferior quality. (11) **All . . hundred,** or 2,901 of var. kinds not specified above.

[a] 2 Ki. xxiv. 13; xxv. 14; Jer xxvii. 16; xxviii. 6; lii. 18.

[b] Da. i. 2.

[c] The word Cyrus —sun.

[d] Ez. iii. 2, 8; v. 14, 16; Mat. i. 12; Lu iii. 27.

What are the results?—Judge the inspiration by the restoration. Do not be content with reading the proclamation of Cyrus, but see what it leads to. Do not be content with reading the Bible, but see what that reading results in. Do not be content when any priest or preacher tells you that any book is inspired; reply to him, let me read the book for myself, through and through, carefully, word by word, and when I have finished I shall know whether the book is inspired or not. If I be enlarged, inflamed, lifted up, ennobled, if I melt in charity, if I abound in love, if I would have all men come and read the same book and drink at the same fountain, then I shall know that it is God's Book, a living Book,—sweet, tender, gracious, complete, touching life at every point, and answering it with infinite replies.—*Peop. Bib.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

the number of the people that return

1—6. (1) **these . . province,**[e] *i. e.* of Judah as distinct fr. the Jews who remained in the city of Babylon. **unto his city,** *i. e.* "wh. was their own years after the return when this catalogue was compiled." (2) **Zerubbabel,** putative grandson of Jeconiah. His name = born at Babel. **Jeshua,** or *Joshua*, first high priest of the new community. **Nehemiah,** not the Nehemiah of the next bk. **Mordecai,** not Esther's relative. (3, 4) **Parosh . . Shephatiah,** how carefully the family records were kept during the cap'y. (5) **Arah . . five,** Neh. gives 652. (6) **Pahath-moab . . twelve,** 2,818 in Neh.

[e] Both Ezra and Neh. give a sum total of 42,360 men, and 7,337 men servants, and maid servants, Ezra's list was made B. C. 536. Nehemiah's list dates fr. B. C. 536.

Elements of a good leader.—In a great leader many elements of qualification are combined. Other men may excel him in detached points, but taken as a whole he rules not perhaps by one dominant faculty, but by a noble proportion of natural and acquired gifts. The only sound rule for promotion to influential positions in the church is, that *wisdom*, wheresoever found, in the rich or the poor, the old or the young, should be recognized and honored.

7—13. (10) **Bani,** or *Binnui.*[f] (13) **six . . six,** note the number.

[f] Neh. vii. 15.

Register of names.—There is more written than we suppose. There are registers that are hidden away, but will one day be produced. When those registers are before us it will be found that the first may be last, and the last may be first. God is the scribe and nothing escapes His pen. There are in heaven books, and a Book; there is another book, which is the Book of Life. The universe is kept in regular order; it is founded on what we may term a systematic basis; every worker's name is entered, the period of service is indicated, the wages agreed upon are stated; nothing is left to disorder or to be settled without distinct and all-inclusive law. The register is kept at the Cross, the signatures are all inscribed in blood; no man can write his own name there, but God will write it for him, if the man will only cry from his heart—God be merciful to me a sinner!—*Peop. Bib.*

"Every Christian is born great because he is born for heaven."—*Massillon.*

14—18. (18) **Jorah,** or *Hariah.*[g]

[g] Ne. vii. 24.

The solemn significance of names.—A name is a key to the nature or history of the thing which bears it. In the history of the creation we read that "God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." And so it has been well said by Carlyle that not only all common speech, but science, poetry itself, is no other than a right *naming*. "There was a time in the history of Europe when the controversy about what a name represents involved issues so grave that men were burnt for taking what was considered the heretical side of this controversy."—*R. W. Dale.*

"As in Noah's ark there were the clean and the unclean raven and dove, leopard and kid, the cruel lion with the gentle lamb, so in the church of Christ on earth you will find the same diversities and differences of human character."—*Guthrie.*

19—24. (20) *Vss.* 20–35, "names of towns and places." **Gibbar,** Gibeon.[a] (21) **an . . three,** one of the smaller companies : but the Messiah came hence.[b] (23) **Anathoth,** the home of Jeremiah. The modern Anata, 4 miles N. E. of Jerus. (24) **Azmaveth,** or *Bethazmaveth,*[c] prob. El. Hizmeh.

Divisions in the church.— There are divisions in the great kingdoms of creation : divisions between the lands and waters ; divisions between islands and continents ; divisions between continents and continents ; divisions between vegetation and minerals ; divisions in birds, fishes, creeping things, animals of all kinds ; divisions among men ; and yet there are great principles, laws, and operations which unite them together, as the one harmonious workmanship of Almighty wisdom and power. So it is in the church of Christ. There are divisions in regard to discipline, forms of worship, creeds of belief, means of grace, modes of working, names of distinction, places of abode, etc.; but beneath these, and of more importance, there run grand laws and elements which bind together the church of Christ in one glorious body, of which He is the Head.—*J. Bate.*

25—30. (29) Called in Nehemiah "the other Nebo,"[d] *i. e.* not of N. beyond Jordan in tr. of Reuben, but of that of N. called Nob bef. the cap'y.

Unity of the church. —Pliny writes of a stone in the island of Scyros, that if it be whole, though a large and heavy one, it swims above water, but being broken it sinks. So long as saints keep whole, nothing shall sink them ; but if they break up, and divide, they are in danger of going down. —*Hom. Com.* Separate the atoms which make the hammer, and each would fall on the stone as a snow-flake : but welded into *one,* and wielded by the firm arm of the quarryman, it will break the massive rocks asunder. Divide the waters of Niagara into distinct and individual drops, and they would be no more than the falling rain ; but their united body would quench the fires of Vesuvius, and have some to spare for other volcanoes. —*Guthrie.*

31—35. (31) **Elam,** "this title apparently refers back to the Elam mentioned in *vs.* 7. The fact that the 'Elam' of *vs.* 7 is probably the name of a person and that the Elam here mentioned is found in connection with the names of towns renders the expression 'the other' very strange. Another strange circumstance is the exact correspondence of the numbers in each case, *i. e.* 1254. The text is not free from suspicion." — *Cam. B.* (33) **Lod,** *i. e.* Lydda, Acts ix. 32. **Hadid,** or Harid.[e]

God has clearly ordained public worship. —He made man to be social — social in virtue of his sorrows, his joys, his wants, his affections, his relationships. Accordingly, fellowship in worship may be traced from the earliest period. It seems not improbable that, as our great poet has represented, even in paradise the primitive pair had some chosen bower whither they resorted to offer up their stated homage to their Maker. Where the patriarch pitched his tent, there he built his altar. As soon as ever God had singled out a people for Himself, He bade them raise a tabernacle of witness and of worship, giving the minutest instructions for its construction, its furniture, and its ordinances. —*Hom. Com.*

36—39. (36) *Vss.* 36–39, register of the priestly classes. **The priests,** exactly as in Neh.[f] **Jeshua,** head of ninth course.[g] "The difficulty occasioned by this verse has arisen from the desire to identify this Jeshua with the high-priest, and from the mistake of supposing that the names of the heads of families were necessarily the companions of Zerubbabel instead of being rather the distinctive names of clans."—*Cam. B.* (37) **Immer,** sixteenth course.[h] (38) **Pashur,**[i] (39) **Harim,**[j] third course.

The significance of this record of names and numbers. —The pains which the children of Israel took to keep a strict record of their families in Persia may have been (*a*) an act of faith : it may have been the expression of their belief that God's word of promise spoken by Jeremiah (i. 1) would be fulfilled, and that the hour would come when they or their children would lay claim to their ancestral inheritance. Or it may have been (*b*) a habit of obedience, which itself is suggestive enough. It was the will of their Divine Sovereign that everything, however minute, which pertained to His people should be scrupulously cared for. Nothing was unimportant that pertained to the people of God. —*Pul. Com.*

Sacrifice for sake of the church. —When a teacher was wanted by Dr. Mason of Burmah for the war-like Bghais, he asked his boatman, Shapon, if

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a Neh. vii. 25.

b Mic. v. 2.

c Neh. vii. 28.

"This is the state of the church militant; she is like the ark floating upon the waters, like a lily growing among thorns, like the bush which burned with fire, and was not consumed; so the city of God is always besieged but never ruined."—*Henry Smith.*

d Neh. vii. 33.

"Do you ask 'Why not do away with the church, if its members make so many mistakes?" Would you take away the lighth'se because careless mariners through wrong observations run their ships high and dry upon the shore ? Would you put out the lamp in your house because moths and millers burn their wings in it? What would the children do?"—*H. W. Beecher.*

e So it is given in some copies.

"In all societies it is advisable to associate, if possible, with the highest; not that the highest are always the best, but because, if disgusted there, we can at any time descend ; but if we begin with the lowest, to ascend is impossible."—*Colton.*

the priests

f Ez. vii. 39-42.

"These coincidences show with what accuracy the names and nums. of the priests were reckoned." — *Bp. Wordsworth.*

g 1 Ch. xxiv. 11.

h 1 Ch. xxiv. 14.

i Jer. xx. 1; xxi. 1; 1 Ch. ix. 12.

j 1 Ch. xxiv. 8.

"Men say their pinnacles point to heaven; why, so does every tree that buds, and every bird that rises as it sings. Men say their

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aisles are good for worship; why, so is every mountain glen and rough sea shore. But this they have as distinct and indisputable glory — that their mighty walls were never raised, and never shall be, but by men who love and aid each other in their weakness."— *Ruskin.*

he would go; and reminded him that instead of the fifteen rupees a month which he now received, he could only have four rupees a month as teacher. After praying over the matter he came back; and Dr. Mason said, "Well, Shapon, what is your decision? Can you go to the Bghais for four rupees a month?" Shapon answered, "No, teacher, I could not go for four rupees a month; but *I can do it for Christ.*" And for Christ's sake he went. Dr. Judson labored diligently for six years in Burmah without baptizing a convert. At the end of three years, he was asked what evidence he had of ultimate success. He replied, "As much as there is a God who will fulfil all His promises." A hundred churches and thousands of converts already answer his faith. We will suppose that some opulent person makes the tour of Europe. If his money fall short he comforts himself with the reflection that he has a sufficient stock in the bank, which he can draw out at any time by writing to his cashiers. This is just the case spiritually with God's elect. They are travelers in a foreign land remote from home.— *Hom. Com.*

the Levites singers and porters

a Ez. iii 9.

b Ne. vii. 43.

c Ne. vii. 44.

d Ne. vii. 45.

40—42. (40) *Vss.* 40–58, the Levites, Nethinim and "Solomon's servants," laborers about the temple. The small number of Levites indicates that they were very backward in returning to Jerus. **Levites,** "their office being more mechanical and material than that of the priests, they seem to have declined in religious zeal and earnestness." **Hodaviah,** or *Judah,*[a] "it seems best to regard the clause as belonging to Kadmiel especially, and as signifying a closer limitation of that family. Thus the Levites comprised the family of Jeshua and those members of the Kadmiel family who belonged to the Hodaviah branch," called also Hodevah.[b] (41) **singers,** instituted in Dav 's time. **an . . eight,** or 148.[c] (42) **an . . nine,** or 138.[d]

David's influence on Hebrew song. —

The harp the monarch-minstrel swept,
The king of men, the loved of Heaven,
Which music hallowed while she wept,
O'er tones her heart of hearts had given,
Redoubled be her tears, its chords are riven!

It softened men of iron mold,
It gave them virtues not their own;
No ear so dull, no soul so cold,
That felt not, fired not to the tone,
Till David's lyre grew mightier than his throne. — *Byron.*

the Nethinim, etc.

e 1 Chr. ix. 2.

In 1848, Lamartine, introduced De la Eure to the riotous populace, saying, "Listen, citizens! It is sixty years of a pure life that is about to address you." The multitude all became attentive to his words. It was the power of integrity and purity.

f Ne. vii. 54.

"The church was built to disturb the peace of man; but often, it does not perform its duty for fear of disturbing the peace of the church. What kind of artillery practice would that be which declined to fire for fear of kicking over the gun carriages, or

43—48. (43) **Nethinims,** *R. V.*, "Nethinim," ending "im" being plural. Appointed by David to aid the Levites.[e] A class of servants lower than the Levites; Jewish tradition identifies them with the Gibeonites, Jos. ix. 3–27. (44) **Siaha,** or *Sia.* (46) **Shalmai,** or *Shamlai.*

Variety in service. — In our own day we have pastors, preachers, evangelists, conductors of prayer-meetings, Sunday-school teachers, tract distributors, visitors of the sick and sorrowful, leaders of the psalmody of the church, and managers of its financial and other business arrangements. In the work of the Lord Jesus amongst men there is scope for every kind and degree of faculty. The feeblest power may be beneficially employed; and the greatest gifts may find spheres of service which demand their utmost exercise. This fact deprives the idlers in the church of God of any legitimate excuse for their indolence. There is work for every one, and suited to every capacity; and the obligation of service rests upon every one. Let every one, then, be up and doing. — *Hom. Com.*

49—54. (50) **Nephusim,** *R. V.*, "Nephisim." (52) **Bazluth,** or *Bazlith.*[f]

Christian service. — I know of no service that can be more distinguished than the doing of good, the scattering of blessings among the sons of men. Methinks the very angels before the throne might envy us poor men who are permitted to talk of Christ, even though it be but to little children. I reckon the humblest ragged-school teacher to be more honored than even Gabriel himself, in being commissioned to tell out the story of the cross, and to win youthful hearts to the Saviour's service. You are not employed as scullions in your Master's kitchen, though you might be content with such a service; you are not made as His hired servants, to toil in meanest drudgery,

you are not sent to be hewers of wood and drawers of water; but you are His friends, the friends of Jesus, to do such work as He did; and even greater works than He did are you enabled to do, because He hath gone to His Father. "This honor have all the saints," the honor of being gentlemen-at-arms under Jesus, the Captain of their salvation. — *Hom. Com.*

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waking up the sentinels asleep at their posts."— *Beecher.*

55–60. (55) **the . . servants,** prob. Canaanitish laborers, whom Sol. employed,[a] and who had bec. proselytes. In some places[b] they seem to be included in the Nethinim. **Sophereth,** *R. V.*, "Hassophereth." **Peruda,** or *Perida.*[c] (57) **Pochereth of Zebaim,** *R. V.*, Pochereth-hazzebaim, *i. e.* "the gazelle hunters." **Ami,** or *Amon.*[d] (59) *Vss.* 59–63, Israelites and priests without clear genealogy. They could not exercise the full rights of citizenship; they were disqualified fr. exercising the priestly office. **Tel-melah, Tel-harsa,** names of Chaldæan cities. **Addan,** or *Addon.*[e] **they . house,** hence their claim, like that of the priests, stood over till it could be settled by authority.[f] **seed,** pedigree.

How to destroy a church. — To do this effectually, you must — I. Discourage the pastor. II. Discourage your fellow-members. III. Destroy the confidence of the community. I. To discourage the pastor — 1. Absent yourself from one service every Sabbath. 2. Neglect the prayer and class-meetings; 3. Criticise your minister freely; pray for him little or none; 4. If he proposes to hold extra meetings withhold your co-operation; 5. Give yourself no concern whether his salary is paid or not; 6. Never call on him socially, or allow him to think that his comfort or that of his family is a matter of any importance in your eyes. II. To discourage your fellow-members — 1. Observe the directions given above; 2. Complain about everything they do and don't do; 3. Contrive to make yourself the head of a clique, and by their assistance and your own industry keep the church in hot water generally; 4. While doing this, lose no opportunity to complain of the bad treatment you are receiving. III. To destroy the confidence of the community — 1. Observe the foregoing directions; 2. Tell the people that you are in the church by force of circumstances, but have no respect for the way in which business is conducted; 3. Publish the faults of your brethren; 4. Make no effort to induce people to attend the church; 5. Publish it on all occasions that you have no confidence in the concern — predict that it must fail — go down — blow up — never can succeed. By observing these directions faithfully, you may have the satisfaction, if the church is not unusually vigorous, of witnessing the fulfilment of your predictions.

the children of Solomon's servants

a 1 Ki. ix. 20, 21; 2 Ch. viii. 7, 8.

b Ne. iii. 26, 31; x. 29.

c Ne. vii. 57.

d Ne. vii. 59.

e Ne. vii. 61.

f vs. 63.

"If you stand on the mountain of faith and look down, things will seem easy to you; but if you are in the valley of doubt they will look like giants. What the church wants and what it is looking for are men and women of faith." — *D. L. Moody.*

61–63. (61) **Habaiah,** prob. their ancestor married one of the house of Barzillai, the Gileadite.[g] **Koz,** *R. V.*, "Hakkoz," the seventh priestly course, 1 Chr. xxiv. 10. (62) **sought,** this shows their anxiety to be found among the children of Israel. **register,** *i. e.* the register called "the enrolled." (63) **Tirshatha,** Persian for "governor." Here Zerubbabel is meant; a title also given to Nehemiah.[h] **should . . things,** the priest's portion.[i] "The distinction here made between the 'most holy' and the 'holy' is important. 'The most holy' included the shewbread, the incense, the sin and guilt offering, the drink offering. 'The holy' comprised the thank-offering, the firstlings of herd and flock, the first-fruits, the tithe." **stood . . Thummim,**[j] by wh. he would try them, and pronounce them of the line of Aaron or otherwise. "But Zerubbabel's expectation was disappointed. The gift of Urim and Thummim, forfeited by disobedience, was never recovered."

the children of the priests

g 2 Sa. xvii. 27; xix. 32–39; 1 Ki. ii. 7.

h Ne. viii. 9; x. 1; xii. 26.

i Le. xxii. 2, 10, 15, 16.

j Ex. xxviii. 30; Nu. xxvii. 21.

A true minister is a man whose manhood itself is a strong and influential argument with his people. He lives in such relations with God, and in such a genuine sympathy with man, that it is a pleasure to be under the influence of such a mind. Just as, lying on a couch on a summer's evening, you hear from a neighboring house the low breathing of an instrument of music, so far away that you can only hear its palpitation, but cannot discern the exact tune that is played, and are soothed by it, and drawn nearer to hear more; so the true man, the true Christian minister, is himself so inspiring, so musical, there is so much of the Divine element in him, rendered homelike by incarnation with his disposition, brought down to the level of man's understanding, that wherever he goes, little children want to see him, plain people want to be with him; everybody says when he comes, "Good;" and everybody says when he goes away, "I wish he had stayed longer;" all who come in contact with him are inclined to live a better life. Manhood is the best sermon. It is good to

"The church has a good stomach; she has swallowed down whole countries, and has never known a surfeit; the Church alone can digest such ill-gotten wealth." — *Goethe.*

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fill the mind with the goodness and sweetness of the thing itself to which you would fain draw them. "Go, preach," was no more authoritative than "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." — *H. W. Beecher.*

total number of the people

64—67. (64) **The . . threescore,**[a] the total of those who came to Jerus., and prob. counted there. "Ezra's numbers, as given in detail (*vss.* 3–60), produce when added together a total of only 29,818; Nehemiah's items (vii. 8–62) gives a total of 31,089; those of the apocryphal Esdras a total of 33,950. The three authorities agree, however, in their summation, all alike declaring that the actual number of those who returned with Zerubbabel was 42,360. Esdras adds that children under twelve years of age are not included." — *Pulp. Com.* Prob. the disagreement bet. the various items and the sum total arises from copyist's errors in transcription. (65) **two women,** or 245.[b] Not included among the servants, but, in default of the Levites, besides their servants they used these men and women to swell the choruses. (66, 67) **horses,** the possession of the rich and well armed, same as in Neh.[c] Beasts of burden to carry baggage: the vessels, and offerings, *etc.* **mules,** ridden only by the richest classes. **asses,** used by the poorer classes.

[a] Ne. vii. 66.

[b] Ne. vii. 67.

"Now had the childr. of Israel taken down their harps fr. the willows of Babylon, and could sing unbidden the songs of Sion." — *Bp. Hall.*

Home after exile. —

But rest more sweet and still,
  Than ever nightfall gave;
Our yearning hearts shall fill,
  In the land beyond the grave.

There shall no tempests blow,
  No scorching noontide beat;
There shall be no more snow,
  No weary, wandering feet.

So we lift our trusting eyes
  From the hills our fathers trod,
To the quiet of the skies,
  To the Sabbath of our God. — *Mrs. Hemans.*

[c] Ne. vii. 68, 69.

"The way to preserve the peace of the Church is to preserve the unity of it."—*M. Henry.*

the offerings of the people for the work

68—70. (68) **some . . fathers,** *R. V.*, "some of the heads of fathers' houses," names and gifts diff. fr. Neh.'s acc.[d] **when . . Lord,** *i. e.* to the site on wh. it was to be built. (69) **drams,** *R. V.*, "darics," a Persian gold coin, = about 5 dollars. (70) **all Israel,**[e] those who returned, and those whom they found in the land. **in . . cities,** prob. allotted to them by public authority, and occupied gradually.

[d] Neh vii. 70-72. The differ. shows the independence of the lists.

Willing gifts. — I happened to attend one of Mr. Whitefield's sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles of gold. As he proceeded, I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably, that I emptied my pockets into the collector's dish, gold and all. — *Franklin.* *Gifts to the church.* — The gifts of poverty are the richest gifts to the churches. I refer not now to the widows' mites, richer though they be than all the gifts of wealth, but to the gifts richer even than the widow's mite. A few years ago, on a wintry morning, a boy in the habiliments of poverty entered an old school-house among our western mountains and avowed to the master his desire for an education. There was poverty, laying one of her richest gifts on the altar of religion. For that boy was Jonas King. On his humble shoemaker's bench Carey laid the foundation of British Baptist Missions. John Newton found in his congregation an unfriended Scotch boy, whose soul was then glowing with newborn love to Christ. He took him to see John Thornton, one of those noble merchants whose wealth, whose piety, and whose beneficence increase together. They educated him, and that boy became Claudius Buchanan, whose name India will bless when the names of Clive and Hastings are forgotten. John Bunyan was a gift of poverty to the church. Zwingle came forth from an Alpine shepherd's cabin; Luther from a miner's cottage; the apostles, some of them, from fishermen's huts. These are the gifts of poverty to the church.— *J. Harris.*

[e] Ne. vii. 73.

"The truth is, when we are under any affliction, we are generally troubled with a malicious kind of melancholy; we only dwell and pore upon the sad and dark occurrences of Providence, but never take notice of the more benign and bright ones. We are like froward children who, if you take one of their playthings from them throw away all the rest in spite." — *Bp. Hopkins.*

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CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—3. (1) **when . . come,** *Tisri.*[a] The chief of the Heb. religious year. (2) **Jeshua,** the high priest.[b] **son of Jozadak,** he was the son of Seraiah, high priest when Jerus. was destroyed. **brethren,** as descended fr. Aaron. **Zerubbabel,** the governor.[c] **and . . altar,** their first act. The foundations of the temple not yet laid.[d] **in the law,** *i. e.* offerings for the Feast of Trumpets. Num. xxix. 1-6. (3) **bases,** *R. V.*, "its base," on its old foundations. **fear . . countries,** hence they would first propitiate Jehovah, who had so often defended and delivered their ancestors. "Though the exiles had permission from Cyrus to raise up not only their altar, but their temple, it was not at all certain that his nominal subjects would passively submit. It was as if a modern Turkish Sultan should decree the erection of a Christian altar and a grand Christian cathedral at Kerbela or Bussorah, towards the verge of his empire. There would be great danger in acting on such a decree."—*Pulp. Com.*

the altar is set up

[a] On the *first* was the holy convocation — Nu. xxix. 1; on the *tenth*, the Feast of Atonement — Nu. xxix. 7; on the *fifteenth*, the Feast of Tabernacles — Nu. xxix. 12.

[b] Ez. ii. 2.

[c] Ez. ii. 2.

[d] *vs.* 6.

The temple begun.—I. The foundation laid. The first care of the returned exiles was to re-establish the worship of God. See — 1. Their zeal: no difficulties disheartened or deterred them; 2. Self-sacrifice: each gave freely of money and means to a work so sacred. II. The shout of the young, and the tears of the aged. The young looked onward; the aged recalled the past. As the aged recalled what the temple was in their young days, their cries all but drowned the shouts of the young. The young hoped that Israel might recover the former glory. Learn: (1) Make the worship and glory of God your first care; (2) Count no sacrifice too great to promote His glory; (3) Enter with joy into God's worship; whatever regrets the past may cause, the future may be blessed.— *Hive.*

A man is converted, and he comes into the church. He is fit to be in the church because he is so bad, and has found it out. For a man that is lame in the leg, and half blind, and deaf, and without the power of digestion — is not he just the man that ought to be in the hospital, if he knows what his condition is, and wants to get well?

Difficulties of worship among Puritans.—Never, not even under the tyranny of Laud, had the condition of the Puritans been so deplorable as at that time (autumn 1685). Never had spies been so actively employed in detecting congregations. Never had magistrates, grand jurors, rectors, and church wardens been so much on the alert. Many dissenters were cited before the ecclesiastical courts. Others found it necessary to purchase the connivance of the agents of the government by presents of hogsheads of wine and of gloves stuffed with guineas. It was impossible for the separatists to pray together without precautions, such as are employed by coiners and receivers of stolen goods. The places of meeting were frequently changed. Worship was performed sometimes just before break of day and sometimes at dead of night. Round the building where the little flock was gathered sentinels were posted to give the alarm if a stranger drew near. The minister in disguise was introduced through the garden and the back yard. In some houses there were trap doors through which, in case of danger, he might descend. Where Nonconformists lived next door to each other, the walls were often broken open, and secret passages were made from dwelling to dwelling. No psalm was sung; and many contrivances were used to prevent the voice of the preacher, in his moments of fervor, from being heard beyond the walls. . . Dissenting ministers, however blameless in life, however eminent for learning and abilities, could not venture to walk the streets for fear of outrages, which were not only not repressed, but encouraged, by those whose duty it was to preserve the peace. Some divines of great fame were in prison. Others, who had, during a quarter of a century, borne up against oppression, now lost heart, and quitted the kingdom.— *Macaulay's Hist. England.*

"In thy silent wishing, thy voiceless unuttered prayer, let the desire be cherished not that afflictions may not visit thee; for well has it been said, such prayers never seem to have wings. I am willing to be purified through sorrow, and to accept it meekly as a blessing. I see that all the clouds are angels' faces, and their voices speak harmoniously of the everlasting chime."— *Mrs. L. M. Child.*

4—7. (4) **as . . written,** acc. to the prescribed rules of observance[e] fr. the fifteenth to the twenty-second of Tisri; they dwelt in tents during the whole time. **custom,** *R. V.*, "ordinance." **as . . required,** *Heb.* "the matter of the day in his day." Nothing omitted one day, or put off till to-morrow. (5) **afterward . . offering,**[f] *etc.*, a resumption of the sacrificial system. "The exiles re-established permanently three things:—1. The daily sacrifice; 2. The celebration of the new moons and other regular feasts; and 3. The practice of allowing the people to bring offerings whenever they pleased, to be offered on the great altar by the priest or priests in attendance."— *Pulp. Com.* Ex. xxix. 38. (6) **From . . day,** commencing, and going through the sacred month in order. **But . . laid,** they did not wait for the building, bef. they beg. the worship; for God dwelleth not (exclusively) in temples made with

feasts kept, and offerings made

[e] Ex. xxiii 16.

[f] Num. xxviii. 3, 11, 19, 26; xxix. 2, 8, 13.

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hands. "Thus, we see, the full establishment of religious services precedes the building of the temple. A weighty truth is enshrined in this apparently incongruous fact. The worship itself is felt to be more important than the house in which it is to be celebrated." (7) **unto . . Tyre,** thus imitating Solomon.[a] **according . . Persia,** as Cyrus was not master of Phœnicia, the word must be taken in a general sense, *i. e.* the Jews felt obligated to rebuild the temple bec. the king had given them permission and a freewill offering, *see* vi. 3, 4.

[a] 1 Ki. v. 9, 10; 2 Ch. ii. 10-15.

"The company in which you will improve most will be least expensive to you." — *Washington.*

A significant event. — A hundred churches can be in course of erection in any of the chief cities of the globe now given up to the Christian profession, and the citizens would pay but little heed to the fact that so many pinnacles were rising to the clouds. We must recall the circumstances under which the altar was set up. Heathenism prevailed even in places once holy; the whole spirit and genius of the time was against the worship of the true and living God: when the smoke curled upward from the new altar it was like a signal of defiance to those who had given themselves up to worship the hosts of heaven, or the beasts of the earth, or images of their own fashioning. — *Peop. Bib.*

foundations of the temple are laid

8–11. (8) This verse shows how universal was the movement to rebuild the temple. **from . . upward,** this was David's rule.[b] **set . . Lord,** *R. V.*, "have oversight of." (9) **Jeshua,**[c] *etc.*, this Jeshua must not be confounded with Jeshua, the high priest, *cf.* ii. 40. The *vs.* presents many difficulties. *Rawlinson* suggests that the clause "the sons of Henadad, *etc.*," is "an unauthorized addition to the true text." *Ryle in Cam. B.* says: "It seems better to suppose that there are three families referred to," viz., Jeshua, Kadmiss, Henadad. The absence of Henadad's name from the list in chap. ii. 40 is strange. But we must account for it by supposing either that the Henadad family never left Palestine, or that they came to Jerusalem between the arrival of Zerubbabel and the beginning of the second year, or that they belonged to the class more numerous than scholars have hitherto taken account of, *i. e.* those who returned to Jerusalem from exile in other countries." **Judah,** or *Hodaviah.* (10) **apparel,** dressed in their official robes.[d] **after . . Israel,**[e] taking David's rule for the service, as Sol.'s for the building. (11) **sang . . course,** an antistrophical chant. One portion of the singers rendered one part, and then the rest answered.

[b] 1 Ch. xxiii. 24.

[c] Ez. ii. 40.

[d] Ez. ii. 69.

[e] 1 Ch. vi. 31; xvi. 4; xxv. 1.

There is no wall that can contain the church of God on earth, and there is no sect-line that can reach around it. The Lord's garment is large enough to cover all sects, and to leave room for nations to camp under it besides.

The rebuilding of the temple. — I. What there was at that time to call forth such strong and widely different emotions. This work was — 1. To some, an occasion of exalted joy; 2. To others, an occasion of the deepest sorrow. That this subject is not uninteresting to us, will appear whilst I show — II. How far similar emotions become us at this day. 1. Certainly there is at this time great occasion for joy; 2. Yet there is among us abundant occasion for grief also. See, then — (1) What, above all things, should interest our souls; (2) What use we should make of our knowledge and experience. — *Simeon.*

"Association is the delight of the heart not less than of poetry. Alison observes that an autumn sunset, with its crimson clouds, glimmering trunks of trees, and wavering tints upon the grass, seems scarcely capable of embellishment. But if in this calm and beautiful glow the chime of a distant bell steal over the fields, the bosom heaves with the sensation that Dante so tenderly describes." — *Willmott.*

Brevity of life. — Human life is short; God's work is complex and prolonged, and steadily flowing on. Hence we are continually beginning, and passing away, and leaving what we begin for others to finish. Every generation is beginning, and every generation is passing away without having finished what it has begun. But that which we begin is not going to stop because we cease to go forward with it. One worker dies; the loom goes on, and another worker takes up the thread that he has laid down. We pass away, and another man, somewhere, is prepared to step into our place. We commence a work, and perform a part of it; when we are gone, others perform another part; when they are gone, still others perform another part; and so that which we undertake is by others carried along to its bright consummation. — *H. W. Beecher.*

the joy and mourning of the people

12–13. (12) **ancient,** aged. **that . . house,** wh. had been destroyed between 49 and 59 yrs. before. The most approved dates are, temple destroyed 587 B. C., new foundations laid 536 B. C. **wept,** tears caused by contrast betw. (1) prosperous circumstances in wh. foundats. of first temple were laid, and present reduced state of country; (2) inferior size and cost of stones;[f] (3) smaller extent of foundation, *etc.*;[g] (4) the comparative smallness of present means: (5) and esp. bec. of absence of ark, Shekinah, *etc.* **many . . joy,** these prob. the younger, comforted by Haggai.[h] (13) **So . . people,** the Eastern's expressions of emotion are always loud and vehement.

[f] 1 Ki. vii. 9, 10.

[g] Hag. ii. 9.

[h] Hag ii. 9.

The sad memories of the aged and the joyousness of the young. — I. Why did the aged weep? 1. In part, because of the poor preparations made for building this house as compared with those for building the first house; 2. Because of the absence of many things that were the glory of the temple at the first. II. Why do the young rejoice? 1. It was the gladness of patriotism: the temple was the centre of the nation; the manifester of the nation's growth, the fountain of law, and the instrument of progress; 2. It was the gladness of piety; to such it was a proof of the return of the Divine favor.

The second temple. — The first temple had been the work of a king; the second is to be the work of a people. The nation had been dazzled by the splendor of Solomon's court, and had basked in its rays so that the after-glow of them lingered in the memories of ages even down to the time of our Lord. But there was a healthier spirit in the humbler work of the returned exiles, when, forced to dispense with the king they would gladly have accepted, they undertook the task of building the new temple themselves. — *Exp. B.*

B. C. 536.

"Here is an apt emblem of everything, however joyous, which is done in the ch. militant on earth. her march of victory is through a vale of tears; her restorations are memorials of sins wh. caused the destruction of that which had been dissolved." — *Bp. Wordsworth.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1—3. (1) **adversaries,** Samaritans.[a] (2) **as ye do,** this was not true, *cf.* 2 Ki. xvii. 33. **since . . Assur,** *R. V.* "Assyria," *i. e.* his was the last colonization, 680–668 B. C. Esar-haddon was the son of Sennacherib.[f] (3) **Ye . . God,**[c] their offer rejected, as they did not profess the true faith, nor adhere to the pure and holy worship.[d] The real temper of the Samaritans is soon seen. **our God,** as if he were the Jews' exclusive property. **as king Cyrus,** *etc.*, this was the technical ground upon wh. the Jews based their refusal. The "decree" did not mention the Samaritans.

Satan's disguises. — It was but a shallow device, and showed a very inadequate conception of devilish art, to represent Satan a hideous and repulsive figure, with frightful marks to be recognized by, with a beastly foot to certify his track, and all concentrated malignities on his distorted features. Why, men would run from such ugliness by instinct; and if this were the type of evil, it could never come near enough to tempt us. Our virtue would be safe against a seducer that inspired nothing but disgust. In the real Satan we must look for a shrewder cunning, a more subtle diplomacy, a more politic disguise. Whatever he may have been to the superstitious fears of ruder ages, to try the temper of the nineteenth century he takes on the address of a courtier, the self-possession of a man of the world, the royal dignity of a prince, the beauty of a seraph, and the manners of a gentleman. If you meet him now — and meet him you certainly will to-morrow and to-day — he will be transformed into an angel of light. — *F. D. Huntington.*

the proffered help of the adversaries

a vs. 10, see on 2 Ki. xvii. 24.

b 2 Ki. xix. 37; 2 Chr. xxiii. 11.

c Ne. ii. 20.

d 2 Ki. xvii. 3, 24–34.

"Malice scorned, puts out itself; but, argued, gives a kind of credit to a false accusation."—*Massinger.*

"Where a foundation has been laid, anybody can build, but only God, can build on nothing." —*A. J. Gordon.*

B. C. 529.

4—6. (4) **Then . . building,** this proves that Zerubbabel was right in rejecting their help. Their conduct shows that their offer of aid was a pretence; in every possible way the Samaritans hindered the Jews. **troubled,** *R. V.*, margin "terrified." (5) **counsellors,** intriguing men to spread evil reports. Prob. bribed others at the Persian court. **all . . Persia,**[e] till 7 yrs. aft. return of Jews. Cyrus did not comprehend the polit. and relig. spirit of the Jews, and their refusal of the seemingly friendly offers of the Samaritans gave credence to the reports that the Jews were cherishing some polit. designs against the Persian government. **even . . Persia,**[f] *i. e.* during the time of Smerdis, succ. of Cambyses, to time of Darius Hystaspes, some seven or eight years more. (6) **Ahasuerus,** prob. Xerxes.

The crafty architect. — It is recorded of an architect of the name of Cnidius, that having built a watch-tower for the king of Egypt, to warn mariners from certain dangerous rocks, he caused his own name to be engraved on a certain stone in the wall, and then having covered it with plaster, he inscribed on the outside, in golden letters, the name of the king, as though the thing was done for his glory. He was cunning enough to know that the waves would ere long wash away the coat of plastering, and that then his own name would appear, and his memory be handed down to successive generations. How many there are who, while affecting to seek only the glory of God and His church, are really seeking whatever is calculated to gratify self-love. Could the outer coat, as it were, of their pretences be removed, we should see them, as they really are, desirous not of God's glory but of their own. — *Illus. of Truth.*

their false accusations

e Cyrus was engaged in war with the Lydians and Scythians at the time. He died B. C. 529. He left the gov., while at his wars, in the hands of his wicked son, Cambyses, who was hostile to the Jews. See *Jos. Ant.* xi. 2, 1.

f Darius, son of Hystaspes; raised to throne B. C. 522, on death of pseudo-Smerdis.

B. C. 522.

their letters to Artaxerxes

7—10. (7) **Artaxerxes,** here arta = great (as in Arta-banes, *etc.*). Herodotus[a] renders the word great warrior. Xerxes[b] seems to be an appellative = warlike. **companions,** societies. Bislam, *etc.*, were prob. deputy-governors. **Syrian,** Aramæan, called Chaldee sometimes in our version. (8) **chancellor,** *lit.* master of judgment. **scribe,** secretary, appointed by the king to act as a check upon the provincial governor. (9) **Then wrote,** *etc.*, to vi. 18 this bk. is now in Chaldee.[c] **Dinaites,**[d] prob. fr. city of Media. **Apharsathchites,** a tribe of Medo-Persia. **Tarpelites,** per. fr. E. of Elymais. **Apharsites,** Persian origin. **Archevites,**[e] fr. Babylonia. **Susanchites,** fr. Susa. **Dehavites,** Dâi.[f] **Elamites,** fr. Elymais. (10) **Asnapper,** *R. V.*, "Osnapper." "Scholars now begin to accept the ingenious and most probable suggestion that 'Osnapper' is the Aramaic attempt to reproduce the name of Assur-bani-pal, the great Assyrian king. He was the only Assyrian king who captured Susa and could carry off 'Susanchites;' no king so fully deserved the titles of 'great and noble.'"—*Cam. B.* Prob. one of the officers of Esarhaddon,[g] kg. of Assyria. **rest . . river,** *R. V.* "nd in the rest of the country beyond the river." "As Romans in North Italy, writing to Rome, would have spoken of themselves as '*Trans*padani,' so Persian subjects, writing to Susa from the west of the Jordan, speak of their country as '*across* the Jordan.'" **and at such a time,** *R. V.*, "and so forth," *i. e. et caetera.*

World's antagonism to the church.—The ship of the church may be tossed, but it cannot sink, for Christ is in it, and will awake time enough to prevent its wreck. There is, therefore, no cause for us, when the storm beateth hardest upon it, to disturb Him, as once the disciples, did with the shrieks and outcries of our unbelief, as if all were lost. Our faith is more in danger of sinking at such a time than the cause and church of Christ are. They are both by the promise set out of the reach of men and devils. The gospel is an "everlasting gospel." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one iota of this shall perish." "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever," and shall be alive to walk over all its enemies' graves, yea to see the funeral of the whole world. —*W. Gurnall.*

the purport of the letter

11—13. (11) **Thy . . river,** *i. e.* W. of the Euphrates. (12) **building . . city,** which was not true. They were building the temple simply. **set up,** *R. V.*, "finished." **joined,** *R. V.*, "repaired." (13) **then . . custom,** they turn prophets as well as false witnesses. "The three terms used by the Samaritans really represent, respectively, 'tribute,' or the money payment required from each province; 'provision,' or the payment in kind equally required (Herod., i. 192; iii. 91), and 'toll,' or contributions from those who made use of the Persian highways."—*Pul. Com.* **thou . . kings,**[h] *R. V.*, "and in the end it will endamage the kings."

Unscrupulous slander.—This is very manifest in the gross exaggerations of this letter. Notice two or three of them. "Jerusalem . . . the rebellious and the bad city." A most unjust description of its character. "If this city be builded and the walls set up, they will not pay toll," *etc.* (*vs.* 13). An unwarranted and slanderous assertion, for these Jews had never given any cause why their loyalty to the Persian monarchs should be suspected. "If this city be builded, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river." An extremely absurd exaggeration. One would suppose that the authors of it must have known it to be a gross misrepresentation. The chief assertions of the letter were unscrupulous and base calumnies. The enemies of the church of God have never been particular as to the weapons they should use against it. Falsehood and cruelty, fines and imprisonment, bonds and banishment, fire and sword, have all been employed against it.—*Hom. Com.*

they request the search of the records

14—16. (14) **we . . palace,** *R. V.*, "we eat the salt of the palace."[i] **dishonour,** *i. e.* nakedness or damage. They could not hold their peace and see the king stript of his rightful due. (15) **so . . find,** *etc.*, not a word do they say of the more recent decree of Cyrus that might also be found there. A part of the truth is sometimes the worst lie. **destroyed,** *R. V.*, "laid waste." (16) **we certify,** *etc.*, this certainly shows that the position of Jerusalem was regarded as strong and influential. **this side the river,** *R. V.*, "Beyond the river." *i. e.* Persia would lose its hold upon the country W. of the Euphrates: "Jordan" is suggested by *Rawlinson.*

[a] Ez. vi. 98.

[b] "The Ahasuerus of Book of Esther is Xerxes, son of Darius."—*Bp. Wordsworth.*

[c] Prob. Ezra copied it from some collection of Chaldee records.

[d] 2 Ki. xvii. 30, 31.

[e] Ge. x. 10.

[f] See *Herodotus* i. 125.

[g] 2 Ki. xix. 37.

"In consequence of the difficulties and obstacles thus interposed, for a period of 20 yrs., the progress of the work was very slow."—*Port. Com.*

[h] So the Jews pretended zeal for the imperial power of Rome, when they would destroy the Lord of the temple.—Lu. xxiii. 2; Jo. xix. 12.

"Not alone to know, but to act according to thy knowledge, is thy destination, proclaims the voice of my inmost soul. *Fichte.*

[i] 2 Ch. xiii. 5. They regarded themselves bound to him, as solemn-

Christian watchfulness. —

Christian! seek not yet repose,
Cast thy dreams of ease away;
Thou art in the midst of foes;
Watch and pray.

Principalities and powers,
Mustering their unseen array,
Wait for thy unguarded hours;
Watch and pray.

Hear the victors who o'ercame;
Still they mark each warrior's way,
All with one sweet voice exclaim,
Watch and pray.

Hear, above all, hear thy Lord,
Him thou lovest to obey;
Hide within thy heart His word;
Watch and pray.

B. C. 522.

ly as by rite of hospitality. "Eating a prince's salt" is an Oriental phrase, equivalent to "receiving maintenance fr. him."

"Malice sucks up the greatest part of her own venom, and poisons herself.—*Montaigne.*

17—22. (17) **and at such a time,** *R. V.*, "and so forth." (18) **hath . . me,** its sense has been explained. (19) **commanded,** *R. V.*, "decreed" a more authoritative word. **search . . found,** *etc.*, their charge being so far confirmed, it is admitted in other respects. "The pseudo-Smerdis, who was a fanatical adherent of Magism, which disallowed temples altogether (Herod., i. 130), and who had already destroyed the temples of Ormuzd in Persia ('Behistun Ins.'), was naturally willing enough to do as the Samaritans desired, and stop the restoration of the Jewish temple." — *Pul. Com.* (20) **mighty kings,**[a] *etc.*, as Solomon, Uzziah, Josiah, **over all countries,** *R. V.*, "all the country." (21) **give . . until,** *etc.*, the building to be stayed until a special permission were granted. (22) **Take . . this,** *etc.*, they are called on, in the king's name, to see to this.

the decree of Artaxerxes

[a] 1 Ki. iv. 21; Ps. lxxii. 8; Gen. xv. 18; Jos. i. 4.

"Falsehood, is never so successful as when she baits her hook with truth; no watches so effectually deceive the wearers as those that are sometimes right." — *Colton.*

Force of heredity. — The child generally inherits the natural constitution, the mental peculiarities, and sometimes even the moral character of his parent. His secular condition, too, rich or poor, is frequently determined by his parents. Some inherit a princely fortune, and some a crushing penury, from their ancestors. And their social status, too, is often ruled by the position and conduct of those of whom they were born. Children participate in the shame or the glory connected with the memory of their parents. The brilliant reflection of an illustrious sire seems to lead his offspring to social honor, and to shed a radiance on his name. On the other hand, the infamy which parents by theft, treason, or murder, have gained for themselves, transmits its odious influence down to their children, depreciating their own personal worth, and degrading them in the estimation of their contemporaries. — *David Thomas.*

23, 24. (23) **cease . . power,** most, prob. a display of armed force. There is so much confusion regarding the names of the Persian kings used in this chapter that this whole section *vss.* 6–23 may refer to the time of Nehemiah, nearly a century later. Scholars are so divided that each student must choose for himself. (24) **Then . . Jerusalem,** no doubt they continued to pray and worship. **ceased . . Persia,** *i. e.* for ab. 8 years after the death of Cyrus, *see vs.* 5.[b]

the work of building ceases

[b] Darius asc. throne of Persia B. C. 522.

Hindrances to religious enterprises. — I. We are here reminded of some of the hindrances that arise from sectarian jealousies, and also from sectarian rivalries. II. We are also reminded of the undue timidity of some orders in holy causes. Learn — (1) To take heed how we hinder the work of religion; (2) How we suffer ourselves to be intimidated.

Victory not defeat. — If ever failure seemed to rest on a noble life, it was when the Son of Man, deserted by His friends, heard the cry which proclaimed that the Pharisees had successfully drawn the net round their Divine Victim. Yet from that very hour of defeat and death there went forth the world's life — from that very moment of apparent failure there proceeded forth into the ages the spirit of the conquering Cross. Surely if the Cross says anything, it says that apparent defeat is real victory, and that there is a heaven for those who have nobly and truly failed on earth. — *F. W. Robertson.*

The Rev. James Owen of Shrewsbury, being asked, when on his deathbed, whether he would have some of his friends sent for to keep him company, replied, "My fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; and he that is not satisfied with that company doth not deserve it."

B. C. 520.

Haggai and Zechariah incite the people to renew their work

a Hag. i. 1.

b Zech. i. 1.

You never can tell, by looking at birds' tail-feathers, which is going to fly highest; and you cannot tell by looking at churches, and their ordinance and their outside apparatus which is going to take the the lead. I tell you, that Church which has, first the most power with God, and then, next, the most sympathetic power with men, is the truest Church.

"Bad company is like a nail driven into a post, which, after the first and second blows, may be drawn out with little difficulty; but being once driven up to the head the pincers cannot take hold to draw it out, but which can only be done by the destruction of the wood."—*St. Augustine.*

Tatnai, etc., cannot hinder the Jews

c Ez. vi. 6.

d Ez. vii. 6, 28; Ps. xxxiii. 18.

"It is the pruned church, like the pruned vine, that bears the most precious clusters; it is the crushed soul, like the crushed aromatic plant, that is most fragrant."—*James.*

their letter to Darius against the Jews

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1, 2. (1) **Haggai**[a] **. . Zechariah,**[b] Haggai boldly reproves the Jews for the neglect and delay, and encourages them to renew zealously the work of the temple. He prophesied only from Sept. 520 B. C. to Dec. of the same year, but his words produced wonderful results. Zechariah was the grandson of Iddo. He was a very young man whose soul was fired by the earnestness of Haggai. *See* intros. to their bks. **even . . them,** *R. V., margin,* "which was upon them," *i. e.* God's spirit was upon the prophets or upon the people. (2) **prophets . . them,** and their words were a great help.

The revival of the work. — It was conducted under the guidance of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. I. Consider the arguments they employed. 1. They drew attention to the contrast between their own dwellings and the house of God; 2. They were reminded of the mind of God as marked by the dearth that had been sent; 3. They gave the promise of the greater glory of the second temple. II. Consider the effects of the arguments they used. 1. The revived religious faith of the nation; 2. The progress and completion of the work.

Influence of worldliness. — Nearly all can recall that favorite fiction of their childhood — the voyage of Sinbad the Sailor into the Indian Sea. They will remember that magnetic rock that rose from the surface of the placid waters. Silently Sinbad's vessel was attracted towards it; silently the bolts were drawn out of the ship's side, one by one, through the subtle attraction of that magnetic rock. And when the fated vessel drew so near that every bolt and clamp were unloosed, the whole structure of bulwark, masts, and spars tumbled into ruin on the sea, and the sleeping sailors awoke to their drowning agonies. So stands the magnetic rock of *worldliness* athwart the Christian's path. Its attraction is subtle, silent, slow; but fearfully powerful on every soul that floats within its range. Under its enchanting spell, bolt after bolt of good resolution, clamp after clamp of Christian obligation, are steadily drawn out. What matters it how long, or how fair has been the man's profession of religion, or how flauntingly the flag of his orthodoxy floats from the mast head? Let sudden temptation smite the unbolted professor, and in an hour he is a wreck. He cannot hold together in a tempest of trial, he cannot go out on any cruise of Christian service, because he is no longer held together by a Divine *principle* within. It has been silently drawn out of him by that mighty lodestone of attraction — a sinful, godless, self-pampering, Christ-rejecting *world.* — *T. L. Cuyler.*

3—5. (3) **Tatnai,**[c] gov. of Syria. *R. V.,* "Tattenai." The superior officer to whom Zerubbabel would have to render account for any treachery. **Shethar-boznai,** prob. secretary to Tattenai. **commanded you,** *R. V.,* "gave you a decree." (4) **said we,** *R. V., margin,* "spake they," *i. e.* Tattenai and his friends. (5) **eye . . Jews,**[d] He guided them by His eye. Looked favorably. **could not . . cease,** *R. V.,* "and they did not make them cease." **till . . matter,** they not only continued the work, but also provided for future interruptions and prepared their defence.

Duty of the church. — If the church will go forth to win new victories, she needs only to take fearlessly up the supremacy with which her God has dowered her, namely, the reconciling life of her indwelling Lord. Shutting up all internal questions that make her militant against herself, she is to move on in her own absolute, sublime majesty, militant only against every form of sin, to enthrone the kingdom of God. She must cease to beg favors of worldly policy. She must stop her infamous coquetry with Mammon. She must not be bowing on Sunday to sectarian prejudice, nor on week-days to social respectability, nor ever whisper guilty flatteries to popular sins, nor wait till great public vices are manifestly dying out of themselves, and feeble with approaching dissolution, before she dares strike at them. The staunch, uncompromising sincerity of old Puritans and confessors must be in her muscles. An awful zeal must gird up her loins. Purity, freedom, equity, are to be more to her than costly churches; the prayers of saintly men, and women and children too, her patronage; and her daily speech the benediction of charity."—*F. D. Huntington.*

6—8. (6) **Shethar-boznai,** shining star. **Apharsachites,** perhaps a Chaldæan word equiv. to Persians, the body-guard of the governor. (8) **house**

. . **God,** " his acknowledgment of the God of the Jews as 'the great God' must be held to indicate the general belief of the Persians on the subject." **great stones,** *lit.* " stones of rolling."[a] So large that they had to be transported on rollers. **timber . . walls,** " the inlaying of the walls with woodwork artistically finished."

Prosperity. — Art, science, commerce, civilization, religion, are aided by prosperity. The refinements of life are foes of the lower passions. The devil should not have the best music, nor the best pictures, nor the highest knowledge. Christians! Claim the world for God. It is His; He made it, He upholds it, He sustains it, He redeemed it, He is restoring it. And because it is His it is yours. " Ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." " All things are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." — *Hom. Com.*

B. C. 520.

a An allu. prob. to the method of removing stones of very large size.

" Ceremonies are different in every country; but true politeness is everywhere the same."— *Goldsmith.*

9—12. (9) **asked,** *etc.*, they enter into the minutest details. (11) **God . . earth,** Jehovah no local deity. The one God over all. **build,** rebuild. **great . . builded,**[b] Solomon. (12) **after . . wrath,**[c] *R. V., margin,* " because that," *etc.*, a causal conjunction. Their sin and not the power of the enemy had brought about their ruin. **Nebuchadnezzar,** was God's instrument of vengeance. In working out his own ends he fulfilled the designs and purposes of God, 2 Ki. xxiv. 2; xxv. 8, 9, 11.

Prudence. — As the hermits were communing together, there arose a question as to which of all the virtues was most necessary to perfection. One said chastity; another, humility; a third, justice. St. Anthony remained silent till all had given their opinion, and then he spoke, " Ye have all said well, but none of you have said aright. The virtue most necessary to perfection is prudence; for the most virtuous actions of men, unless governed and directed by prudence, are neither pleasing to God, nor serviceable to others, nor profitable to ourselves." — *Dict. of Illus.*

b 1 Ki. vi. 1.

c 2 Chr. xxxvi. 16, 17.

The world has been deluged with books on the evidences of Christianity; what the world needs is not books on these evidences but men who are proofs of them. — *T. W. Jenkyn.*

13—17. (13) **Cyrus . . Babylon,** C. dwelt in B. in that year.[d] (14, 15) **and the vessels,** *etc.*, *see* i. 7, 8. (16) **Sheshbazzar,**[e] the Chaldæan name of " the prince of Judah," or Zerubbabel. **and . . finished,** might have been, perh., but for the hindrances. The time described covered about 16 yrs., 536 to 520 B. C. (17) **search . . treasure house,** in place of the treasures there would be the decree of Cyrus explaining the absence of the golden vessels. **decree . . Cyrus,** they refer the king to an older decree than the one their enemy had quoted, *viz.*, " to the edict of Cyrus, and describe their subsequent conduct as a direct act of obedience to that edict. Thus they plead their cause as loyal subjects of the Persian empire."

d *Xenophon Cyrop.* vii. 7. Artaxerxes also is called king of B., Neh. xiii. 6, and king of Assyria, Ezra vi. 22.

e Ez. i. 8.

The house of the rolls. — An idea of the form of this Babylonian register-house, as well as the manner of preserving public records within its repositories, can be obtained from the recent discoveries at Nineveh. Two small chambers were discovered in the palace of Konyunjik, which, from the fragments found in them, Mr. Layard considers as " a house of rolls." After reminding his readers that the historical records and public documents of the Assyrians were kept on tablets and cylinders of baked clay, many specimens of which have been brought to this country, he goes on to say, " The chambers I am describing appear to have been a depository in the palace of Nineveh for such documents. To the height of a foot or more from the floor they were entirely filled with them; some entire, but the greater part broken into many fragments, probably by the falling in of the upper part of the building. They were of different sizes; the largest tablets were flat, and measured about 9 in. by 6½ in.; the smaller were slightly convex, and some were not more than an inch long, with but one or two lines of writing. The cuneiform characters on most of them were singularly sharp and well defined, but so minute in some instances as to be almost illegible without a magnifying glass. These documents appear to be of various kinds. The documents that have thus been discovered 'in the house of the rolls' at Nineveh probably exceed all that have yet been afforded by the monuments of Egypt, and when the innumerable fragments are put together and transcribed, the publication of these records will be of the greatest importance to the history of the ancient world."

" It is a joy to me to know that the Christians within the communion of this church are not all the Christians to be found in the congregation. We are richer than we appear to be. Here are growing pear trees, apple trees, cherry trees and shrubs, and blossoming vines, and flowers of every hue and odor; but I am glad that some seeds have been blown over the wall, and that fruit trees and flowers most pleasant to the eye are springing up there also."— *Beecher.*

B. C. 519.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

Darius finds and enforces the decree of Cyrus

1—5. (1) **Darius,** *i. e.* D. Hystaspes.[a] **house . . rolls,** or *books. R. V.*, "house of the archives." **laid up,** *lit.* "made to descend."[b] (2) **Achmetha,** Ecbatana. Summer residence of the Persian kings. (4) **row . . timber,** better "one row of timber." An obscure passage — "(1) Some explain by three *storeys* of stones surmounted by one of wood, the elevation of the temple. (2) Others by 'three *layers* of stone followed by one of wood,' the material of the walls. (3) Others by 'three *courses* of stone backed by a wainscot of wood,' the thickness of the walls. (4) But in all probability the verse should be explained by reference to 1 Kings vi. 36, where 'three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams' are the construction of the walls of the inner court." — *Cam. B.* **let . . house,** and the charges were to be defrayed out of the royal exchequer. (5) **let . . vessels,** as already stated (i. 7, 8; v. 14). Thus ends the decree of Cyrus.

The value of books. — In books lies the *soul* of the whole past time; the articulate audible voice of the past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream. Mighty fleets and armies, harbors and arsenals, vast cities, high domed, many engined, — they are precious, great: but what do they become? Agamemnon, the many Agamemnons, Pericleses, and their Greece; all is gone now to some ruined fragments, dumb, mournful wrecks and blocks: but the books of Greece! There Greece, to every thinker, still very literally lives; can be called up again into life. No magic *Rune* is stranger than a book. All that mankind has done, thought, gained, or been: it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of books. They are the chosen possession of men. — *Thomas Carlyle.*

a Great and interesting light has been thrown on the history of this monarch and the transactions of his reign, by the decipherment of the Cuneatic inscriptions on the rocks of Behistûn.

b These treasure chambers were underground. Hence many of the anc. cylinders have been found under the ruins by Layard, etc.

Tattenai is exhorted by the king to aid the work

6—10. (6) **Now,** here begins the order of Darius to Tattenai. **be . . thence,** from your suspicions and hindrances. (7) **Let . . alone,** save in the way of helping. **let . . Jews,** Zerubbabel. (8) **Moreover,** in addition to this decree of Cyrus, or in enforcement of its spirit. **forthwith . . given,** *R. V.*, "expenses be given with all diligence." **that . . hindered,** better, "which is not to be neglected." (9) **let . . fail,** without the omission of a day, without abatement of a single jot. (10) **sacrifices of sweet savours,** *R. V.*, "sacrifices of sweet savour," one word in the Heb. recalling the "burnt offering . . . . of a sweet savour unto the Lord," Ex. xix. 18. **pray . . life,**[c] these heathen men had some belief in Jehovah, and in the power of prayer.[d]

Sermon on the king's accession. — We propose to consider the words before us — I. As the desire of a heathen prince. 1. It was a just and reasonable; 2. It was a wise and political desire. II. As the duty of a Christian people — 1. It is your duty, the discharge of which is to your interest; 2. To the performance of which we have an especial call; 3. To obey which we are under a special obligation. — *Simeon.*

Efficacy of faithful prayer. — A man who lives habitually near to God is like a great cloud forever dropping with fertilizing showers. This is the man who can say, "The earth is dissolved; I bear up the pillars thereof." France had never seen so bloody a revolution had there been men of prayer to preserve her. England, amidst the commotions which make her rock to and fro, is held fast because prayer is put up incessantly by the faithful. The flag of old England is nailed to her mast, not by the hands of her sailors, but by the prayers of the people of God. These, as they intercede day and night, and as they go about their spiritual ministry, these are they for whom God spareth nations, for whom He permitteth the earth still to exist; and when their time is over, and they are taken away, the salt being taken from the earth, then shall the elements dissolve with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; but not until He hath caught away the saints with Christ into the air, shall this world pass away. — *Spurgeon.*

c 1 Ti. ii. 1, 2.

d "Here was a foreshadowing of the time when all nations would be admitted to worship the one true God." Is. ii 2; Mal. i. 11.

"As a countenance is made beautiful by the soul's shining through it, so the world is beautified by the shining through it of God." — *Jacobi.*

the penalty of disobedience to this decree

11—15. (11) **that . . word,** *etc.*, a warning to the meddling Samaritans. **timber . . house,** *R. V.*, "let a beam be pulled out." **hanged,**[e] lifted up, *i. e.* crucified. (12) **God . . there,**[f] Darius regarded Jehovah as a local deity. **to alter . . destroy,** *R. V.*, "to alter the same (*i. e.* this decree), to destroy." (13) **so . . speedily,** suggestive of the power of the despotic monarchs of the time. (14) **through the prophesying,** *etc.*, *i. e.* the encouragement and inspiration aroused by the prophets helped along the

e A com. punishment among the Persians. Est. ii. 23; vii. 9; ix. 13; *Herodotus* iii. 125; iv, 43; vii. 194.

f "Darius, the K., saith, if thou

success of the work. **finished,** *etc.*, decree of Darius, received in 4th yr. of his reign, B. C. 518.[a] **Artaxerxes,** *i. e.* Longimanus, who came to the throne in B. C. 464. An anticipation by the compiler, of later history. (15) **finished,** *etc.*, "from Zerubbabel's laying of the foundation (Ezra iii. 10), the time that had elapsed was twenty-one years. From the recommencement under the inspiriting influence of the two prophets, the time was only four years, five months, and ten days."

Our share in the spiritual temple. — When Cyrus took one of his guests around his garden, the guest admired it greatly, and said he had much pleasure in it. "Ah," said Cyrus, "but you have not so much pleasure in this garden as I have, for I have planted every tree in it myself." One reason why Christ has so much pleasure in His church is because He did so much for it; and one reason why some saints will have a greater fulness of heaven than others to rejoice in will be because they did more for heaven than others. By God's grace they were enabled to bring more souls there; and as they look upon the church they may, without self-reliance, and ascribing it all to grace, remember what they were enabled to do in its building up. — *Spurgeon.*

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hidest this decree, and dost not publish it to the people, may Auramazda destroy thee, and thy house perish." — From a cuneiform inscrip. set up by Darius at Behistûn

[a] Zech. vii. 5. See *Prideaux*, i. 257.

16—18. (16) **rest . . captivity,** sons of the transportation. **kept . . joy,** "the Lord himself, the Messenger of the covenant, so long sought by His people, suddenly came to this temple (Mal. iii. 1) — came to it, and frequented it, and taught in it, and gave it a dignity and a majesty far beyond the first temple." (17) **twelve he-goats,** *etc.*, "the sin offering 'of twelve he-goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel,' was an incident full of deep religious pathos. The remnant who had returned make solemn confession of sin in the name of the whole scattered and dispersed race. They acknowledge the essential unity of Israel's tribes alike in the consequences of sin, in the possibilities of restoration, and in the renewed consecration to God's service." — *Cam. B.* **according . . Israel,** Israel and Judah united in the intention of this second temple. (18) **divisions,** 1 Chr. xxiv. 1. **courses,** 1 Chr. xxiii. 3. **service of God,** here refers to the worship, *i. e.* the liturgy. **as . . Moses,**[c] Num. iii. 6, viii. 9, 10.

the joyful dedication of the temple

[b] Prob. they sang Pss. cxlvi., cxlvii., cxlviii., called in the LXX. Ps. of Hag. and Zech.

[c] Although David arranged the priests and Levites in courses acc. to their fams., it was Moses who assigned to them their rights, privileges, stations, and duties.

Religious rejoicing. — The priests of old were not to sully themselves with sorrow when they performed their functions, and saints who are of a higher priesthood should show forth delight in their approaches to their God. Angels sing, and why not God's other servants, who are a little lower, and yet far higher? David danced before the ark, which was but a symbol of Divinity; what ails us that our heart so seldom dances before the Lord Himself? The old creation has its sunshine and flowers; its lowing herds and bleating flocks; its heaven-mounting larks and warbling nightingales; its rivers laughing, and its seas clapping hands; is the new creation of grace to render less happy worship to God, our exceeding joy? Nay, rather let us come into His presence with thanksgiving, and show ourselves glad in Him with psalms. Most of the English versions alter the old hundredth Psalm into, "Him serve with fear;" but for my part, by God's grace I mean to sing it as it used to be and still is sung in Scotland —

"Nations and men are only the best when they are the gladdest, and deserve heaven when they enjoy it." — *Richter.*

"All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with MIRTH, His praise forth tell,
Come ye before Him and rejoice."—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

19—22. And . . month,[d] *i. e.* the month after the temp. was finished. (20) **purified,** 2 Chr. xxx. 15. *Cf.* also 2 Chr. xxix. 34. (21) **all . . themselves,** by undergoing the indispensable rite of circumcision. Prob. those who separated themselves fr. the moral and ceremonial pollution of idolatry at this time, were not the heathen, but the descendants of those Jews who had remained in Palestine during the exile. (22) **for . . joyful,** the cause of their prosperity rightly traced. **turned . . them,**[f] "after all the hard sufferings of the exile, and after all the severe trials which had come upon them since the time of Cyrus, the Lord had now, by the re-estab. of the temple, exactly seventy years after its destruction, caused a real and great change of affairs to take place." Darius is called the king of Assyria, bec. the Persian kings "took the same relative position over against the children of God as the Assyrian and Chaldean kings" by reason of this succession to the great Assyrian empire.

the Passover is observed

[d] Ex. xii. 6.

[e] Ez. ix. 11.

[f] Pr. xxi. 1.

There is the same difference between the church and religion that there is between the hand and the soul. The hand is important, and I do not propose to cut

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it off; but if it is a choice between the hand and the soul, I know which I should choose. Now, churches are instruments which God employs in carrying religion forward. But when a comparison is made between institutions and the things which they serve, there is no question which is superior.

A true church. — What magnificent churches we have for the wealthy. They occupy extensive corner plots; they are built of granite or fine stone, painted with costly and exquisite taste; they are upholstered with the softest and sleepiest of cushions, and when they are finished, these words are cut on the portal; "The poor have the Gospel preached to them." I often think of the wag who saw such an inscription over such a door, and who with a piece of chalk wrote underneath, "Yes, but not here." Now, I do not believe that this is exactly the form of Christianity which the Master would approve of if He were to come into this city. Not that I doubt that rich men need preaching. I think that Christ, instead of occupying this splendid pulpit, would stand out yonder on the steps, and get the crowd about Him — the rich and the poor in the same audience. Now I am told that rich men like to be exclusive. They have elegant houses, and they want to worship God elegantly. I don't believe it. Wealth is sometimes purse-proud and conceited; but the great majority of rich men in this city would be glad to see sitting by his side the clerk on a small salary, and the carpenter and the mason. Given good behavior and cleanliness, it is a good thing to have a silk gown in one pew and a calico one in another. — *Hepworth.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

Ezra goes up to Jerusalem

Betw. this chap. and the last is a period of 58 yrs., during wh. reigned Xerxes (who suc. Darius), fr. B.C. 486-465., X was suc by Artaxerxes Longimanus.

In this interval the Bk. of Esther falls.

a Killed at Biblah, 130 yrs. bef. 2 Ki. xxv. 18-21.

b vss. 21-26.

"My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth:
But higher far my proud pretensions rise —
The son of parents passed into the skies." —*Cowper.*

1—6. (1-5) **Ezra** (*helper*), *see* intro. **son of Seraiah,**[a] "son" is here used freely. Ezra was prob. the great-grandson of Seraiah. (6) **went . . Babylon,** authorized by the king.[b] He was the civil ruler of the province. **and . . scribe,** quick in understanding, and bold in expressing, the meaning of the law. **which . . given,** the law was of Divine origin and authority. **and . . request,** his zeal in wishing to go, and the kindness of the king, to be both noted. **according . . him,** *i. e.* by reason of God's special favor to him.

The setting out of Ezra. — We are once more reminded — I. Of the unchangeableness of God's purposes of mercy. II. Of the ease with which great obstacles are overcome, when God arises in the greatness of His strength. III. That God proceeds on the principle of vindicating His own name, and is not affected alone by the characters of men. IV. Of our journey home to the heavenly Jerusalem, and our safety on the march.

The power of individuals. — The greatest works that have been done, have been done by the ones. The hundreds do not often do much, the companies never do; it is the units, just the single individuals that, after all, are the power and the might. Take any church — there are multitudes in it; but it is some two or three that do the work. Look on the Reformation! — there might be many reformers, but there was but one Luther: there might be many teachers, but there was but one Calvin. Look ye upon the preachers of the last age, the mighty preachers who stirred up the churches — there were many coadjutors with them; but, after all, it was not Whitefield's friends, nor Wesley's friends, but the men themselves, that did it. Individual effort is, after all, the grand thing. A man alone can do more than a man with fifty men at his heels to fetter him. Separate men — Davids with their slings and stones — have done more than armies could accomplish. — *Spurgeon.*

his arrival at Jerusalem

c 1st and 2d temps. destroyed on the month Ap. Some say on the same day. *see* Zech. viii. 19; *Allen's Judaism* 401.

"Ezra's reigning desire had been to study the Divine law — its principles, institutions, privileges, and requirements; and now fr. love and zeal, he devoted

7—10. (7) **went up,** *etc.*, *see* ch. viii. **Nethinims,** *R. V.*, "Nethinim." **seventh year . . king,** *i. e.* the first day of the year 458 B. C. (8) **fifth month,** the month Ab.[c] It was the end of July. (9) **began . . up,** *etc.*, hence a journey of 4 mos. Caravans travel slowly, esp. such as this, with poor people, women, and children, *etc.* **to seek the law,** *i. e.* to know it thoroughly. (10) **For Ezra,** *etc.*, this shows us the reason of his request. **statutes and judgments,** "'statutes' are the appointed rules or regulations of conduct or ceremony, 'judgments' are the duties and rights determined by equity, authority, or custom. The phrase is however used very generally without any close distinction in the shades of meaning."

The Christian ministry. — The text points out some indispensable qualifications for an able minister of the New Testament. I. Devotedness to God's Word. II. Personal religion. III. Public instruction.

Holy courage. — Bernard de Palissy, a native of Agen, in France, was a maker of earthenware, at Saintes, and distinguished himself by his knowledge and talents. He composed a number of scientific and practical

works, which have been repeatedly republished; and the last edition, in 1777, is enriched with notes by the celebrated Faujas de St. Fonds. This able and worthy man was a Calvinist, and the French king, Henry III., said to him one day, that "he should be compelled to give him up to his enemies, unless he changed his religion." "You have often said to me, sir," was the undaunted reply of de Palissy, "that you pitied me; but as for me, I pity you, who have given utterance to such words as, I shall be compelled. These are unkingly words; and I say to you in royal phrase, that neither the Guises, nor all your people, nor yourself, are able to compel a humble manufacturer of earthenware to bend his knee before statues." Bernard was a man of humor, as well as of courage; he would sometimes say, alluding to his trade, and his trust in Providence, "My only property is heaven and earth."

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himself, as the business of his life, to the work of instructing, reforming, and edifying others." — *Port. Com.*

11—13. (11) **Now . . letter,** written in Chaldee. A private "firman" presented to Ezra by the king, wh. constituted the basis for his civil and ecclesiastical authority. **even a scribe,** *R. V.*, "the scribe," he was an expounder of the law rather than a compiler. (12) **king of kings,** prob. an Orientalism = great and powerful prince,[a] but many of his tributary princes still retained the title of kings. **perfect . . time,** *R. V.*, "perfect and so forth." Prob. a condensation. (13) **I decree,** *etc.*, this was a royal permit, a free conduct. None were to be compelled to go, and none to be hindered who desired to go. "The decree of Artaxerxes is as wide in its terms as the proclamation of Cyrus (ch. i. 3), and gives permission not to the Jews only, but to all Israelites of whatever tribe, to accompany Ezra to Jerusalem. That Israelites of all the tribes actually went up to Jerusalem on the occasion seems indicated by the 'twelve bullocks for *all* Israel,' which those who returned with Ezra offered on their arrival to the 'God of Israel.'" — *Pulp. Com.*

the king's commission to Ezra

[a] As heaven of heavens = great and highest heaven; and vanity of vanities = greatest vanity.

Explanation of vs. 13. — It may be objected that after the decree of Cyrus any such fresh sanction should not have been needed. But two generations had passed away since the pilgrimage of the first body of returning captives, and during this long time many things had happened to check the free action of the Jews and to cast reproach upon their movements. For a great expedition to start now without any orders from the reigning monarch might excite his displeasure and a subject people who were dependent for their very existence on the good-will of an absolute sovereign would naturally hesitate before they ventured to rouse his suspicions by undertaking any considerable migration on their own account." — *Exp. Bib.*

A cuneiform inscrip., discov. at Susa, begins: — "Thus speaks Artaxerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of the countries, the king of the earth, the son of King Darius."

14—17. (14) **sent . . king,** lit. fr. bef. the king, *i. e.* with royal authority. **and .. counsellors,** who "saw the king's face."[b] Note the confidence reposed in Ezra. **according . . hand,** not a book in his possession, but the Mosaic law, in wh. Ezra was reputed to be fully instructed. (15) **whose . . Jerusalem,** heathen notion of localized deity. Habitation refers to the temple. (16) **And . . find,**[c] as free contributions of the people. Three classes of givers, the crown, the Babylonians so disposed, and the Jews. (17) **speedily,** diligently, and sufficiently. **meat offerings,** *R. V.*, "meal offerings," *i. e.* a bloodless offering.

the king sets forth Ezra's work

[b] Est. i. 14.

Giving a part of worship. — In collecting money for the repairs of the temple, which Athaliah and her sons had dilapidated, the good priest did a thing worth noticing. He had a chest placed right alongside the brazen altar in front of the temple, and in the lid of the chest was a hole bored, and into the hole the priests, selected for the purpose, dropped the coins which the people brought, either as their half-shekel tax, or as the offering for vows, or as a freewill offering to the temple of Jehovah. When I read the story and then read from Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, "Upon the first day of the week" (the Lord's day, mind you!) "let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," I cannot help thinking that giving is a part of worship! Close alongside of the altar, where the type of the Lamb of God was offered up, was the money chest. How exalted giving to the Lord's cause is in this light! And Paul calls it Sunday work, puts it with prayer, and praise, and Bible instruction, and all that is improving to the soul. — *Crosby.*

[c] "Granting him a free collection, and what he can get and gather by it." — *Bp. Richardson.*

"I should say sincerity, a deep, great, genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic." — *Carlyle.*

18—20. (18) **whatsoever,** *etc.*, happy the king who sees that what his people do "after the will of" their God, will be for general good. **will . . God,** *i. e.* as declared in the law. (19) **vessels,**[d] these were dif. from those previously taken.[e] Prob. gifts from the king and others who wished to adorn

and grants him means for executing it

[d] Ez. viii. 25-27.

[e] Ez. i. 7-11.

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"A crust of God's carving is better than a banquet of our own providing."—*Beadle.*

"How just is Providence in all its works! How swift to overtake us in our crimes!"—*Lansdowne.*

Birds cannot converse with men unless they had a rational nature put into them, nor can men converse with God unless, being made new creatures, they partake of the Divine nature.

the temple. **before . . Jerusalem,** perhaps a condensed form for "before the God of Israel, whose temple is in Jerusalem." (20) **more . . needful,** after making the collection. Here was confidence in the integrity of Ezra.

George Buchanan. — This illustrious scholar, compelled to fly from his own country by the blood-seeking animosity of a priestly cabal, whose vices he had made the theme of his satire, sought refuge and protection under Henry VIII. of England. His appeal to that monarch was couched in terms of great pathos and elegance. "Look not," said the poet, "with an unrelenting countenance upon the humble advances of a man whose soul is devoted to your service; one who, a beggar, a vagrant, and an exile, has endured every species of misfortune which a perfidious world can inflict. A savage host of inveterate enemies pursues him, and the palace of his sovereign resounds with their menaces. Over mountains covered in snow, and valleys flooded with rain, I come a fugitive to the Athenian altar of mercy, and, exhausted by calamities, cast myself at your feet." Alas! London was not the Athens the fugitive sought, nor Henry the Pericles whose generosity was to succor him. But who can wonder that, after sacrificing to the axe that beauty on which he once reposed with delight, neither the misfortunes of greatness, nor the eloquence of genius, should have been able to make the least impression on the heart of the savage Henry. — *Percy Anec.*

the king's decree to the treasures

21—23. (21) **decree . . speedily,** the king fulfilled his word royally. (22) **hundred . . silver,** a "kikkar," or talent of silver was worth about $1,800; hence amount was about $180,000. (23) **let it,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "let it be done exactly." **why . . wrath,** the disasters[a] of the nation were attributed to the anger of the gods.

Unlimited grace. — I. As salt was used for its preserving and purifying properties it may be regarded as an emblem of grace in the soul. II. As the king gave salt to Ezra without limiting the quantity, so the King of kings gives unlimited grace to His people. III. We can have large measures of many things without being necessarily benefited. IV. As salt kills reptiles, so grace kills sins. — *Spurgeon.*

Hindrances to work. — Sometimes the storms of persecution howl around the church, and men have to die instead of work, and it hinders building. Sometimes the frost of unbelief sets in, and men's hands get so cold that they cannot give, and their tongues so stiff that they cannot speak, and their knees so cramped that they cannot pray, and that hinders building. Sometimes the fog of error steals around, and everything gets disproportionate, and men imagine that because they don't see what their fellow-workmen are doing, they are doing nothing, and those who are at work can't see what they are doing, and this hinders building. Sometimes there is a strike — Judah vexes Ephraim, and Ephraim envies Judah — and the workmen quarrel with each other, and this hinders building. The great Master sees all this, and though for a while He may hide Himself, it will be but for a moment. Does the storm howl? He says, "Peace, be still," and there is a great calm, and the church has rest, and is multiplied. Does the fog blind? At the breath of His mouth it is scattered, and men see clearly. Does the frost set in? He, the Sun of Righteousness, pours His warm rays upon them, and the winter is soon past and gone. Is there a strike? He takes the two sticks into His hand, and they become one. — *Hom. Com.*

[a] "Such as Marathon and Salamis, and in Egypt." — *Wordsworth.*

"Nothing this world unriddles but the next."—*E. Young.*

"God has His plan for every man."—*Swiss Proverb.*

"Do not give me ready money now; give a cheque-book and let me draw what I like. This is what God does with the believer. He does not immediately transfer His inheritance to him, but lets him draw what he needs out of the riches of His fulness in Christ Jesus."—*Spurgeon.*

Ezra's followers exempt from taxes

24—26. (24) **Nethinims,** *R. V.*, "Nethinim," fr. *nathan*, to give. Those who had given themselves up to serve in the temp. **ministers,** *R. V.*, "servants," *i. e.* Solomon's servants, ch. ii. 55–58. "Now that he reaches the most important point in the whole of his decree — the permanent exemption of a large part of the people from liability to taxation of any kind, his style changes, and he says, "*We* certify you." Perhaps he speaks in the name of himself *and his successors;* or possibly he means to say that in this matter he has asked and obtained the assent and consent of his council."— *Pulp. Com.* (25) **And thou Ezra,** *etc.*, he was to exercise jurisdiction over the Israelites and proselytes throughout Syria. Phœnicia and . alestine. **and teach . . not,** "The primary intention of this sentence is to insure instruction in the law for those Jews, who by living among the heathen had grown to neglect or to forget the obligations of their religion. It does not amount to a command 'to proselytize,' but would, no doubt, include the instruction of proselytes, and grant general permission to teach the Jewish religion."— *Cam. B.* (26) **banishment,** called rooting out, *i. e.* outlawry.

"As Satan selects his disciples when they are idle, so our Saviour chose His while they were busy at their trade, — either mending their nets, or casting them into the sea. Nay, He Himself stooped to a trade, and was a carpenter."—*Farrindon.*

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A godly judge. — "In the year 1772," says one, "I spent the summer in London, and being upon a visit to a family at Ware, in Hertfordshire, we one day went to Hertford, it being the summer assizes. Lord Chief Baron Smith presided on the bench, whom I had heard much of, as being a godly and spiritual man, as well as an upright and judicious judge. The first morning he sat at Nisi Prius, and I thought him very sensible and knowing, or what the lawyers called learned, in his profession: but the next morning he had to try three criminals; I forget the offenses, but they were all capital, and the prisoners were tried separately, and found guilty. The venerable judge, in passing the sentence of the law upon them, was very solemn. He stated to them separately the aggravation of the particular crime of each, and the necessity that the laws of the country, and the security of the people, should be maintained by the punishment of the offenders, 'which punishment,' he added, 'I am now to denounce upon you; this it is painful for me to do, but it is a duty imposed on me by my office to pronounce, That you be taken from hence to the place from whence you came,' *etc.* His subsequent address affected the audience, however it might the criminals: — 'Prisoners, so we see that the law worketh wrath against transgressors, and the Divine law on us and all mankind as sinners, who have come short of the glory of God. But God, who is rich in mercy, hath provided a glorious salvation, in which you and I may find abundant relief. He sent His own Son to seek and save the lost, and to give Himself a sacrifice for sin, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth from all sin. I am a sinner like you; but pleading that blood I found mercy; and therefore recommend that blood to you, Go ye and do likewise.'" — *Whitecross.*

"When Cyrus gave one of his friends a kiss, and another a wedge of gold, he that had the gold envied him that had the kiss, as a greater expression of favor. So the true Christian prefers the privilege of acceptance with God to the possession of any earthly comfort; for the light of His countenance is life, and His favor as the cloud of the latter rain." — *Buck.*

27, 28. Blessed, *etc.* "this devout thanksgiving is in unison with the whole character of Ezra, who discerns the hand of God in every event, and is always ready to express a pious acknowledgment for the Divine goodness."

Ezra praises God

Gratitude to God (*vs.* 27).— The late Lady Glenorchy, being in a delicate state of health, frequently employed Mrs. Graham as her almoner to the poor. On one of these visits Mrs. G. called on a poor woman with the present of a new gown. "I am obliged to you and her ladyship for your kindness," said the poor woman rich in faith; "but I maur gang to the right airt first; ye wad nae hae come gin ye had nae been sent; the Lord hath lately left me wi' but ae goon for week-day and Sabbath, but now He hath sent you wi' a Sabbath-day's goon." Thus intimating that her gratitude was first due to the God of providence, who had put it into the hearts of His people to supply her wants. *Humility.*— Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a very righteous man, as he seemed to himself and to others; but God, who seeth not as man seeth, accounted the unrighteous man the more righteous of the two. So have I seen two flowers, side by side, the one erect, and without a misgiving, looking up to heaven; the other, with its head all adown upon its breast, looking only to the earth. But the flower that looked earthward, as though not worthy to look heavenward, was the more heavenly of the two. Then said I, pride and self-sufficiency are a miserable insufficiency; but meekness and self-distrust are allied to all-sufficiency. Question: Does God always give least to those who think themselves greatest, and most to those who think less of themselves? Answer: Humility hath the palm.— *John Pulsford.*

"What I have done is worthy of nothing but silence and forgetfulness; but what God has done for me is worthy of everlasting and thankfulremembrance." — *Bishop Hall.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—7. (1) **them . . Babylon,** these are males only (1,754); as there were also women and children there must have been fr. 6,000 to 8,000[a] in the whole caravan. (2) **Daniel,** not the prophet. **Hattush,** the punctuation in the *A. V.* is wrong. It should read "Hattush, of the *etc.*" "Among the chief men there is no name that is remarkable, excepting that of Hattush. 'Hattush, of the sons of Shechaniah,' is, beyond all reasonable doubt, the descendant of David mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 22, who was a son of Shemaiah, and Zerubbabel's great-great-grandson." (3) This verse should begin as follows: "Of the sons of Parosh, Zechariah." (4–7) **males,** note that males only are included in this list.

the companions of Ezra who went from Babylon

[a] *Kitto* thinks the whole could not be less than 7,000.

The mission of each person. — There is not a spider hanging on the king's wall but hath its errand; there is not a nettle that groweth in the corner of

"There are greater things to be done in the future than in the past." — *Adams.*

B. C. *cir.* 457.

"There is to God no future, nor a past." — *Henry Kirke White*

the churchyard but hath its purpose; there is not a single insect fluttering in the breeze but accomplisheth some Divine decree; and I will never have it that God created any man, especially any Christian man, to be a blank, and to be a nothing. He made you for an end. Find out what that end is; find out your niche and fill it. If it be ever so little, if it is only to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, do something in this great battle for God and truth. — *Spurgeon.*

8—14. (13) **last . . Adonikam,** *R. V.*, "of the sons of Adon., that were the last; and these are their names," *i. e.* either the younger branches returned with Ezra or these were the last to join themselves to the caravan; 666 had already returned.[a] It is suggested that no more were left behind after these.[b] (14) **Bigvai,** ii. 14. **Zabbud,** or Zaccur.

The journey. — "Upon the first day of the first month" (chap. vii. 9) they set out from Babylon, and continued their journey for several days without any lengthened encampment. They entered upon their journey, we conceive, with mingled feelings of hope and fear. They were encouraged by hopes of reaching their famous fatherland, and of there enjoying the precious privileges of their religion; but the pleasure of these anticipations was moderated by the thought of the difficulties and dangers of the long journey that lay before them. Moreover, it is almost certain that, in leaving Babylon, most of them were sacrificing temporal advantages, and breaking up treasured associations, and severing themselves from dear friends, and these things could not have been done without much mental suffering; but at the summons of duty and the invitations of sacred privileges, they deliberately encountered these trials, and went up from Babylon. Their departure may be looked at as an illustration of the exodus of the soul from the captivity of a life of sin and its setting out on its upward pilgrimage. — *Hom. Com.*

a Ez. ii. 13.

b *M. Henry.* Or, "who went up this last time."—*Patrick.*

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."—*Sheridan.*

the halt at Ahava

Levites, etc., are sent for

15—20. (15) **river . . Ahava,**[c] so the river itself is called. "The conjecture therefore that the Ahava was one of the many canals or artifical rivers in the vicinity of Babylon, appears to be the most probable. Perhaps there was a specially influential settlement of Jews on the banks of the Ahava." **abode . . days,** this to rest, order the march, afford time for all to join the party who intended to go. **viewed,** reviewed, examined into tribes, fam., *etc.* **found . .Levi,** whose slackness is bef. noted, ii. 40. (16) **chief men,** men of influence and authority. **men of understanding,** *R. V.*, "which were teachers," with powers of persuading. (17) **Iddo . . Casiphia,**[d] "prob. Iddo was head of theological seminary, or college of Levites." **told . . say,** gave the substance of the message. **ministers,** servants. (18) **by . . God,** he attributes the success of their mission to the right source. (20) **all . . name,** no promiscuous herd of men, each had his name distinctly recorded.

Need of rest. — It will be confessed by all men, even by the veriest slaves to their ever-driving ambition, that physicial rest is sometimes needed. The aching limb asks for it; the hand that is so weary that it cannot any longer hold pen, or tool, or weapon of war, says, in its trembling weakness, "Let me rest awhile;" and the fevered brain, over driven, excited almost to madness, says, in its sleeplessness and throbbing and heat, "Let me rest awhile." Well, then, here is so much gained. We shall be able to make our way from this low point to a much higher phase of rest, and find our way upward, from the cry of the feeble and exhausted flesh, to the greater, more solemn, and urgent wants of our over-excited spiritual nature; we shall understand, in some degree, that our highest, divinest faculties must occasionally pause, rest, and recover themselves.

c Acc. to *Ewald*, the Pall-a-c a p a s, a river south of Babylon; acc. to *Rawlinson* the is. wh. flows into the Euphrates, 120 m. N. of Babylon. See 2 Ki. xviii. 34.

d Fr. *casaph*, to be white, whence *casaph*, silver. Perh. the Snow or White Mt., in South of Media. *Strabo*, i. 506; *Herodotus*, vii. 67.

the fast proclaimed

21—23. (21) **Then . . there,** without a military escort, carrying much valuable property. This is a fine illustration of faith. **Ahava,** *vs.* 15. **afflict,**[e] humble, a moral discipline. **right,** safe in every sense, direct and level, *i. e.* a prosperous journey. **for . . ones,** thoughtful care of the children. (22) **ashamed,** having avowed faith in God, he would not betray any want of confidence. **to require,** *R. V.*, "to ask." (23) **and . . us,** God honored their faith.

Confidence. — Suppose I were to set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and before I started were to go to Brown Brothers & Co., and obtain letters of credit for the cities of London, Jericho, &c. Then, with these papers, which a child might destroy, which would be but ashes in the teeth of flame, which

e Le. xvi. 29, xxiii. 29; Is. lviii. 3-5.

"The work savors of the workman. If the poet sickens, his verse sickens; if black, venous blood flows

a thousand chances might take from me, I should go on with confidence and cheer, saying to myself, "As soon as I come to London I shall be in funds. I have a letter in my pocket from Brown Brothers & Co. which will give me five hundred dollars there; and in the other cities to which I am bound I shall find similar supplies, all at my command, through the agency of these magic papers and pen strokes of these enterprising men." But suppose that, instead of this confidence, I were to sit down on ship-board, and go to tormenting myself in this fashion — "Now, what *am* I to do when I get to London? — I have no money, and how do I know that these bits of paper which I have with me mean anything, or will amount to anything? What shall I do? I am afraid I shall starve in the strange city to which I am going." I should be a fool, you say; but should I be half the fool that man is who, bearing the letters of credit of the Eternal God, yet goes fearing all his way, cast down and doubting whether he shall ever get safe through his journey? No fire, no violence, nor any chance can destroy the cheques of the Lord. When he says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and "My grace shall be sufficient for thee," believe it; and no longer dishonor your God by withholding from Him the confidence which you freely accord to Brown Brothers & Co. — *Beecher.*

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to an author's brain it beclouds his pages, and the devotions of a consumptive man scent of his disease as Lord Byron's obscenities smell of gin. Not only 'lying lips,' but a dyspeptic stomach, is an abomination to the Lord."—*H. Mann.*

24—27. (24) **separated,** appointed to this special duty of being custodians of the sacred vessels. "Our translators, following the Vulgate, have omitted to render the preposition which occurs in the Hebrew text before the name of Sherebiah and have thus represented Sherebiah and Hashabiah, as priests, whereas they were not priests, but Levites, as appears from *vss.* 18, 19. The true sense is given by the LXX. — "Then I assigned twelve of the chief priests to Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren;" *i. e.*, "then I appointed twelve chief priests to act with twelve chief Levites, of whom Sherebiah and Hashabiah were two, in the matter of the royal offering." — *Pulp. Com.* (25) **weighed,** that there might be no error at the end of the journey. **of the house,** *R. V.*, "for the house," a dedicatory offering, Ex. xxxv. 24. (26, 27) **weighed,** *etc.*, worth acc. to value of Babylonian talent from $500,000 to $600,000. **two . . copper,**[a] some precious alloy. *R. V.*, "fine bright brass."

the vessels committed to the care of the priests

[a] "Copper shining like gold," — *Gesenius.* "Rare as the metal called auri-chalcum was."—*Patrick.* As copper was in com. use amongst the Babylonians, this could not be mere copper, wh. would not be as precious as gold.

A minister's sacred trust. — Brethren, have we at all understood what was done to us when we were ordained — that it was an act of exchange and of interchange — we giving ourselves to Jesus Christ; He giving to us a trust of ministry, on the definite basis of a Divine communication of truth. How little have they realized the good deposit, who have regarded it as nothing more than the reading of services or the preaching of sermons, out of the resources of natural or acquired knowledge, and as only a part of the life, of which all other parts might be just as earthly, just as self-indulgent, just as frivolous, as if no transaction at all had passed between us and Jesus Christ! The good deposit. Let us first of all feel it to be *something.* Let us try to touch and to handle just one substantial ingredient of it. Let us resolve, let us struggle, let us pray, that this revelation, this self-manifestation of God, which is enshrined in this volume called holy, shall shine out of it upon us. It shall not be a name, it shall not be a formula, it shall not be a mere buzzing sound — it shall be a voice. How serious should we then be — how evidently taken knowledge of as men that had a trust, and were set and bent upon faithfulness to it! Men would come then to listen to us, as to men who were in communication with the world out of sight — as men who were charged each separate time of ministering, with something special to say, and with the true way of saying it. — *C. J. Vaughan.*

"Faith builds in the dungeon and the lazar-house its sublimest shrines; and up, through roofs of stone, that shut out the eye of heaven, ascends the ladder where the angels glide to and fro — Prayer." — *Lytton.*

28—30. (28) **Ye . . Lord,**[b] *etc.*, the strongest reason he could urge for conscientious care-taking, the exile had not lessened their sanctity. (29) **Watch . . weigh,** *etc.*, as they have hitherto been watched, and are now weighed to you. (30) **So,** *etc.*, as holy men having a holy duty to perform.

Ezra's charge to the priests

[b] Le. xxi. 6-8; De. xxxiii. 8; Le. xxii. 2, 3; Nu. iv. 4, 15, 19, 20.

Watchfulness. — A soldier was once posted in a forest to watch for the approach of Indians. It was a position of peculiar danger, three different men having been surprised and killed at this post without having had time to fire a shot. The soldier was left with strict orders to observe the utmost vigilance. In a short time, an object moving among the trees at some distance, caught his eye. He watched it attentively, the gun ready, until, as it came a little nearer, he saw it to be a wild hog. Another came in sight. He satisfied himself it was a wild hog, rooting under the leaves. Presently in

"As the bristle on the shoemaker's thread goes through the hole

B. C. cir. 457.

another direction, the leaves were rustled, and a third wild hog appeared. The movements of the last animal, however, soon engaged the man's thoughts. He observed a slight awkwardness in the movements of this one and thought that possibly an Indian might be approaching him covered with a hog-skin. If it was an Indian, the safest thing was to shoot. If it was not an Indian, and he should shoot, he would run no risk. He raised his rifle and fired. With a bound and a yell, an Indian leaped to his feet and fell back dead. The man had saved his life and prevented the surprise of the garrison by his watchfulness. — *D. W. Whittle.*

first, and draws the thread after it; so the fear of God's vengeance first goes before, breaking man's heart, and then follows the thread of God's mercies in Christ." — *Cowdray.*

the Ahava camp broken up, and arrival in Jerusalem

31, 32. (31) **Then . . Jerusalem,** the whole time of the march was about 4 mo. **hand . . enemy,**[a] *etc.*, ref. to prowling bands of Bedouins. (32) **And . . days,**[b] days of rest and council, bef. proceeding to business.

a Ez. vii. 6, 9, 28.

b Ne. ii. 11.

"*Is father on deck?*" — A number of years ago, Captain D. commanded a vessel sailing from Liverpool to New York, and on one voyage he had all his family with him on board the ship. One night, when all were quietly asleep, there arose a sudden squall of wind which came sweeping over the waters until it struck the vessel and threw her on her side, tumbling and crashing everything that was movable, and awakening the passengers to a consciousness that they were in imminent peril. Every one on board was alarmed and uneasy; and some sprang from their berths and began to dress, that they might be ready for the worst. Captain D. had a little girl on board, just eight years old, who of course awoke with the rest. "What's the matter?" said the frightened child. They told her that a squall had struck the ship. "Is father on deck?" said she. "Yes; father's on deck." The little thing dropped herself on her pillow again without a fear, and in a few moments was sleeping sweetly in spite of winds or waves. Blessed child! How her confidence shames our doubts and fears, and restless, vague surmisings. She had faith in father, and she had no room for fear.

You may do much without faith, but nothing which God will accept. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him."

"The steps of faith fall on the seeming void, and find the rock beneath." — *Whittier.*

the vessels redelivered and the burnt-offering

33—36. (33) **weighed,** *vss.* 26–30. **by the hand,** *R. V.*, "into the hand," *i. e.* not those who weighed the treasure, but those deemed worthy to receive and care for it. Two were priests, two were Levites. (34) **By . . one,** the least as well as the greatest individually registered. (35) **children . . captivity,** *R. V.*, "The children of the captivity which were come out of exile." **offerings,**[c] expressive of humility and gratitude. **twelve bullocks . . twelve he goats,** *i. e.* they felt that they represented the 12 tribes. All these sacrifices were completely consumed. (36) **commissions,** *see* vii. 21. **lieutenants,** *lit.* satraps. **furthered . . God,** officials now rendered help; foreign countries ceased their neutrality.

c Ez. vi. 17.

Reward of conscientiousness.— A gentleman jumping from an omnibus in the city of New York, dropped his pocket-book, and had gone some distance before he discovered his loss; then, hastily returning, he asked every passenger whom he met, if a pocket-book had been seen: finally, meeting a little girl of ten years old, to whom he made the same inquiry, she asked, "What kind of a pocket-book?" He described it. Then unfolding her apron, "Is this it?" "Yes, that is mine; come into this store with me." They entered: he opened the book, counted the notes, and examined the papers. "They are all right," he said: "fifteen notes of a thousand dollars each; had they fallen into other hands, I might never have seen them again. Take, then, my little girl, this note of a thousand dollars as a reward for your honesty, and a lesson to me to be more careful in the future." "No," said the girl, "I cannot take it. I have been taught at Sunday school not to keep what is not mine; and my parents would not be pleased if I took the note home, they might suppose I had stolen it." "Well, then, my child, show me where your parents live." The girl took him to a humble tenement in an obscure street, rude but cleanly. He informed the parents of the case: they told him their child had acted correctly; they were "poor," it was true, but their pastor had always told them not to set their hearts on rich gifts. The gentleman told them they must take it; and he was convinced they would make a good use of it, from the principles they had professed. The pious parents then blessed their benefactor, for such he proved: they paid debts which had disturbed their peace, and the benevolent giver gave the father employment in his occupation as a carpenter, enabling him to rear an industrious family in comparative happiness. This little girl became the wife of a respectable tradesman of New York, and had reason to rejoice that she was born of pious parents who had secured their daughter's happiness by sending her to Sunday school.

"There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats; for I am arm'd so strong in honesty, that they pass by me as the idle wind, which I respect not," — *Shakespeare.*

"Honesty is the best policy; but he who acts upon this principle is not an honest man." — *Whately.*

B. C. 475.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

Ezra mourns the sin of the people

1—4. (1) **when . . done,** the report of the princes was about four months after E.'s arrival. **princes,** *i. e.* some of them, not all, see *vs.* 2. "It is remarkable that complaint on a matter of religious transgression should have come from the secular and not from the ecclesiastical authorities of the city. But there clearly appears about this time some remissness and connivance at evil, if not even participation in it, on the part of the chief ecclesiastics. On this particular occasion, actual sons and nephews of Jeshua, the high priest, were among those who had married idolatrous wives (ch. x. 18)."— *Pulp. Com.* **abominations,** the ancient idolatrous practices condemned by Moses and the proph. (2) **For . . sons,** and they were seduced to evil by these unequal marriages. "The danger to purity of religion was great. Those who married idolatrous wives were tempted, like Solomon, to connive at their introducing unhallowed rites into the holy city; while the issue of such marriages, influenced by their mothers, were apt to prefer heathenism to Judaism, and to fall away from the faith altogether."— *Pulp. Com.* **hand . . trespass,** some of those who should have withstood these practices were leaders in evil. (3) **rent . . garment . . mantle,**[a] rent my inner and outer robe: this, with plucking, *etc.*, a sign of overwhelming grief. **plucked off,** *etc.*, the only instance of such exaggerated manifestation of grief in the O. T. **astonied,** *i. e.* astounded. In Babylon there had been no tendency thus to break God's law and destroy the national characteristics. **Then . . Israel,** the sincerely devout came to condole, advise, help, **those . . away,** *R. V.*, "of them of the captivity," *i. e.* those who had shared the captivity rallied around Ezra.

The events of this chap., and esp. the prayer of Ezra, important as evidence of E.'s acquaintance with Pentateuch and Bks. of Isa. and Dan.

Rending garments. — The Jews mingled a great deal of ceremony with the tearing of garments, when any misfortune befell them. Sometimes they made the rent from the top downwards, sometimes from the skirt upwards. The requisite length was a hand's breadth. When made on the occasion of the death of parents it was not sewed up again; when for the death of other persons it was sewed up at the end of thirty days. It is in reference to this practice that Solomon has said there is "a time to rend and a time to sew," that is to say, a time to be afflicted and a time to admit of consolation. — *Constable's Miscellany.* *Duty of holy living.* — It is recorded of Alexander the Great, that a soldier was reported to him as having betrayed great cowardice on a particular occasion, on which Alexander called him to him and asked his name. On hearing that his name was Alexander, he upbraided him with the dishonor that he brought on such a name, and entreated him either to change his manners or to change his name, asking him how he could dare, while known as Alexander, to act unworthily? And shall not the Christian remember the high and the holy name by which he is called, and dread encountering the guilt and meanness of dishonoring his Head, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners?" That *name*, in its very signification, tells him that he is related to the *anointed One*, and that (as the name implies) all His members, in their measure and degree, are anointed ones. How shall they who take this sacred unction upon them dare to dishonor this name, and so sin against Christ! —*H. G. Salter.*

a Jos. vii. 6; 2 Sa. iv. 12; 2 Sa. i. 2; xiii. 31; 2 Ki. xviii. 37; Job. i. 20; Ma. xxvi, 65. See also *Homer, Odyss.* x. 567.

"There is a kind of mournful eloquence in thy dumb grief, which shames all-clamorous sorrow." — *Lee.*

Ezra prays and makes confession

5—7. (5) **I . . heaviness,** perh. comforted by the suggestions of the hour. **and having next,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "even with my garments and my mantle rent;" no necessity for a second rending of his garments. **fell . . God,**[b] making public confession and prayer. (6) **ashamed,**[c] *etc.*, not of repentance, but of the sins of the people. "As in the confession of Daniel, the personality of the speaker is merged in that of the nation. The sin of the race no less than its shame and its punishment is acknowledged in the 'we,' 'our,' and 'us.' The self-abnegation and love of Ezra as of Moses (Ex. xxxii. 32), and of Paul (Rom. ix. 3), accept the obligations of nationality as the source of guilt as well as of privilege to the individual." — *Cam. B.* **iniquities are increased,** *i. e.* go on rising like a flood. (7) **Since . . days,**[d] the very sins of wh. they had so soon become guilty were the cause of their national disasters.

b Ex. ix. 29—33.

c Dan. ix. 7, 8.

Ezra's humiliation for the sins of his people. — We propose to consider — I. the reason of his sorrow. He justly regarded the conduct of the people as a most heinous evil. 1. As being a violation of an express command; 2. As having an evident tendency to bring the people back to idolatry. How great his sorrow on this occasion was, we may judge from — II. The expression of

d Ps. cvi. 6; Da. ix. 5, 6, 8.

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it. Note the expression of his grief the instant he was informed of their misconduct. But his humiliation before God is that which more particularly demands our intention. — *Simeon.*

Ezra's prayer. — Welling up, hot and passionate, his prayer is a revelation of the very heart of the scribe. Ezra shows us what true prayer is — that it is laying bare the heart and soul in the presence of God. The striking characteristic of this outburst of Ezra's is that it does not contain a single petition. There is no greater mistake in regard to prayer than the notion that it is nothing more than the begging of specific favors from the bounty of the Almighty. That is but a shallow kind of prayer at best. In the deepest and most real prayer the soul is too near to God to ask for any definite thing; it is just unbosoming itself to the Great Confidant, just telling out its agony to the Father who can understand everything and receive the whole burden of the anguished spirit. — *Exp. Bib.*

"Repentance hath a purifying power, and every tear is of a cleansing virtue; but these penitential clouds must be still kept dropping; one shower will not suffice; for repentance is not one single action, but a course." — *South.*

8, 9. (8) **little space,** *lit.* moment. Since the decree of Cyrus about 80 years previously. **remnant,** ref. to Isa. i. 9; x. 20–22; fr. the destruction of Jerus., and the degeneration of the captivity. **nail,** pin of wood for fixing a tent, meaning a constant and sure abode.[a] **lighten our eyes,** *i. e.* remove the night of trouble. **reviving,** *etc.*, *i. e.* by bestowing salvation and strength. (9) **bondmen,** *etc.*, *see* refs.[b] **give . . wall,** a fence,[c] protection. Wall of Jerus. not yet built.

Faith leads to humble prayer. — Our faith can never afford to approach God in robes of royalty. Sackcloth and ashes are always its proper clothing. Faith can never grow too strong to pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner." We are all Pharisees by nature, publicans only by grace, and let us shun as we would a viper all claim to sinless perfection. Paul never reached it or if he did, he was far from being conscious of his high attainment. When a comparatively young Christian he wrote, "I am the least of the apostles." After he had grown in grace a few years he could say, "I am less than the least of all saints." When he had grown old in God's service he could subscribe himself "the chief of sinners." A certain Methodist bishop said, "Aim at perfection, but I charge you in God's name, never to profess it." The place for true faith, is on its knees before a holy God, weeping tears of penitence for its sins, and rejoicing only in His righteousness. — *A. C. Dixon.*

"O ye powers! that search the heart of man and weigh his inmost thoughts! If I've done amiss, impute it not; the best may err, but ye are good." — *Addison.*

10—12. (10) **what . . this,** what, after this fresh transgression of the law, can be said in excuse; or by way of promise. (11) **by . . prophets,** *i. e.* "by the hand of," *etc.* Their hand of power indicating the authority with wh. they wrote. **saying,** *etc.*, a testy. to the Pentateuch.[d] A general statement of prophetical teaching concerning foreign intermarriage. (12) **nor . . peace,** *etc.*,[e] not protect them, nor enrich yourself by their wealth, with special ref. to the Moabites and Ammonites.

Confession is a necessary basis of forgiveness. Confession is not a simple act. Confession is in reality a multitudinous act; it is many acts in one; it is a convergence of right judgment, right feeling, and right action. There are kinds of confession which are wholly unavailing. . . . This is not the confession in which David poured out his soul; his words are full of heart. His language seems to be baptized with tears. Every word is a groan from the soul; and consequently his confession comes within the assurance of that world-enclosing and most blessed promise, that if we confess our sins, God will erase them from His book, and remember them no more for ever. Think of God *forgetting*. Think of the Infinite casting aught behind His back! Back of the Infinite! Where is *that?* He will put our sins away from Him, as far as the east is from the west. What geometrician can set forth in lines that distance, or tell in words the vastness of that immensity? — *J. Parker.*

13—15. (13) **after . . deeds,** by which the people should have been warned. **hast . . deserve,**[f] *lit.* hast withheld beneath our iniquities. **deliverance,** *R. V.*, "a remnant." (14) **should we,** *R. V.*, "shall we." **affinity,**[g] by marriage, *etc.* **angry . . us,**[h] the heaviest punishment dealt out may be exceeded in the future. (15) **righteous,**[i] making a dif. betw. the evil and the good. "This must not be softened down as if it were 'thou art gracious.' The words are an acknowledgment of the perfect justice of God's dealings with Israel in the past. The next sentence 'for we are left a remnant' is not uttered in gratitude for the mercy which spared 'a remnant,' but is added to

a Isa. xxii. 23.

b Ne. ix. 36; Ps. cxxxi. 23; Ez. vii. 28.

c Isa. v. 2, 5.

vs. 8. According to the marginal reading, "a constant and sure abode." The idea seems to be derived from the nails, or pins, with which the tabernacle was fastened to the ground. A similar allusion is containe in Isaiah xxii. 23.

d De. vii. 1–3.

e De. xxiii. 6; *cf.* Jos. xvi. 10.

"He that repents every day for the sins of every day, when he comes to die will have the sin but of one day to repent of. Short reckonings make long friends." — *P. Henry.*

The more you yield to any known sin, the greater will be its power over you. Men may give way to the power of sin till at last they are "led captives of the devil at his will."

f Ps. ciii. 10.

g Ne. xiii. 23-27

h De. ix. 8.

i Ne. ix. 33; Da. ix. 14.

express the greatness of the catastrophe which had carried off the whole nation except 'a remnant.' And yet the visitation had been just." — *Cam. B.* **escaped,** the sin as well as the punishment. **because of this,** *i. e.* wicked transgression of God's law. Israel as a nation, the innocent and the guilty, are responsible before God.

The voice of the soul in view of sin, and of salvation from it. — Under the influence of a great grief we have in our text the soul uttering two voices. I. The voice of conscience in view of sin. Conscience says — 1. The man himself is responsible for his sins; 2. That the evil of sin is great; 3. That punishment is connected with sin; 4. That sin is not punished in this world according to its desert, and this for two reasons: because it is a world in which good and evil exist, because there is more mercy than justice in this world. II. The voice of wild wonder in view of God's salvation from sin. This wonder is caused by two things. 1. By the greatness of the deliverance; 2. By looking at the awful consequence of rejecting this salvation. — *E. Jones.*

An old sailor's story. — Once upon a time I made a voyage in a merchant barque. We were becalmed in the South Seas, and weary work it were, a doing of nothing from day to day. But when the water began to come up thick from the bottom of the water casks, it was a wearier a deal. Then a thick fog came on, as white as snow a'most, and we couldn't see more than a few yards ahead or on any side of us. But the fog didn't keep the heat off; it only made it worse, and the water was fast goin' down. The short allowance grew shorter and shorter, and the men, some of them, were half mad with thirst, and began to look bad at one another. I kept up my heart by looking ahead inside me. For days and days the fog hung about us as if the air had been made o' flocks o' wool. The captain took to his berth, and several of the crew to their hammocks, for it was just as hot on deck as anywhere else. The mate lay on the spare sail on the quarter deck, groaning. I had a strong suspicion that the schooner was drifting, and hove the lead again and again, but could find no bottom. Some of the men got hold of the spirits, and that didn't quench their thirst, it drove them clean mad. I had to knock one of them down myself with a capstan-bar, for he ran at the mate with his knife. At last I began to lose all hope, and still I was sure the schooner was slowly drifting. My head was like to burst, and my tongue was like a lump of holystone in my mouth. Well, one morning I had just, as I thought, lain down on the decks to breathe my last, hoping I should die before I went quite mad with thirst, when all at once the fog lifted, like the foot of a sail. I sprung to my feet. There was the blue sky overhead, but the terrible burning sun was there. A moment more and a light air blew on my cheek; and, turning my face to it as if it had been the very breath of God, there was an island within half a mile, and I saw the shine on the water, on the face of a rock, on the shore. I cried out, "Land on the weather quarter! water in sight!" In a moment more a boat was lowered, and in a few minutes the boat's crew, of which I was one, were lying, clothes and all, in a little stream that came down from the hills above.

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"We live in the consequences of past actions."—*A. A. Hodge.*

"This is ever God's manner, when men change their deeds, to change His doom; when they renounce their sins, to recall His sentence; when they repent of the evil they have done against Him, to repent of the evil He had said He would do against them. . . . Never was a man truly and inwardly humbled but God, in the riches of His special mercy (in Christ), truly pardoned him." — *B. Sanderson.*

Whatsoever curse there is in sin, or punishment due to it, is taken from you, if you are in Christ; for He has made satisfaction for the one, and borne the other.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1, 2. (1) **prayed,** *etc.*,[a] *R. V.*, "while Ezra prayed," ix. 5-15. **for . . sore,** *lit.* wept with a great weeping. The sight of Ezra's sorrow may have suggested to them the greatness of the sin. (2) **one . . Elam,** *vs.* 26, one of the leading men, but not one of the delinquents. "He was no priest, nor prince, but one of the congregation, so that in and with him the congregation itself promptly arose to vindicate the law." **yet . . thing,** must have been a morally brave man to oppose in this way his nearest relatives. Yet the people's penitence was the assurance of an amendment of their ways.

Reason for hope. — The case is sad, but it is not desperate; the disease is threatening, but not incurable. There is hope that the people may be reformed, the guilty reclaimed, a stop put to the spreading of the contagion; and so the judgments which the sin deserves may be prevented, and all will be well. "Now there is hope;" now that the disease is discovered, it is half cured. Now that the alarm is taken, the people begin to be sensible of the mischief, and to lament it; a spirit of repentance seems to be poured out upon them, and they are all thus humbling themselves before God for it: "now there is hope" that God will forgive and have mercy. "The valley of

Ezra encouraged

[a] Da. ix. 20.

"Friendship peculiar boon of heaven."—*Johnson.*

"Friendship is a sheltering tree."—*S. T Coleridge.*

"Sorrow for past ills doth restore frail man to his first innocence."—*Nabb.*

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Achor" (that is of trouble) is the "door of hope" (Hos. ii. 15); for the sin that truly troubles us shall not ruin us. There is hope now that Israel has such a prudent, pious, zealous governor as Ezra to manage this affair. — *M. Henry.*

Ezra exhorted to begin the work of reformation

3—5. (3) **make . . wives,**[a] either by legal divorce or a public decree annulling these mixed marriages. The great idea of Ezra was to preserve a separate people. He held that this was essential to the maintenance of pure religion and morals in the midst of the pagan abominations which surrounded the little colony. Church separation seemed to be bound up with race separation. This Ezra believed to be after the minds of the prophets, and therefore a truth of Divine inspiration. Under all these circumstances it is not easy to say that his main contention was wrong. — *Exp. B.* **counsel . . lord,** Shechaniah surmises Ezra's wish and purpose in this crisis. **according . . law,** *i. e.* either the new decree to be proclaimed, or in conformity with the regulations for divorce found in Mosaic law. Deut. xxiv. 1–4. (4) **Arise . . thee,** *etc.*, it was a work that needed much tact and delicacy, as well as authority. **be . . it,**[b] though the work be difficult and painful. (5) **arose,** not only fr. his knees, but to attend to this work. **swear . . word,**[c] he would have more than their mere word to carry out Shech. proposal.

a 2 Ch. xxxiv. 31.

b 2 Ch. xxviii. 10.

c Ne. v. 12.

Reformation a test of repentance. — "Reformation is just as essential as repentance. That is, it is just as essential that you should, up to your power, do the deeds of a good man or woman, as that you should take the resolution to be a good man or woman. If you are heartily sorry for misspent years, you will make it your business to spend your future years wisely. Thus, in fact, reformation becomes the *test* of repentance, proving its sincerity and its worth. We infer that a miser is penitent, when we see him giving liberally to the poor, or to spreading the Gospel. A sensualist may profess to have repented; but we are not sure till we see him forsaking dissipation, and living temperately and chastely. A vain, frivolous girl deserves small confidence as repenting till her whole appearance reveals a constant life hidden with Christ in God, and the dignity of a sober devotion to the welfare of others. It is not to be believed that a sullen or angry temper has been actually repented of, till the countenance loses its unhallowed fire, and the voice its asperity, and the words come gently, like His, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again."

"Time passes on, and the fashions of the mind, as well as of the body, change; but the mind and the body remain the same in all ages, and are subject to the same accidents of disease and error."—*Southey.*

Ezra calls an assembly at Jerusalem

6—8. (6) **Johanan,**[d] son of Eliashib, the high priest who succeeded Joiakim, the successor of Jeshua. **and . . thither,** where he per. abode. He showed the intensity of his feelings by the severity of his fast. (7) **proclamation,** issuing fr. a council of princes and elders held in such a place under the presidency of Ezra, would have great weight. (8) **whosoever . . days,** a longer time would have allowed space for counteraction. Note the promptitude of Ezra. **forfeited,** *lit.* devoted. **separated,**[e] excommunicated. **those . . away,** *R. V.*, "the captivity," a pet phrase of Ezra's.

d Ne. xii. 10–12.

e Ez. vii. 64; Ne. xiii. 28.

Confession of sin. — He that cries to have sin taken away acknowledgeth that it lies upon him. A full confession, not of many, but of all sins, either actually committed, or habitually comprised in our body of sin. As he in the comedy said, that he had invited two guests to dinner, Philocrates and Philocrates, a single man, but a double eater; so, in examination of ourselves, we shall every one find sins enough in himself to denominate him a double and treble sinner. A free confession, not as Pharaoh's, extorted upon the rack; nor as that of Judas, squeezed out with anguish and horror, but ingenuous and penitent, arising from the purpose of a pious heart, that cometh like water out of a spring, with voluntary freeness; not like water out of a still, which is forced with fire. — *Bp. Reynolds.*

"Confession of sin should be free, particular, full, penitential, earnest, accompanied with heartfelt hatred to sin, supplication for mercy, forsaking sin, and an implicit faith in Christ for the forgiveness of the same."—*John Bate.*

Ezra addresses the assembly

9—11. (9) **men . . Benjamin,** to wh. tribes the returned captives chiefly belonged. **ninth . . month,** betw. end of Dec. and begin. of Jan., coldest and most rainy time in Palestine. **street,** court. (10) **stood . . said,** *etc.*, simply told them of their sin, did not discuss it. **transgressed,** better with *R. V.*, "trespassed." **trespass,** *i. e. R. V.*, "guilt." This last "offense had added to the black account against Israel." (11) **Now . . confession,**[f] *etc.*, the honesty of the confession was to be shown in abandoning the sin. **separate,** *etc.*, not only divorce is commanded, but also an entire rupture with all the citizens who had not adopted Judaism.

f Jos. vii. 19; Pr. xviii. 13.

Confession. — As the frank and dutiful child, when he has committed a fault does not wait till another goes and tells his father, or till the father dis-

"Many persons who appear to re-

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covers by his frowning countenance that it has come to his ear; but freely, and of his own accord, goes pleasantly to his father, and eases his aching heart by a free and full confession; and this with such plain-heartedness, giving his offence the weight of every aggravating circumstance, so that if the devil himself should come after him, to glean up what he hath left, he should hardly find wherewithal to make the case appear blacker; thus does the sincere soul to God; adding to his simplicity in the confession of his sin such a flow of sorrow, that God, seeing His dear child in danger of being carried down towards despair, if good news from Him do not speedily stay him, cannot but tune His voice rather into a strain of comforting him in his mourning, than chiding him for his sin. — *W. Gurnall.*

pent are like sailors who throw their goods overboard in a storm, and wish for them again in a calm." — *Mead.*

12—14. (12) **As . . do,** must, bec. it is right; not simply bec. it can be compelled. (13) **But . . many,** *etc.*, the matter was of serious import and considerable magnitude, hence time was necessary. The people could not remain in Jerus. during the trials. (14) **rulers . . elders . . judges,** they propose a commission to inquire, take evidence, and correct abuses, consisting of a permanent body, and the officials of each town in order. **for this matter,** *R. V.*, "until this matter be dispatched."

the people propose a commission of inquiry

The value of a wise decision. — Two years ago a man was called to decide between preserving his life, and parting with the gains of his lifetime. A gold-digger, he stood on the deck of a ship that, coming from Australian shores, had — as some all but reach heaven — all but reached her harbor in safety. The exiles had been coasting along their native shores; and to-morrow husbands would embrace their wives, children their parents, and not a few realize the bright dream of returning to pass the evening of their days in happiness amid the loved scenes of their youth. But as the proverb runs, there is much betwen the cup and the lip. Night came lowering down; and with the night a storm that wrecked ship, and hopes, and fortunes all together. The dawning light revealed a scene of horror — death staring them in the face. The sea, lashed into fury, ran mountains high; no boat could live in her. One chance still remained. Pale women, weeping children, feeble and timid men must die; but a stout, brave swimmer, with trust in God, and disencumbered of all impediments, might reach the shore, where hundreds stood ready to dash into the boiling surf, and, seizing, save him. One man was observed to go below. He bound round his waist a heavy belt, filled with gold, the hard gains of his life; and returned to the deck. One after another, he saw his fellow-passengers leap overboard. After a brief but terrible struggle, head after head went down — sunk by the gold they had fought hard to gain, and were loth to lose. Slowly he was seen to unbuckle his belt. His hopes had been bound up in it. It was to buy him land, and ease, and respect — the reward of long years of hard and weary exile. What hardships he had endured for it! The sweat of his brow, the hopes of day and the dreams of night were there. If he parts with it, he is a beggar; but then if he keeps it, he dies. He poised it in his hand; balanced it for a while: took a long, sad look at it; and then with one strong, desperate effort, flung it far out into the roaring sea. Wise man! It sinks with a sullen plunge; and now he follows it — not to sink, but, disencumbered of its weight, to swim; to beat the billows manfully; and, riding on the foaming surge, to reach the shore. Well done, brave gold-digger! Ay, well done, and well chosen; but if "a man," as the devil said, who for once spoke God's truth, "will give all that he hath for his life," how much more should he give all he hath for his soul? Better to part with gold than with God; to bear the heaviest cross than miss a heavenly crown! — *Thomas Guthrie.*

If I do what I may in earnest, I need not mourn if I work no great work on this earth. To help the growth of a thought that struggles toward the light; to brush with gentle hand the earth stain from the white of one snowdrop, such is my ambition! — *George Macdonald.*

"Man should do nothing that he should repent; but if he have, and say that he is sorry, it is a worse fault, if he be not truly." — *Beaumont and Fletcher.*

15—17. (15) **Only,** or but,[a] not in the sense of "alone." **employed,** lit. stood or withstood. These four were the leaders of the opposition to Ezra's proposals. (16) **separated,** gave themselves up for this special work. (17) **by . . month,** so as to be ready for the Passover.

an end made of strange marriages

Wisdom to direct. — The property of cords contracting their length by moisture became generally known, it is said, on the raising of the Egyptian obelisk in the square facing St. Peter's, at Rome, by order of Pope Sixtus V. The great work was undertaken in the year 1586; and the day for raising the obelisk was marked with great solemnity. High mass was celebrated at St. Peter's; and the architect and workmen received the benediction of the Pope. The blast of a trumpet was the given signal, when engines were set in motion

[a] LXX.

There are many sins which must either be dealt with suddenly, or not at all. — *Henry Drummond.*

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One sin cherished dearly will cost a man his character. — *L. M. Clarke.*

by an incredible number of horses; but not until after fifty two unsuccessful attempts had been made, was the huge block lifted from the earth. As the ropes which held it had somewhat stretched, the base of the obelisk could not reach the summit of the pedestal: when a man in the crowd cried out, "*Wet the ropes!*" This advice was followed; and the column, as of itself, gradually rose to the required height, and was placed upright on the pedestal prepared for it. — *Biblical Treasury.*

the names of the sons of the priests who had sinned

18—24. (18) **sons,** *i. e.* descendants. **Jeshua,**[a] who came to Jerus. with Zerubbabel some 80 yrs. bef. (19) **gave . . hands,**[b] *R. V.*, hand, *i. e.* word of honor, 2 Ki. x. 15. **being . . trespass,**[c] sin needs to be atoned for, as well as discontinued. (23) **Jozabad,**[d] ii. 40.

Thoroughness in battling with sin. — It is a remarkable, but awful, fact that liberty and religion both have arisen to prosperity in the world on successive stages of blood. Blood nutured the tree of Grecian and of Roman freedom. With bloody swords our fathers in the puritanic and covenanting days gained our civil and religious victories. Through a shower of blood came down, in 1789 and the after years, the genius of liberty to the continental shores. The blood of John Brown of Virginia dropped into the dust, to rear a glorious and a terrible harvest of freedom to his black countrymen And the religion of Jesus, need we say, arises from the root of a blood sprinkled cross. This springs, doubtless, in part from the Divine plan and purpose, but it augurs also something dreadfully wrong in the present system of things. Through the dominion of the evil power men's minds, in every age, have been steeped in selfishness, besotted with lies; and when truth and good try to stir them, they succeed, but the stir they produce is that of rage and resistance. The darkness comprehends them not, but apprehends and destroys their votaries, and many of the followers of the prince of evil perish in the strife, too, and thus, "blood toucheth blood." — *G Gilfillan.*

a *There were* 973 *priests of that house*, ii. 36.

b Pr. vi. 1; Ez. xvii. 18.

c Le. v. 14.-19.

d Ne. viii. 7.

25—33. (25) **Moreover . . Parosh,**[e] ii. 3–29. (26) **Jehiel,** *vs.* 2.

Pride of ancestry. — M. Alexandre Dumas, born on the 24th of January, 1803, at Villiers Cotterets, in the department of the Aisne, was but one remove from negro blood. A story is told of his readiness to meet curious examinations into his ancestry. "Who was your father, M. Dumas?" some blindly fatuous fop, tempting annihilation, is said to have asked him. "A half-caste, sir," was the reply. "And your grandfather?" "A black." "And your great-grandfather?" "A baboon, monsieur; my pedigree begins where yours terminates." In point of fact, M. Alexandre-Davy Dumas was the son of M. Alexandre-Davy Dumas, who was the son, over the bar sinister, of M. le Marquis de la Pailleterie, a wealthy planter of San Domingo, by a negress. On the death of his father, who distinguished himself during the wars arising out of the Revolution, our Alexandre Dumas migrated to Paris, with the hope of obtaining some post, through the influence of his family connections, but, as he has declared, was coldly received. A letter of introduction to General Foy gained him a start for which he was always ready to express his gratitude. — *London Paper.*

vs 19 *Ram.* "This shows that they sinned ag. knowledge; for a sin of ignorance the oblation was not a ram, but a goat." — *Trapp.*

e "All that are named for Parosh, in *vs.* 25, to Shimeon (*vs.* 31), were of Judah." — *Wordsworth.*

"When Adam dolve, and Eve span, who was then a gentleman? Then came the churle, and gathered good; and thence arose the gentle blood."

"I am no herald to enquire of men's pedigrees; it sufficeth me if I know their virtues" — *Sir. P. Sidney.*

True nobility consists not in the natural, but in the spiritual pedigree; every child of God is of royal descent.

34—44. (43) **Jadau,** *R. V.*, "Iddo." (44) **and some . . children,** *lit.* "and there were of them wives, and they had children." Showing the difficulties wh. the commission faced in carrying out Ezra's stern and wholesale decree.

The names of those who had married the strange wives (*vss.* 18–44). — Aware of the danger that the nation might relapse into the sin which he was seeking to root out, Ezra punishes the wrong-doers by placing their names on record, that others might fear to do the like. He assigns the first place in his catalogue of offenders to the priests, doubtless because in them the sin was greatest; they, as the special custodians of the law, were most bound to have observed the law. Next to the priests he put the Levites, on the same principle, because of their semi-sacerdotal character. He then concludes with the laymen, arranged under their several families. By the list of laymen it appears that ten only out of some thirty-six lay families were implicated in the sin. Three of the four priestly families, on the other hand, and even the near kindred of the high priest, were among the guilty. It is remarkable that it is Ezra, a priest, and one by many accused of over-sacerdotalism, who gives this testimony against his own order. — *Pulpit Com.*

"This is true greatness, to be patient in conscious strength. The only possibility of it is to put things into God's hand. Only in still waters of the soul can the Divine image be reflected. All gracious processes are wrought in restful souls." — *H. Allon.*

THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

Introduction.

I. Title. "Bk. of Nehemiah," so called from the name of its chief character, is in some versions (as the *Latin* and *Greek*) termed the Second Bk. of Ezra. **II. Author.** The book of Nehemiah had probably the same origin as Ezra, the compiler using the memoirs of Nehemiah as he had used the memoirs of Ezra, "Had Nehemiah himself been the compiler, he would never have interrupted his own narrative by the section vii. 73 *b*–x. 39, leaving the substance of vii. 1–5 incomplete; nor should we have been left in ignorance as to the length of his governorship, nor, as has before been pointed out, would the reference in Neh. xii. 26, 47 to 'the days of Nehemiah' have been found on either side of a passage (*vss.* 27–43) containing the autobiographical words of Nehemiah himself."— *Ryle.* **III. Time.** See Introduction to Ezra. **IV. Uses.** "So far as their religious significance is concerned, the teaching of these books is of especial value in reference to (1) The Faithfulness of the Divine Promise, (2) The Discipline of Disappointment, (3) The Hallowing of Common Life, (4) The Preparation for the Messianic Age."— *Ryle.*

Character of Nehemiah.— The memoirs of Nehemiah show him to have been a man of strong feeling, resolute perseverance and great energy. He was a man whose character would easily have excited the respect and the sympathy of the court at Susa. He had evidently won the affection of Artaxerxes. In reply to his favorite cupbearer's request the king granted him permission to proceed to Jerusalem as Governor and to rebuild the walls of the city. He further provided him with a body-guard of Persian troops, and with letters of introduction to the Satraps and other officials on the W. of the Euphrates. All the energy and resolution of Nehemiah were needed to carry the proposed task to a satisfactory completion. He was vehemently opposed by the Samaritans, who doubtless felt that a last effort must be made to prevent a fortified Jerusalem from overshadowing every rival town in Palestine. Threats of force, hints of royal displeasure, and treacherous overtures, alike failed to divert Nehemiah from his purpose. They only succeeded in revealing to him how seriously disaffection prevailed within the city, and how few shared to the full that stricter view of the Jewish religion, which he, in common with Ezra, deemed to be required of every sincere worshipper of Jehovah.— *Ryle.*

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

Part I. The departure of Nehemiah from Shushan with a royal commission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem ..... i., ii.

Part II. Account of the building of the walls..... ii. 12–20, iii.-v

Part III. Nehemiah's first reformation.

Sect. 1. Those who returned and their offerings..... vii. 5–72

Sect. 2. Reading of the Law, and the Feast of Tabernacles..... viii.

Sect. 3. The Fast and the Covenant, ix., x.

Sect. 4. Sundry Lists, etc., Completion of the Wall ....xi. xii.

Part IV. Second reformation of Nehemiah on his second return to Jerusalem, and his correction of abuses which had crept in during his absence .....xiii.

(*According to Wright.*)

Part. I. The Commission and the Journey of Nehemiah ..... i.–ii. 10

Part. II. The Rebuilding of the Walls, ii. 11–vii. 73

Part. III. The Restoration of Religion.

(*a*) Solemn Reading of the Law..viii. 1–12

(*b*) Feast of Tabernacles..... viii. 13–18

(*c*) The Great Confession.....ix.

(*d*) Sealing of the Covenant... .....x.

(*e*) List of Returned Exiles. ..xi. xii. 1–26

(*f*) Dedication of the Walls...xii. 27–xiii. 3

(*g*) Correction of Divers Abuses ..xiii. 4–31

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

Nehemiah hears of the state of Jerusalem

1—3. (1) **The words,** *R. V.*, margin, "the history." "No other *historical* book commences in this manner, and we may best account for the introduction of the clause by the consideration that 'Nehemiah' having been originally appended to 'Ezra,' it marked the point at which a new narrative began by a new author." — *Pulp. Com.* **Chisleu,**[a] the winter month. **in . . year,**[b] of Artaxerxes Longimanus. **Shushan,** or Susa. **the palace,** *R. V.*, margin "the castle." On the Choapes, ab. 200 ms. S. E. of Babylon; the principal winter residence of ks. of Persia.[c] (2) **Hanani,** brother or near relative, ch. vii. 2; not the priest mentioned, ch. xii. 36. **of Judah,** *R. V.*, "out of J.," ref. to the place rather than the nationality. **I asked,** *etc.*, Neh. high in office, had not lost his patriotism. (3) **province,**[d] Judæa. **affliction . . reproach,** "this 'affliction and reproach' is something quite distinct from the humiliation of being subject to foreign rulers, as in ix. 37. The 'affliction' denotes 'the evil plight' within the walls; the 'reproach,' the scornful attitude of enemies without," and this in spite of Ezra's 13 yrs. of effort. This news was unexpected to Neh. **wall,**[e] *etc.*, in the same state as left by Nebuchadnezzar 142 years before.

God in storms. — Peace is the centre of the universe. The God of peace is undisturbed by tempest; albeit He is in all storms as their master and guide. I. He is in all material storms. 1. He commands them; 2. He uses them. II. He is in all moral storms. 1. He is in the conflict of man with man; 2. He is in all conflicts of man with himself.

God's Providence. — The trees are adapted to the demands of their position. The fir of the northern hills defies the wintry blast by reason of its strong roots which penetrate the crevices of the soil. The tall palms send their roots down three feet into the earth, and then spread out, securing a firm anchorage, and are able to stand the sweep of the desert winds. The roots of the pine are spread over the surface, but it grows in less exposed situation. The mangrove which fringes the estuaries and lagoons of the tropics, exposed to the tides, on a shifting soil, supports itself by sending roots from its trunk and lower branches down into the muddy ground, so that the whole has the appearance of a tree propped up by artificial stakes. We may infer that a like adjustment of strength to situation pervades the moral world. — *Hom. Com.*

Nehemiah's prayer

4—6. (4) **sat . . wept . . fasted,** vivid picture of true patriot mourning over the fall of his country. **prayed,** turns in his sorrow to the God of all consolation. (5) **O . . heaven,**[f] the Omnipresent and Almighty One. **that . . mercy,**[g] "Neh., like Ezr., adopts words of Pentateuch." "On the Divine side, the keeping of the covenant consisted in showing 'mercy.'" On the human side covenant relations are sustained by the obedience born of love. (6) **Let . . attentive,** ref. to anc. promise,[h] and Sol.'s prayer.[i] **I . . house,** he identified himself with his sinning people. *Lange* suggests that these words imply that Neh. was of the house of Dav. *Vs.* 11 strengthens the supposition, for Eastern despots loved to have men of royal blood wait upon them.

Prayer. — It is related of an ancient king that he never granted a petition that was offered with a trembling hand because it marked a want of confidence in his clemency. "Have faith in God" (Mark xi. 22). One of the holiest and most devoted of modern missionaries, who after surmounting almost insuperable obstacles, at length completed his translations of the Scriptures into a language of surpassing difficulty, inscribed upon the last page of his manuscript these words: — "I give it, as the result of long experience, that prayer and pains, with faith in Christ Jesus, will enable a man to do anything."

7—9. (7) **We . . thee,** Neh. associated national disaster with sin. (8) **Remember . . Moses,** *etc.*, "another ref. to Pentateuch."[j] (9) **turn,** *R. V.*, "return," *i. e.* turn the back upon the former wrong direction. **place . . there,** *R. V.*, "to cause my name to dwell there," *i. e.* Jerusalem and the temple.

Repentance. — Like *Janus Bifrons*, the Roman god looking two ways, a true repentance not only bemoans the past, but takes heed to the future. Repentance, like the lights of a ship at her bow and her stern, not only looks to the track she has made, but to the path before her. A godly sorrow moves the

[a] Ezra x. 9.

[b] B.C. 445, 91 years aft. decree of Cyrus (Ezra i. 1), 71 yrs. aft. ded. of temp. (vi. 15), 13 yrs. aft. commis. of Ezra. By *Bede, Usher, Hengstenberg, Ld. A. Hervey*, this 20th of A. long regarded as the begin. of Daniel's weeks.

[c] Ecbatana, Ezra vi. 2, the summer residence.

[d] Ezra v. 8.

[e] Ne. ii. 17; 2 Ki. xxv. 10.

[f] Ne. ii. 4; Ezr. i. 2; Da. ix. 37.

[g] De. vii. 9.

[h] Le. xxvi. 40-45.

[i] 1 Ki. viii. 46-52.

"Wandering thoughts in prayer are like vagrants; the best way to rid the country of the one, and the heart of the other, is to give them the law —the lash I mean." — *A divine of the 17th century.*

[j] Le. xxvi. 33, 39-45; De. iv. 25-31; xxviii. 64; xxx. 1-4.

"*Prayer* to have power and prevail must ask for the glory of God; and

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Christian to weep over the failure of the past, but his eyes are not so blurred with tears, but that he can look watchfully into the future, and, profiting by the experience of former failures, make straight paths for his feet. — *Pilkington.*

one can only do this as he is *living* for God's glory." — *Andrew Murray.*

10, 11. (10) **Now . . people,** "the ground on which the privilege of the promise is claimed." **whom . . hand,** Neh. looks back beyond the restoration fr. Babylon to the original Exodus fr. Egypt. (11) **who desire,** more correctly with *R. V.*, "who delight." **thy name,** *i. e.*, God's character and attributes. **day,** at this crisis. **this man,** the king, Artaxerxes Longimanus. **For . . cup bearer,**[a] *lit.* one who gave him to drink. A position of great importance, similar to the prominence now enjoyed by the great ministers of state. Neh. was one, but not the only one of such.

The king's cup-bearer. — I. The secular calling of Nehemiah did not lessen his piety. II. The secular position of Nehemiah did not affect his sympathy with his countrymen. III. The secular position of Nehemiah gave him an opportunity for displaying his piety and assisting his countrymen. Remember — 1. God specially honors those who serve Him; 2. We shall be the better able to resist the temptation of our secular position by serving God.

Nehemiah's prayer. — When we glance back over the prayer as a whole, we are struck with its order and progress. As in our Lord's model prayer, the first part is absorbed with thoughts of God; it is after uplifting His thoughts to heaven that the worshiper comes down to human need. Then a large place is given to sin. This comes first in the consideration of man after the worshiper has turned his eyes from the contemplation of God and felt the contrast of darkness after light. Lastly, the human subjects of the prayer begin in the wider circle of the whole nation; only at the very last, in little more than a sentence, Nehemiah brings forward his own personal petition. — *Exp. Bib.*

The power of prayer. — One of the first ships in which prayer meetings were held on the River Thames was bound from Shields to London, with a cargo of coals. On her passage she was overtaken by a dreadful gale of wind. There were two boys on board, one of whom, named Jack, cried very much, and said, "Oh, I shall be drowned; I shall never see my mother any more!" The other boy, whose name was Dick, went to him, and seemingly unmoved at the awful situation they were in, said, "Don't cry, Jack, I am not afraid; don't you know that they always pray for our ship in the river? It is now Tuesday evening, eight o'clock; there is a prayer meeting on board some ship, and I know they will not forget us." The remark of this lad fell upon the captain's ear, as he was standing by, almost in despair: it roused him to fresh exertions, and he was enabled to cast his ship and crew on the mercy of that God who holds the winds in His fist, and the waves in the hollow of His hand. In a short time the wind veered a point or two in their favor; they got the ship under management, and in forty-eight hours she was safely moored in the Thames.

[a] "This was providential; for it is noted of the Persian kings that they were always inclined to grant requests wh. were preferred to them at banquets; of which we have evidence in the case of Esther." — *Wordsworth.*

"God has three sorts of servants in the world: some are *slaves*, and serve him from a principle of fear; others are *hirelings*, and serve Him for the sake of wages; and the last are *sons*, and serve Him under the influence of love" — *Secker.*

"I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men." — *Mary. Qn. of Scotland.*

"Want felt, help desired, with faith to obtain it, is prayer."—*Adam.*

"Prayer is our speech to God: when we read, God speaks to us; when we pray, we speak to God." — *Augustine.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

Nehemiah's sadness is noticed by the king

1—3. (1) **Nisan,** or *Abib*,[b] the 1st mo. **wine . . him,** some think on a festal day. **Now . . presence,** it was unbecoming to appear in the royal presence with any signs of sorrow.[c] "It seems necessary to assume that Nehemiah chose his opportunity and deliberately gave occasion for the king's inquiry. After his prayer to God (ch. i. 5–11), he had been able to resolve upon his course of action." (2) **sad,** *lit.* evil, ill-favored. **afraid,** "he has looked sad in the king's presence. He is about to ask permission to quit the court. These are both sins against the fundamental doctrine of Persian court life, that to bask in the light of the royal countenance is the height of felicity. Will the king be displeased, refuse his request, dismiss him from his post, cast him into prison, or will he pardon his rudeness and allow his request?"— *Pulp. Com.* (3) **Let . . ever,**[d] customary salutation. **the . . sepulchres,**[e] *lit.* the house of the graves of my fathers. Another touch indicating that Neh. was of the tribe of Judah.

Unselfish sorrow.— We have been told about a man who in the time of the Punic wars had put a chaplet on his empty head and put his head out of the window to look at the difficulties, the struggles, the hazards of the people, and we know how the Romans treated that man: they took his chaplet off his head, and would have put his head itself in great danger if the head had

[b] Est. iii. 7.

[c] Est. iv. 2.

[d] Da. ii. 4; iii. 9.

[e] "This ref. to their graves implies a belief in their resurrection. *cf.* Gen. xlix. 29; l. 24, 25." — *Wordsworth.*

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been worth taking off. Ay, poor fool! could he put on his little green chaplet and say, "I am happy, what do I care for what is occurring in the commonwealth? I have bread enough: why should I think about those who are hungering? my thinking about them cannot help them."—*Peop. Bib.*

4—6. (4) **For . . request,** the king in a gracious humor. Nehemiah might have sought his own advantage. (5) **said . . king,**[a] *etc.*, having prayed to be guided *what* to request, and that he might not be denied. (6) **queen,**[b] queen consort; supposed to be Q. Damaspia.[c] **sitting,** they usually reclined in the East. **I . . time,**[c] Neh. did not leave Jerus. till 12 yrs. aft. Prob. his time was frequently extended.

Nehemiah's request of the king

Prayer before choosing.— Two things strike us here. 1. A rare opportunity for worldly advancement; 2. A rare treatment of such an opportunity. Now the principle involved in such an obligation—that prayer should precede choosing—is of universal obligation. Three things show the wisdom of this. I. God alone knows what is best for us. II. God always desires what is best for us, and that He desires our happiness is clear—1. From the capacity of enjoyment with which He has endowed us; 2. From the elements of happiness with which the world abounds; 3. From the mission of His only begotten Son. III. God, in answer to prayer, is ever ready to bestow what is best for us. Conclusion:—Let us ever act on the principle that prayer should precede choice.

Secret prayer.— As the tender dew that falls during the silent night makes the grass, and herbs, and flowers to flourish and grow more abundantly than great showers of rain that fall in the day, so secret prayer will more abundantly cause the sweet herbs of grace and holiness to flourish and grow in the soul, than all those more public and open duties of religion, which too often are mingled with the sun and wind of pride and hypocrisy.— *Brooks.*

a "This form of speech, so frequent in mouth of Neh., was no affected strain of courtship, but a just expression of duty; otherwise that religious man would never have used it."—*Bp. Sanderson*

b Heb. *shegal*. Ps. xlv. 10; Da. v. 2, 3, 23; only occurs in these places.

c Ne. v. 14; xiii. 6.

7—8. (7) **governors,** or satraps. **river,** Euphrates. (8) **forest,** prob. near Jerus.; perhaps Ætam, 7 ms. S. of Jerus.[d] Heb. word signifies "Paradise," *i. e.* a place fenced in and guarded as a forest and game preserve for the royal use. Such a well-wooded spot was of great value in Palestine. Neh. desires lumber for the building of the castle, the wall, the governor's residence. **palace,** *R. V.*, "castle," prob. the Roman *Turris Antonia.* **to the house,** *i. e.* to the temple. **according . . me,**[e] the king appears to have tried in this to reward Neh. for his administration of affairs. But his success was accord. to the favor of God.

he asks letters to the governors

d Jos. *Ant.* viii. 7, 3.

e Ezr. v. 5. vii. 6, 9, 28.

Gratitude.—Prayer and praise are twin services. They should always go hand in hand. Praise is the fragrance breathed from the flower of joy. He is happiest who is thankfullest. This lesson taught by the brute creation. Morose and unkindly animals express as little of enjoyment as they do of gratefulness by their snarling and growling sounds. The beasts and birds of night are rarely gladsome. But the lambs which sport and gambol in their green pastures, and the birds which in the early morning wake the echoes of the woodland with their songs, all tell most unmistakably that they are happy. How much more then must it be the blessedness of man "to look through nature, up to nature's God," and glorify the Giver in all his varied gifts.—*Stowell.*

It has been noted that after this grant of the king Persian affairs—which had not gone well in Egypt, *etc.*,—prospered.—*Wordsworth*·see also *Abp. Usher. Annales*, 110.

9—11. (9) **letters,** *vs.* 8. **sent . . me,** Neh. went as an officer of the king. (10) **Sanballat,** (*sin giveth life*) sin was the moon god of the Assyrians **Horonite,**[f] a dweller in the military stronghold of *Beth-horon*, 12 ms. N. W of Jerus. **Tobiah,**[g] (*pleasing to Jehovah*). **servant,** *Lange* remarks: "Tob. was prob. a renegade Jew, who had become a slave among the Ammonites, and, by his talents and cunning, had risen into prominence, and was now chief adviser of Sanballat." **Ammonite,** hence no friend of the Jews. **grieved,** or enraged. (11) **So . . days,** resting, and observing; and prob. hearing conflicting accs. of matters. The enemy beg. to intrigue.

Nehemiah arrives at Jerusalem, and delivers his credentials

f Jos. x. 10.

g He was allied to some of the chief Jews, hence many favored him. There was also some connection betw. him and Eliashib, the H. priest (xiii. 4-9).

Envy.—The infatuated Caligula slew his brother, because he was a beautiful young man. Mutius a citizen of Rome, was reputed to be of such an envious and malevolent disposition, that Publius, one day observing him to be very sad, said, "Either some great evil hath happened to Mutius, or some great good to another." "Dionysius the Tyrant," says Plutarch, "out of envy punished Philoxenius the musician, because he could sing; and Plato, the philosopher, because he could dispute better than himself." Cambyses killed

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his brother Smerdis, because he could draw a stronger bow than himself or any of his party — *Hom. Com.*

Nehemiah's night inspection of the walls

12—16. (12) **arose,**[a] Neh. would see for himself; a time when the foe was not present with plausible tales. (13) **gate . . valley,**[b] per. nr. present *Jaffa Gate*, on the W.; it led to Valley of Hinnom. King Azziah had fortified this gate. **dragon well,** prob. W. of Jerus., nr. Gihon. "The name is doubtless connected with some sanctuary at this fountain in prehistoric times, when 'living water' was associated with the worship of a deity often represented by a 'dragon.'" **dung port,** rubbish gate, prob. not far fr. *Jaffa Gate*. (14) **gate . . fountain,** fronting upon the pool of Siloam. **king's pool,** *i. e.* of Solomon; S. of Moriah. So-called bec. it watered the king's garden. **no . . pass,** the mass of ruins was so great that progress was impossible. (15) **brook,** Kidron. (16) **rulers . . did,** the information thus obtained in the dusky night more reliable than their daylight communications. They must have wondered at his information. **told it,** *i. e.* the plans for rebuilding the walls. **rest . . work,** speaking by way of anticipation of those who were to rebuild the walls.

Nehemiah, the model worker. — I. He works thoughtfully. II. He works independently. 1. The opinions of others cannot determine our duty; 2. The opinions of others may embarrass us in duty. III. He worked influentially. 1. The people saw that he understood the matter. 2. The people saw that he was thoroughly in earnest. IV. He worked heroically. 1. Look at the sacrifices he made; 2. Look at the enemies he encountered; 3. Look at the labor he effected. V. He worked religiously. 1. His impulses to act he ascribed to God; 2. His rule of action he derived from Him. — *Thomas.*

The power of example. — See what one man can do! One man can set fire to a thousand: Cæsar was more than all Cæsar's legions. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. We cannot all be Goliaths; we cannot all be Cæsars and Hannibals; we cannot all be inspirers; but we can all follow the great inspiration of Biblical testimony, and the great lead of the patriotic philanthropic class of noble and godly men. Though we be but a cipher, yet with a unit at our head that unit shall strike individual value into that which of itself is of minor — of almost infinitesimal consequence. Who will arise and build? The people did; Nehemiah did. — *Peop. Bib.*

Prudent silence. — When Homer makes his heroes to march, he gives them silence for their guide; on the contrary, he makes cowards to babble and chatter like cranes. The one pass along like great rivers, letting their streams glide softly with silent majesty; the others only murmur like bubbling brooks. A sign of not being valiant is to strive to seem valiant. — *Hom. Com.*

a Perh. Ps. cii. was written at this time.

b 2 Ch. xxvi. 9; Ne. iii. 13.

"Earnestness is all heartedness. The difference between an earnest man and others is just this. that while they do things coldly, perfunctorily, without interest, because they have to be done, and for no other reason, he puts his whole soul into his labor, does it with hearty good will, with a vigorous, healthy zeal and because he loves to do it." — *C. M. Merry.*

A poor woman was offered half a sovereign if she would not pray all day. She rejected it, saying, "No, sir, not for all the worlds this side heaven; but I'll just go ask the Lord to help you to believe on Him; and then you'll love prayer as much as I do."

Nehemiah tells the rulers of his intention

17, 18. (17) **Then . . them,** *etc.*,[c] it is implied that Neh. called an assembly of the people and unfolded his plan. "In rebuilding the city walls Nehemiah was accomplishing two good objects; he was fortifying the place, and he was restoring its organic unity. The two advantages would be mutually helpful, because the weakness of Jerusalem was destroying the peculiar character of her life." — *Exp. B.* Their wonder must have been great. They had a man among them who would not trust to mere report. (18) **they said,** *etc.*, encouraged by this display of energy, and his royal commission. **So . . work,**[d] by preparation, and prayer, and mutual congratulations.

The ruins of Jerusalem. — I. Show in what way our position reminds us of Nehemiah's times. II. What his example should teach us. 1. Sorrow; 2. The spirit of sacrifice; 3. The greatness of his faith. — *Bersier.*

Strength in unity. — Standing one day before a beehive, Gotthold observed with delight how the little honey-birds departed and arrived, and from time to time returned home laden with the spoils of the flowers. Meanwhile a great yellow hornet, the wolf among bees, came buzzing up in eager quest of prey. As it was evening-tide, and the bees after the heat of the day had settled about the mouth of the hive to breathe the cool air, it was amusing to observe that their fierce adversary lacked courage to attack their combined host and serried ranks. True, he often advanced for the purpose, but seeing how densely and compactly they were sitting, was forced to retreat empty-handed. At last, a bee, somewhat belated, arrived by itself; and on this straggler he instantly seized, fell with it to the earth, and instantly devoured it. — *Hom. Com.*

c Ne. i. 3; Ps. xliv. 13; lxxix. 4; Jer. xxiv. 9; Ez. v. 14, 15; xxii. 4.

d 2 Sa. ii. 7.

The missionary John Williams once said that two little words make the greatest mountains of difficulty melt—"try and trust."

19, 20. (19) **Geshem,** called also *Gashmu*;[a] the 3d important enemy of Neh. "may have been an independent sheikh possessing authority in Idumea, or in the desert country adjoining upon Ammon; but it seems quite as likely that he was merely the head of a body of Arab troops maintained by Sanballat at Samaria (ch. iv. 7)."[b] — *Pulp Com.* **laughed,**[c] tried effect of ridicule. The work so great, the builders so few, and their means so small. **will . . king,** they turn from scorn to charge of rebellion. (20) **answered,** *etc.*, a reply marked by faith in God, by lofty courage, and a bold counter-charge.[d] "Nehemiah renouncing connection with the Samaritans, affirms that they have no share in the present community, no ground for claiming it in the future, no memorial or justification of such claim in the past." — *Cam. B.*

The zeal of Nehemiah. — Whoever engages diligently in the work of God must expect trials. But Nehemiah encouraged himself in the Lord. It is my intention — I. To set before you the graces he exercised. 1. His confidence; 2. His zeal. Admiring the virtues of this eminent saint, I proceed — II. To commend them to your imitation. Be ye, my brethren, followers of him — 1. In reference to God's work in the world at large; 2. In reference to God's work in your own souls. — *Simeon.*

Ridicule. — The Moravian missionaries in Greenland endured much mockery and opposition from the rude inhabitants, when communicating to them the knowledge of Divine truth. When the missionaries told them they meant to instruct them about the will of God, they were met by the taunt, "Fine fellows, indeed, to be our teachers! We know very well you yourselves are ignorant, and must be taught by others!" If they tarried more than one night with them, they used all their endeavors to entice them to participate in their wanton and dissolute sports; and when they failed in this, they mocked and mimicked their reading, singing, and praying, practising every kind of droll antic; or they accompanied their devotions by drumming or howling hideously. Nor did the poverty of the brethren escape their keenest ridicule, or most cutting sarcasms. They even pelted them with stones, climbed upon their shoulders, destroyed their goods, and maliciously tried to spoil their boat, or drive it out to sea. — *Whitecross.* *Ridicule.* — A poor man who had heard the preaching of the gospel, and to whom it had been greatly blessed, was the subject of much profane ridicule and jesting amongst his neighbors. On being asked if these persecutions did not sometimes make him ready to give up his profession of religion, he replied, "No, I recollect that our good minister once said in his sermon, that if we were so foolish as to permit such people to laugh us out of our religion, till at last we dropped into hell, *they could not laugh us out again.*" Admiral Colpoys relates that when he first left his lodgings to join his ship as a midshipman, his landlady presented him with a Bible and a guinea, saying, "God bless you, and prosper you, my lad; and as long as you live never suffer yourself to be laughed out of your money or your prayers." The young sailor carefully followed this advice through life, and had reason to rejoice that he had done so. — *Hom. Com.*

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Sanballat and others scorn the undertaking

a Neh. vi. 6.

b Neh. iv. 7.

c Ps. xliv. 13; lxxix. 4; lxxx. 6.

d Ezr. iv. 3.

Faith never reasons; she acts from her own point of view, and leaves results with God.

"A great many professed Christians have no other idea of religion than that it is the means of getting to heaven when they die. As to doing anything for God while they live, it does not enter into their plans. I tell you, my brethren, I do not believe there is one in five hundred of such professors that will reach heaven; for there is magnanimity in true religion that is above all such contemptible meanness."— *L. Beecher.*

"The few that pray at all pray oft amiss; and seeking grace to improve the prize they hold would urge a wiser suit than asking more."— *Cowper.*

"Heav'n's never deaf but when man's heart is dumb." — *Quarles.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1—3. (1) **Eliashib**[e] (*God restores*), son of Joiakim, son of Jeshua. Driven by force of public opinion to act, although completely out of harmony with the spirit of Ezra and Neh. *see* xiii. 4. **sheep gate,**[f] E. side of Jerus., nr. present St. Stephen's Gate. Prob. opened into some part of the Temple, through wh. the sheep and goats for sacrifice entered the city. **sanctified it,** the only gate sanctified. The completion of the portion of the priests was marked by a special sacred function. **Meah** (*hundred*), betw. S. gate and tower of **Hananeel**[g] (*graciously vouchsafed by God*), at N. E. corner of city. A well-known building about midway bet. the sheep gate and the fish gate. (2) **next,** *lit.* at his hand. **the . . Jericho,** repairing the part that looked toward their own country. **Zaccur** (*mindful*), a good name for a builder. **Imri**[h] (*promise of the Lord*). (3) **fish gate,**[i] on N. side, nr. the tower. **Hassenaah** (*thorny*), prob. the name of a town — *Senaah,*[j] some of whose men built this gate. **locks,** *R. V.*, "the bolts." "The city gates of ancient times turned upon pivots in sockets instead of upon hinges; and we may conjecture that the word rendered 'locks' denoted that which held a gate in its place, while 'the bars' fastened it to the side-posts."

Hebrew names. — The Hebrew names were nearly all significant. Some-

names and order of the builders

e Ne. xii. 10.

f Jo. v. 2.

g Jer. xxxi. 38; Zec. xiv. 10.

h 1 Ch. ix. 4.

i Nr. fish market (xiii. 16), frequented by fishmongers fr the north, *i. e.* Tyre, 2 Ch. xxxiii. 14.

j Ezr. ii. 35; Ne. vii. 38.

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"At the working-man's house hunger looks in, but dares not enter; nor will the bailiff or the constable enter; for industry pays debts, but despair increaseth them"—*Franklin.*

"Absence of occupation is not rest, a mind quite vacant is a mind distress'd."—*Cowper.*

times commemoration was in a name. Sometimes it uttered a testimony. Sometimes a prophecy stirred in it. The very name of a man sometimes shone like a burning lamp in the darkness of an evil time. When need was, a new name was taken or given, in addition to, or in place of, the original one, and borne as men bear a banner or speak a watchword. — *Alexander Raleigh. Preservation of names.* — The Early Church preserved the names of her confessors and martyrs in the diptychs which were expressly provided for use in public worship, that God might be praised for their noble lives, and that the living might be stimulated to follow their example. — *Exp. Bib. Handicraft.* — It is not a mean thing to labor with the hand. There is a dignity in every duty, and especially in this. Since the *Carpenter of Nazareth* toiled at his bench and made tools for Galilean peasants, labor has had a dignity, and artisans an elevation, and workshops a consecration. After this, the lantern-making of King Æsopus, the ship-building of the Czar Peter, or the watch-making of the Emperor Charles V., could do little to exalt it.—*Steel.*

a Ezr. viii. 33.

b Perh. it was he who stood by Ezr. when he read the law, Ne. viii. 4.

c Head of one of the courses, 1 Ch. xxiv. 10.

d 1 Ch. iv. 12, 13; Ezr. vii. 2.

e Exit for Anathoth, Gibeah, Samaria, *etc.*

Where there is light it will show itself; where there is leaven it will work; and where there is life it will act.

"Condemn the fault, but not the actor of it."—*Shakespeare.*

In the museum at Rotterdam is the first piece painted by the renowned Rembrandt. It is rough, without marks of genius or skill, and uninteresting, except to show that he began as low down as the lowest. In the same gallery is the masterpiece of the same artist, counted of immense value. What years of patient study and practice intervene between the two pieces! If all have not genius, all have the power to work; and this is greater than genius.

4–7. (4) **Meremoth** (*heights*), a priest.[a] **Urijah**[b] (*flame of Jehovah*). **Koz**[c] (*thorn*). **Meshullam** (*friend*), *i. e.* of God; also called Shallum[d] (*retribution*). **Berechiah** (whom *Jehovah hath blessed*). **Meshezabee** (*delivered of God*). **Zadok** (*just*). **Baana** (*son of affliction*); perh. the same as in x. 27. (5) **Tekoites** (*tent-dwellers*, or *trumpet-blowers*); about 9 miles due south of Jerus. **their Lord** *R. V.*, "their lord," *i. e.* Nehemiah. "The fashionable part of Jerus. was in virtual league with the enemies of God. These Tekoite nobles resolutely held aloof." (6) **old gate,**[e] perh. a remnant of anc. Jebusite fortifications. *R. V.*, margin, "the gate of the old city." "When the fortifications coincided with an earlier and thicker wall, it was called the broad wall (*vs.* 8)" On the N. betw. fish g. and g. of Ephraim. (7) **men . . Mizpah,** fr. 4 to 5½ m. to the N. W., this part faced that point. **throne. . river,** *R. V.*, "wh. appertained to the throne of the governor beyond the river." To designate a particular Gibeon and Mizpah. As we would say Philadelphia, N. Y., to distinguish from Phil., Pa.

Idle people. — (See Neh. ii. 16, v. 17, whence it seems that Nehemiah got as little real sympathy as help from them; and that they employed their "hours of idleness" in laying taxes upon others.) — I. A solitary exception. Some who did work. Who? "Nobles," men probably of larger influence and information, might have done much. II. An implied censure. Note was taken of the idle ones; they were not passed over because they were nobles; their example injurious, their time misspent. Learn: — Let us seek to be one of those to whom the Master will say, "Well done."

Pride. — Beautiful is the way in which modern society is returning in many respects to humility in regard to practical things. A Prince of Wales sends his boys to the routine of a sailor apprenticeship; a Duke of Argyle sends his son to a house of business; a gentleman's son doffs his neat coat and stoops down, hammer in hand, in the engineer's yard. In this there is a more hopeful sight than when the proud nobles of Jerusalem disdained the rough work which the God-inspired Nehemiah designed. — *Hom. Com. Personal effort.* — According to Christ's law, every Christian is to be active in spreading the faith, which was delivered not to the ministers but to the saints, to every one of them, that they might maintain it and spread it according to the gift which the Spirit has given them. Shall I venture a parable? A certain band of warlike knights had been exceedingly victorious in all their conflicts. They were men of valor and of indomitable courage; they had carried everything before them, and subdued province after province for their king. But on a sudden they said in the council-chamber, "We have at our head a most valiant warrior, one whose arm is stout enough to smite down fifty of his adversaries; would it not be better if, leaving a few such as he to go out to the fight, the mere men-at-arms, who make up the ordinary ranks, were to rest at home? We should be much more at our ease; our horses would not so often be covered with foam, nor our armor be bruised; the many would enjoy abundant leisure, and great things would be done by the valiant few." Now, the foremost champions, with fear and trembling, undertook the task and went to the conflict, and they fought well, as the rolls of fame can testify: to the best of their ability they unhorsed their foes and performed great exploits. But still, from the very hour in which that scheme was planned and carried out no city was taken, no province was conquered. Then the knights met

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together, and said, "How is this? Our former prestige is departed, our ranks are broken, our pennons are trailed in the dust; what is the cause of it?" When out spoke the champion, and said, "Doubtless it is so, for a reason clear and plain. How did you think that a slender band could do the work of all the thousand? When you all went to the fight, and every man took his share, we dashed upon the foe like an avalanche, and crushed him beneath our tramp; but now that you stay at home, and put us, who are but a handful, to fight every battle, how can you expect that great things should be done?" So each man resolved to put on his helmet, and his armor once again, and hasten to the battle, and lo! the angel of victory returned. If we are to subdue the earth, every one of us must join in the fight. We must not exempt a single soldier of the cross, neither man nor woman, rich nor poor; but each must fight for the Lord Jesus according to his ability, that His kingdom may come, and that His will may be done in earth even as it is in heaven. We shall see great things when all agree to this and put it in practice. — *Spurgeon.*

"A favorite illustration among the Arabs of extreme idleness is the man that would not turn his head over on his pillow though the muddy water leaking through the roof fell plump into his eye."— *Thompson.*

8—12. (8) **goldsmiths,** of whom there must have been some kind of guild. The large portion undertaken indicates their great wealth. **apothecaries,**[a] compounders of spices and perfumes. **fortified,**[b] should prob. be "left out," *i. e.* they omitted a pt. of the anc. city, and restricted the circuit within a narrower range.[c] **broad wall,** "it is possible that this was the portion of 400 cubits which Amaziah pulled down (*see* 2 Ki. xiv. 13; 2 Ch. xxv. 23) with the view of rendering Jerusalem defenseless on the N., and that this was the portion which Hezekiah took pains to strengthen and renew (2 Chr. xxxii. 5)." (9) **ruler . . Jerusalem,** or half of the district round Jerus. (10) **over . . house,** the part wh. faced his own house,[d] *vs.* 23. (11) **other piece,** *i. e.* "another portion." (12) **his daughters,** of doubtful meaning; some consider it used in a technical sense of "village" or "country towns" other interpret it naturally, and find in it another evidence of personal effort on the part of all.

a Ex. xxx. 33; 1 Sa. viii. 13; Song iii. 6.

b The word, wh. occurs more than 200 times in O. T. is only here and in vi. 2 rendered fortify.

c So *Wordsworth* and *Ryle.*

d "In the ch. of God, every man ought to endeavor to build up a wall of Christian virtues over against his own house, and to fortify his own heart ag. the assaults of his spiritual enemy."— *Bede.*

Examples of earnestness. — When Dr. Chalmers occupied the chair of philosophy in the College of St. Andrews, he used to gather into his own house, each Sabbath evening, the poorest and most ignorant of the vagrant children of the neighborhood; and his biography states that, for that audience, he prepared himself as carefully, with his pen in his hand, as for his class in the university. So, on a winter day, through frost, and in the face of a driving snowstorm, you might have seen him walking five miles to fulfil an appointment of religious worship with a little company of rustic people at Kilmany: and there, amid some illiterate, shivering cottagers, too few for a church or chapel, met in a damp room — an audience that many men would have thought it expedient to dismiss at once, "on account of the weather," and many more would have put off with some crude, unpremeditated talk — he preached as labored and as eloquent a sermon as would have moved to rapture and wonder the learning and fashion of Glasgow or of London. It is only of such earnest stuff as this that the truly commanding persons in any of the elevated ranges of action or of learning are made. *Woman's opportunity.* — The world is open to Christian woman as it never has been before. She must write, for a literature must be created for the women of the East. She must teach, for the convert must be trained and the heathen won. She must evangelize, for her feet alone can carry the good tidings of peace to her sisters in their seclusion.— *F. M. Thorburn.*

The total loss of time in pure contented idleness, needless sleep, and painful, listlessness, is to be condemned without mercy as the most unqualified guilt.

Idleness is a great social crime which carries about with it not only its own punishment, but all suffer who come within the pale of its association.

13—15. (15) **valley gate,** nr. Ch. of Holy Sepulchre; the main entrance in the W. wall. **Zanoah,**[e] (*marsh*) 11 m. S. W. of Jerus., now *Zânû'a.* **a thousand cubits,** prob. this section of the wall needed but little restoration, so that a small party could easily undertake it. **dung gate,** ii. 13. (14) **Beth-haccerem,**[f] (*house of the vineyard*). (15) **gate . . fountain,** W. of city and S. of Valley Gate; nr. Jaffa Gate. **part** = district. **of . . Siloah,**[g] S. E. of the city. **and . . David,** *R. V.*, "even unto." *etc.* "Remains of these stairs have been discovered by Schick and Guthe a little to the east of the Pool of Siloam, as well as a little to the south of the Virgin's Spring (but within the line of the old wall), so that they must have run up the eastern slope of Zion, and ended not very far from the square in front of the water gate." — *Sayce.*

e Jos. xv. 34.

f Part of — district of.

g A subterranean water course, 1,750 ft. long, fr. Fount of the Virgin, supplies it, see *Robinson*, i. 507.

The king's garden. — I. This brings to mind the garden of Paradise which the Great King prepared for man. II. The garden of Gethsemane is another

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"A man should inure himself to voluntary labor, and not give up to indulgence and pleasure; as they beget no good constitution of body, nor knowledge of the mind." — *Socrates.*

garden which reminds us how the sin that spoiled the first garden was atoned. III. Our heart should be a garden in which the fruits of holiness, the results of that atonement, should be found. IV. The church is as a well-watered garden. — *Spurgeon.*

Energy. — There is a famous speech recorded of an old Norseman, thoroughly characteristic of the Teuton. "I believe neither in idols nor demons," said he; "I put my sole trust in my own strength of body and soul." The ancient crest of a pick-axe, with the motto of "Either I will find a way or make one," was an expression of the same sturdy independence and practical materialism which to this day distinguishes the descendants of the Northmen. Indeed, nothing could be more characteristic of the Scandinavian mythology than that it had a god with a hammer. A man's character is seen in small matters; and from even so slight a test as the mode in which a man wields a hammer his energy may in some measure be inferred.— *Smiles.*

Laziness grows on people; it begins in cobwebs, and ends in iron chains. The more business a man has, the more he is able to do, for he learns to save his time.

Work for Heaven. —

If thou have thrown a glorious thought
Upon life's common ways,
Should other men the gain have caught,
Fret not to lose the praise.

Great thinker! often shalt thou find,
While folly plunders fame,
To thy rich store the crowd is blind,
Nor knows thy very name.

In a workhouse at Hamburg, idlers are punished by being suspended in a basket above the tables, so that they can see and smell the things provided for the industrious, but are not allowed to taste them.

What matter that? if thou uncoil
The soul that God has given —
Not in the world's mean eye to toil,
But in the sight of Heaven?

If thou art true, yet in thee lurks
For fame a human sigh,
To Nature go and see how works
That handmaid of the sky.

Her own deep bounty she forgets,
Is full of germs and seeds;
Nor glorifies herself, nor sets
Her flowers above her weeds.

"A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best, but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace." — *Emerson.*

She hides the modest leaves between;
She loves untrodden roads;
Her richest treasures are not seen
By any eye but God's.

Accept the lesson — look not for
Reward — from out thee chase
All selfish ends; — and ask no more
Than to fulfil thy place. — *Household Words.*

16—20. (16) **half part,** *see vs.* 9. **Beth-zur,**[a] (*house of the rock*), now Beit Sûr, ab. 15 ms. S. of Jerus. **unto . . David,** in Zion, but exact site is not certain. **pool . . made,** perhaps constructed by Hezekiah. Is. xxii. 9–11. **unto . . mighty,**[b] quarters of king's bodyguard. or guard of temp. (17) **Keilah,**[c] *fortress*, prob. ab. 8 ms. E. of Eleutheropolis; nr. Hebron. (18) **his brethren,** *i. e.* fr. the other half of Keilah. (19) **another piece,** *i. e.* the second piece, the first being, perh., that of *vs.* 17, or *vs.* 15, better "opposite the ascent of the armory on the corner," 2 Chr. xxvi. 9. (20) **earnestly repaired,** Baruch, "provoked to godly jealousy by Ezra," singled out for special praise.

a Jos. xv. 58; 1 Ch. ii. 45; 2 Ch. xi. 7.

b 1 Ch. ix. 26.

Willingness to work in order to give. — A man in W——, who depended for support entirely on his own exertions, subscribed five dollars annually in support of the Bombay schools. His friends inquired, "Why he gave so much, and how he could afford it?" He replied, "I have for some time been wish-

c Jos. xv. 44; 1 Sa. xxiii 1-13; 1 Ch iv. 19.

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ing to do something for Christ's cause; but I cannot preach, neither can I pray in public, to any one's edification, nor can I talk to people; but I have hands, and I can work." *Sepulchres.* — Next to the wells of Syria, the most authentic memorials of past times are the sepulchres, and partly for the same reason. The tombs of ancient Greece and Rome lined the public roads with pillars and towers. Grassy graves and marble monuments fill the churchyards and churches of Christian Europe. But the sepulchres of Palestine were like the habitations of its earliest inhabitants, hewn out of the living limestone rock, and therefore indestructible as the rock itself. In this respect they resembled, though on a smaller scale, the tombs of Upper Egypt; and as there the traveler of the nineteenth century is confronted with the names and records of men who lived thousands of years ago, so also in the excavations of the valleys which surround or approach Shiloh, Shechem, Bethel and Jerusalem he knows that he sees what were the last resting-places of the generations contemporary with Joshua, Samuel, and David. And the example of Egypt shows that the identification of these sepulchres even with their individual occupants is not so improbable as might be otherwise supposed. If the graves of Rameses and Osiris can still be ascertained, there is nothing improbable in the thought that the tombs of the patriarchs may have survived the lapse of twenty or thirty centuries. The rocky cave on Mount Hor must be at least the spot believed by Josephus to mark the grave of Aaron. The tomb of Joseph must be near one of the two monuments pointed out as such in the opening of the vale of Shechem. The sepulchre which is called the tomb of Rachel exactly agrees with the spot described as "a little way" from Bethlehem. The tomb of David, which was known with certainty at the time of the Christian era, may perhaps still be found under the mosque which bears his name in the modern Zion. Above all, the cave of Machpelah is concealed, beyond all reasonable doubt, by the mosque at Hebron. But, with these exceptions, we must rest satisfied rather with the general than the particular interest of the tombs of Palestine. — *Stanley's Sinai and Palestine.*

"Nature knows no pause in progress and development, and attaches her curse on all inaction." — *Goethe.*

"Works without faith is like a salamander without fire, or a fish without water; for though there seem to be some symptoms of life, yet they are but the presages of death." — *J. Beaumont.*

21—25. (21) **Eliashib,** the high priest, *vs.* 1; house evidently upon the wall. (22) **men . . plain,** of the Jordan, or plain nr. Jerus. (23) **over . . house,** *vs.* 10. (24) **another piece,** *vs.* 19. (25) **tower . . house,** *R. V.*, "the tower that standeth out from the upper house of the king, which is by the court of the guard," watch-tower by the royal palace, in the fortification of the wall of the palace. **by . . prison,** scene of Jeremiah's confinement.[a]

a Jer. xxxii. 2; xxxiii. 1.

Work with God. — Too many men say: My God, I am going to work to-day in such and such a part of the vineyard; please come and help me. Our true prayer should be, Lord, where are you working to-day? Let me come and work along with you. We would be much happier if, instead of trying to fit God into our scheme, we would fit ourselves into His and be workers together with God. That is the secret of George Müller's work, he took for his motto, "Our Fellowship is with the Father." — *F. B. Meyer. Work and pray.* — Asa and Ira were two brothers whose farms lay side by side in a fertile intervale. When the young corn, the oats, and the barley were springing up, the weeds took advantage of the rich soil and came up with them. "Do you see," said Asa, "what a hold the weeds are taking? There is danger of their choking out the crops entirely." "Well, well, we must be resigned," said Ira. "Weeds as well as grain were a part of the Creator's plan." And he lay down for his usual afternoon doze. "I can only be resigned to what I cannot help," said Asa. So he went to work, and ploughed and hoed until the fields were clear of weeds. "Do you see, Ira?" said Asa, another morning, "the river is rising, and there is but small chance of preventing our farms from being overflowed." "Alas! it is a judgment upon us for our sins; and what can we do?" said Ira, throwing himself in despair upon the ground. "There are no judgments so severe as those which our own sloth brings upon us," said Asa. And he went quickly and hired workmen, with whose help he raised an embankment that withstood the flood; while Ira witnessed with blank looks the destruction of his wealth. "There is one consolation," said he: "my children, at least, are left me." But, while Asa's sons grew up strong and virtuous men, among Ira's there was a drunkard, a gambler, and a suicide. "The ways of the Lord are not equal," said Ira to his brother. "Why are you always prospered, while I am afflicted, and my old age is disgraced?" "I only know this," replied Asa, "that heaven always helped me to meet my children's faults as I met the weeds, the caterpillars, and the flood; and that

"I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

"Ydelnes, that is the gate of all harmes. An ydil man is like an hous that hath noone walles; the develes may entre on every syde."—*Chaucer.*

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I never presumed to send a petition upward without making toil my right-hand servant, the messenger of my prayer."

[a] 1 Ch. ix. 2.

[b] 1 Ch. xxvii. 3. Identified by *Robinson* (i. 267), with continuation of Moriah, S. towards Siloam, betw. Jehosophat to the E., and Tyropœan to the W. It is ab 1,550 ft. long, 290 bd and ends in rocky bluff, 40 or 50 ft. above pool of Siloam.

[c] Jer. xxxi. 40.

[d] *Josephus*, ix. 7, 3, says it led to Kedron.

[e] Ex. xliii. 21.

"As every thread of gold is valuable, so is every minute of time." — *J. Mason.*

26—32. (26) **Nethinims,**[a] the meanest persons, as well as priests, *etc.*, aided in the work. **Ophel,**[b] hill S. of temp. This whole verse a parenthesis. "This is intro. in order to connect the dwelling of the Nethinims with the tower just spoken of." **water gate,** *i. e.* "wh. carried off the superfluous water fr. the temple reservoirs." (27) **after them,** *R. V.*, "after him," *i. e.* Pedaiah, *vs.* 25. **Tekoites,** *vs.* 5. (28) **horse gate,**[c] nr. S. E. of temp.[d] (29) **east gate,** E. of the temp. a temple gate, not a city gate. (30) **over . . chamber,** prob. a store cham. in the temp. (31) **goldsmith's son,** *vs.* 8. **gate Miphkad,** perh. N. E. of temp.[e] (32) **sheep gate,** *vs.* 1.

Relative greatness.— Jerusalem is the religious metropolis of the world. To be first in religious honor it was not necessary that she should be spacious or populous. Size and numbers count for very little in religion. Its valuation is qualitative, not quantitative. Even the extent of its influence, even the size and mass of this, depends mainly on its character. Moreover, in Jerusalem, as a rule, the really effective religious life was confined to a small group of the "pious;" sometimes it was gathered up in a single individual — a Jeremiah, an Ezra, a Nehemiah. This is a fact replete with encouragement for faith. It is an instance of the way in which God chooses the weak things — weak as to this world — to confound the strong. If a small city could once take the unique position held by Jerusalem, then why should not a small church now? And if a little knot of earnest men within the city could be the nucleus of her character and the source of her influence, why should not quite a small group of earnest people give a character to their church, and, through the church, work wonders in the world, as the grain of mustard seed could move a mountain? The secret of the miracle is, like the secret of nature, that God is in the city and the church, as God is in the seed. When once we have discovered this truth as a certain fact of life and history, our estimate of the relative greatness of things is revolutionized. The map and the census then cease to answer our most pressing questions. The excellence we look for must be spiritual — vigor of faith, self-abnegation of love, passion of zeal. — *Exp. Bib.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

rage of Sanballat, etc.

1—3. (1) **Sanballat,** ii. 10, 19. **that . . wall,** this occurred on a previous occasion bef. the events narrated in chap. iii. (2) **will . . fortify,** prob. an error in the text; some syllables being omitted. The sense should prob. be "will they commit themselves to their God?" spoken contemptously. **brethren,** *i. e.* chief counsellors. **army of Samaria,** "it was resolved to stop the building by main force. Sanballat and Tobiah, his Ammonite hanger-on, entered into a league with the neighboring peoples, the Philistines of Ashdod, the Ammonites, and some Arab tribe or tribes, and agreed with them that a conjoint attack should be made upon Jerusalem by a confederate army." — *Pulp. Com.* **revive . . burned,** he regarded the stones as calcined and unfit for the purpose. (3) **Tobiah,** ii. 10, 19. **fox . . wall,** the wall would not bear the light step of a fox, much less would it resist a siege.

Foxes were known to infest, in great numbers, the ruined and desolate places in the mount and city of Zion, Lam. v. 18.

God overruling evil for good. — Voltaire boasted, that with one hand he would overturn the edifice of Christianity, which required the hands of twelve Apostles to build; but at the present time, the very press which he employed at Ferney for printing his blasphemous works, is actually used at Genoa for printing the Holy Scriptures; so that the very engine he set to work to destroy the Bible is now engaged in circulating its sacred truths. — *Whitecross.*

Nehemiah's prayer

[f] Ps cxxiii. 3, 4; cxxiv, cxxv., cxx., cxxi., cxxvii., cxxix.

"The imprecations invoked here may seem harsh, cruel, and vindictive. But it must be remembered that Nehemiah and his friends regarded those Samaritan leaders as enemies to the cause of God and His people,

4—6. (4) **Hear,** *etc.*, some of the Pss.[f] may have been composed at this time The mockery addressed to the Jews was really directed against God. (5) **cover not,** *etc.*, forgive it not, make no atonement for it. Ps. lxxxv., cix. 14. **provoked,** "the verb here is used absolutely for provoking God, as De. xxxi. 29. (6) **was . . thereof,** of the intended height. **for . . work,** the great secret of success.

The efficacy of zeal and diligence. — Let us consider — I. The reason assigned for their success. 1. The work which the people had to perform was attended with many difficulties: 2. But by zeal and intelligence they were enabled to

accomplish it with incredible despatch. Notice — II. The instruction we may gather from it. There are two truths that may justly be deduced from this history. 1. In everything we have to do for God, zeal and diligence are necessary ; 2. In everything we have to do for God zeal and diligence will ensure success. — *Simeon.*

Christian building. — How is it in the building of the great Christian wall ? There is the Independent, or Congregationalist, building his little bit, and yonder is the Episcopalian, and yonder is the Baptist, and yonder is somebody else, and they will not lend one another a spoonful of lime. Do let us remember that it is one wall, it is one Zion, it is one Jerusalem — why not work together magnanimously in the spirit of brothers, realizing the true ideal of patriotic and Christian fellowship and brotherhood, and let the wall rise from all points simultaneously, all compact, solid, indestructible masonry. Wherever there is a good man, whatever his particular denomination or badge may be, we should work heart and soul with him ; or otherwise, God forgive us ! for we sin against the spirit of the cross of his Son. — *Peop. Bib.*

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and therefore as deserving to be visited with heavy judgments. The prayer, therefore is to be considered as emanating fr. hearts in wh. neither hatred, nor revenge, but a pious and patriotic zeal for the glory of God, and the success of His cause, held the ascendant sway." — *Port. Com.*

7—9. (7) **Ashdodites,** with the old time hatred of Philistia. **were made up,** *R. V.*, " went forward." **wroth,** they first ridiculed the undertaking as impossible of execution. The walls, now half the intended height, gave promise of completion. (8) **conspired**[a] **. . hinder,**[b] they thought to demolish the work, and in some way to intimidate the builders. (9) **we . . God,**[c] they did not depend on their own prowess or sagacity. **set . . watch,** they used means as well as prayed.

conspiring of the enemy and precautions of Nehemiah

a Ps. lxxxiii. 3-5.

b Heb. to make an error in it.

c Ps. l. 15.

Ora et labora (pray and labor) was the monkish watchword with which men went into the wilderness, and built up their lonely cells, and toiled at their simple gardens, and knelt in solemn thought of the world behind them, through long fastings and wakeful nights. But on their lips it was a profound mistake. They had cut themselves off from brotherly sympathies and social duties, from the entire sphere of Christian work. They had thrown themselves upon the selfishness of lonely hours and solitary thoughts. Their *ora*, earnest and well meant at first, became mechanical and unreal ; their *labora* was a fiction. They had no right to their motto. And remembering the hollowness and hypocrisy to which their system brought them, its utter worthlessness, its world-wide scandal, men have shrunk with fear from the truth they misused. Nor are they alone guilty. Those who by practice or speech arrogate to prayer the time and place of ordinary duties are in the same error. — *Hom. Com.*

" The fire of discord turns a house into a little hell, full of the tormenting passions, sorrow and anguish, distain and despite, malice and envy, that blast the most flourishing families." — *W. Bates.*

10—12. (10) **Judah,** " through their rulers or representatives to Neh." **strength . . decayed,** exhausted by excessive toil and watching. The higher the wall the more difficult became the labor. (11) **they . . them,** and caused these rumors of some sudden attack or night assault to be circulated, so as to cause a constant and disheartening fear. (12) **ten . . times,**[a] again and again travelers to Zion brought rumors of impending dangers, and reports of intended mischief ; and builders living at a distance N. fr. the city spoke of molestations. **from all places . . you,** *R. V.*, " from all places, ye must return unto us." The Jews of the neighboring villages, fearing an attack from Sanballat, urge their fellow citizens who are helping at Jerusalem to return home.

rumors and threats of the enemy

a Ge. xxxi. 7.

" The Jews who dwelt near the enemy, and were harassed by them, and appealed to Neh. for help, sent to him ten times, and said that foes would be upon them everywhere, wherever their brethren had left them to return and build the city " — *Wordsworth.*

Burdens and rubbish. — 1. Who are spiritually the burden-bearers in the text ? and what are the burdens ? 1. Penitents, who are burdened with a guilty conscience — with a fear of death — with a dread that they shall not attain mercy ; 2. Believers, who are burdened with a wicked heart — persecutions — afflictions — violent temptations. II. When may it be said their strength decays ? 1. Of penitents when they give up hope of obtaining mercy — when they grow sick of duty — when they give way to sin ; 2. Of believers when they do not bear persecution with patience, or afflictions with resignation — when they do not watch against temptation — when they do not seek for complete holiness. — *W. Stevens.*

" I look upon indolence as a sort of suicide ; for the man is effectually destroyed, though the appetite of the brute may survive." — *Chesterfield.*

Duration of works. — A party of surveyors in Arizona, engaged in exploring the country for railroad routes, came upon some very extensive ruins on the banks of the Little Colorado River. They extend along the river for many miles. Some of the walls of buildings are yet in place, and stand six or eight feet high. The streets may be traced for miles. The old irrigating canals and ditches are yet in a fair state of preservation, and may be traced

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"Earnestness alone makes life eternity." — *Carlyle.*

for miles also. The ground is strewed with broken crockery. The party found some nearly whole vessels of curious form. Many of the walls of the buildings were built of hewn stone, and put up in a workmanlike manner. To all appearance, here once stood a city of many thousand inhabitants. Who they were, or to what tribe they belonged, there is no record left to show. On the east bank are the ruins of a large structure or castle, covering several acres of land; some of the walls are yet standing to the height of twenty or thirty feet.

the people guard and watch and work

13—15. (13) **lower . . wall,** (*see vs.* 6). The difficulties wh. confronted him compelled him to suspend part of the building and watch the enemy. He set men where the city was most open to attack. **higher places,** *R. V.*, "in the open places." The Heb. word means "exposed" rather than "elevated." **set . . families,**[a] one part to fight while another worked; one family to stimulate another. (14) **looked . . up,** when he "looked, and rose up," and spoke, it was probably as the enemy was coming up to the attack; he then made this short but stirring appeal. That no conflict followed would seem to show, that "when the enemy approached, and saw from a distance the whole people awaiting them in perfect equipment, order, and spirit," they lost heart and "turned back." — *Pulp. Com.* **remember the Lord,**[b] the best of all arguments for patriotic courage. **fight . . houses,** the true patriot should be disinterested. (15) **that . . us,** what their evil designs were. **God . . nought,**[c] by discovering their plans, by giving wisdom to Neh., and patriotism to the people. Evidently the threatened attack had put an end to the work; now it is resumed.

a Note the advice of Nestor to Agamemnon; and also disposition of Athenian troops at Marathon.

b Nu. xiv. 9; De. i. 29; x. 17.

c Job v. 12.

"This is a maxim which I have received by hereditary traditions not only from my father, but also from my grandfather and his ancestors, that after what I owe to God, nothing should be more dear or more sacred than the love and respect I owe to my country." — *De Thou.*

Examples of patriotism. — Augustus Cæsar possessed such an attachment to his country that he called it *his own daughter*, and refused to be called its master, because he would rule it not by fear, but by love. After his decease, his disconsolate people lamented over him, saying, "O would to God that he had never lived, or that he had never died." A Lacædemonian mother had five sons in a battle that was fought near Sparta, and seeing a soldier that had left the scene of action, eagerly inquired of him how affairs went on. "All your five sons are slain," said he. "Unhappy wretch!" replied the woman: "I ask thee not of what concerns my children, but of what concerns my country." "As to that all is well," said the soldier. "Then," said she, "let them mourn that are miserable. My country is prosperous, and I am happy." — *Hom. Com.*

half to build and half to guard

16—18. (16) **half . . work,** *etc.*, his own private attendants; "the rest of the Jews were exempted. Neh.'s servants were kept prepared for any emergency." — *Ryle.* **other half . . spears,** the other kept guard, fully armed, and held the spears, bows and arrows, shields, and corselets of their fellows." — *Pulp. Com.* **habergeons,** *R. V.*, "the coats of mail," *see* Ex. xxviii. 32. **rulers . . Judah,** "the rulers" or princes took up their position to the rear of those engaged in working at the wall, so that at any moment, when the alarm should sound, they could issue their commands and take the necessary measures to repel the attack." (18) **builders . . builded,** ready both to work or fight. **he . . me,** to give the appointed signals, *vs.* 20.

There is, for every one of us, a world to be overcome; flesh to be subdued to the spirit; Satan to be resisted; Christ to be glorified. There is a work which is great, difficult, and continuous. Every day brings its proper work; every relation of life brings its duties; every opportunity brings its own responsibility. But the forgetful hearer never sets about the great work of the Christian life in real earnest; he seems to have no idea that what he hears is meant to influence his practice.

Division of duty. — I. If all men performed the same kind of duty, many duties would be left undone. II. If men always selected their own duties, the distribution of workers would be often disproportionate to the work to be done. III. Men in the discharge of one duty should not think lightly of the duty performed by others, or imagine the calling of others more honorable than their own. IV. In the distribution of work the fitness of the worker should be considered. V. All real work, whatever its nature, is honorable.

Bravery. — It is said that a little boy in Holland was returning one night from a village to which he had been sent by his father on an errand, when he noticed the water trickling through a narrow opening in the dyke. He stopped and thought what the consequences would be if the hole was not closed. He knew, for he had often heard his father tell, the sad disasters which happened from such small beginnings. Should he run home and alarm the villagers, it would be dark before they could arrive, and the hole might even then be so large as to defy all attempts to close it. Prompted by these thoughts, he seated himself on the bank of the canal, stopped the opening with his hand, and patiently waited the approach of some villager. But no one came. Hour after hour rolled slowly by, yet there sat the heroic boy, in

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cold and darkness, shivering, wet, and tired, but stoutly pressing his hand against the dangerous breach. All night he stayed at his post. At last the morning broke. A clergyman walking up the canal heard a groan, and looked around to see where it came from. "Why are you here, my child?" he asked, seeing the boy and surprised at his strange position. "I am keeping back the water, sir, and saving the village from being drowned," answered the child, with lips so benumbed with cold that he could scarcely speak. The astonished minister relieved the boy. The dyke was closed, and the danger which threatened hundreds of lives was prevented. — *Anon.*

the preconcerted signal

19—23. (19) **we . . another,** a thin line of defenders, much spread out. (20) **place . . us,** the trumpet was to be blown where the attack was imminent. (21) **half . . appeared,** there were no short-timers among Neh.'s bodyguard. (22) **the people,** as distinguished from the bodyguard. **Let . . Jerusalem,** *see vs.* 12, danger to builders by going far from city. **that . . us,** and safer for them also. **and . . day,** workmen should not live too far fr. their work. By this means all were placed under surveillance. (23) **none . . clothes,** disregard of personal comfort. "At night the working parties retired to rest within the city, but Nehemiah himself, his brothers, his servants, his bodyguard, remained outside, keeping watch by turns, and sleeping in their clothes, until the wall was finished." — *Pulp. Com.* **saving . . washing,**[a] personal ablutions and religious purifications attended to. A very difficult passage, prob. the text is corrupt. The *R. V.* renders "Every one went with his weapon to the water." "We expect some statement of the *length of time* during which Nehemiah and his followers continued without retiring to rest. Perhaps the clause may have run 'each one with his weapon in his hand for a full month of days.' The Syriac version 'we will not put off our clothes during a month of days' agrees with this suggestion, and the Arabic gives a similar rendering, 'till the end of a month and days.'" — *Cam. B.*

a Or, "Every one went with his weapon for water" (Jud. v. 11).

"In the Christian's panoply there is no mention of armor for the back, though there is for the breast, because a Christian soldier should never fly." *Hom. Com.*

The appointed signal. — I. While at work, God's servants are often separated widely from each other. Thus missionaries in their fields of labor. Men of the same town, and who studied side by side at college, are often in toil far asunder. II. When the trumpet of the last day is blown, the army of workers will be gathered together. III. Let us try to do our work well, and toil patiently, and listen earnestly for the signal that shall tell us that our warfare is accomplished and our toils are over.

"Make the most of time, it flies away so fast; yet method will teach you to save time." — *Goethe.*

Working men. — It is not given to all to be masters of song, like Burns; of art like Palissy or Gibson; of engineering skill, like Stephenson; of critical acumen, like Gifford; or of abstract science, like Ferguson or the elder Herschel; yet these, at first, were all poor or working men, who gained their education by their own efforts — who did battle with pinching poverty, lack of educational means, prejudice of class, and all those lions which stand in the way of men of weaker mold, who let "I dare not" wait upon "I would." All cannot be field-marshals in the army of life; but somewhat lower, yet very honorable grades, have been obtained by men once in the ranks, who while never for a moment despising the labor by which they gained honest bread, were not disposed to consider that working, eating, and sleeping are all that is worth living for. Their daily labor honestly and intelligently performed, they felt themselves to be free citizens of the empire of thought, in which true men rank according to what they essentially are, quite independently of the conditions of their life.

"Oh! what a thing, ye gods, is scorn or pity; heap on me, heaven, the heat of all mankind, load me with envy, malice, detestation; let me be horrid to all apprehension; let the world shun me, so I 'scape but scorn." — *Lee.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

complaints of debt, mortgage and bondage

1—5. (1) **cry . . Jews,** internal strife now increased the toil of the great reformer.[b] "The causes of poverty were three: 1. Over-population; 2. A recent famine; and, 3. The weight of taxation, arising from the large amount annually demanded from the province by the Persians in the way of tribute." (2) **take up,** or buy, as *vs.* 3; having no means of living they asked for rations. The rebuilding of the walls and the fear of war had deranged industry and threatened the poor with ruin. The rich nobles had made merchandise of this condition to enslave the children of the poor. (3) **We . . lands,** *etc.*, to such extremities were they reduced. (4) **We . . tribute.** *etc.*, borrowed upon usury, *vs.* 7, contrary to law.[c] (5) **Yet . . brethren,**[d] we, the poor, are of the same ancestry as the rich and love our children and patrimony as dearly.

b 2 Cor. vii. 5.

c Ex. xxii. 25.

d Is. lviii. 7.

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"The rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man's the gold for a' that." — *Burns.*

a Ex. xxi. 7; Le. xxv. 39.

"Some have estates and no children to inherit them; others have children and no estates to leave them; those that have both have reason to be thankful; those that have neither may the better be content." —*M. Henry.*

"Covetousness by a greediness of getting more deprives itself of the true end of getting; it loses the enjoyment of what is got." — *Sprat.*

"To save his only care; so things seem right, no matter what they are" — *Churchill.*

"The rich should share and not make a profit out of the common trouble." **bring into bondage,** *i. e.* are on the point of enslaving. **neither . . them,**[a] *R. V.*, "neither is it in our power to help it."

Unbrotherly oppression. — I. The text teaches us that men of the same church who are giving up much for the Lord should be dealt with with consideration. II. That even good men are apt to be forgetful of the claims of others, in their greed and worldly carefulness. III. That love of money is apt to blind us to social claims.

Hopelessness. — Here is a picture from one of Thomas Carlyle's graphic books. "Passing by the workhouse of St. Ives in Huntingdonshire, on a bright day last autumn" (about 1840), "I saw sitting on wooden benches, in front of their Bastile, and within their ring-wall and its railings, some half hundred or more of these men. Tall, robust figures; young mostly, or of middle age; of honest countenance; many of them thoughtful and even intelligent-looking men. They sat there, near by one another; but in a kind of torpor, especially in a silence, which was very striking. In silence; for, alas, what word was to be said? An earth all lying round, crying, Come and till me, come and reap me; — yet we here sit enchanted! In the eyes and brows of these men hung the gloomiest expression, not of anger, but of grief, and shame, and manifold, inarticulate distress, and weariness. They returned my glance with a glance that seemed to say, 'Do not look at us. We sit enchanted here; we know not why.' There was something that reminded me of Dante's hell in the look of all this, and I rode swiftly away." What a dark outlook utter want has! What a dreary nightmare to lie on a human spirit! In the poor wretches whose condition stirred Nehemiah's anger with their want and their hopeless debt and their heart-breaking family separations, as son and daughter went in pawn for bread, there is a scene to smite the buried conscience of the grinding oppressor, and to call forth some natural tears from the eyes of onlooking philanthrophists. "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn."

an assembly is called

6—8. (6) **angry,** righteous indignation at such a want of patriotism and brotherhood. (7) **Then . . myself,** *Heb.* my heart consulted in me. **usury,**[b] the Mosaic law was very careful to prohibit the taking of interest; but it permitted the giving of a pledge regulated by the prin. of charity. This plea of Neh. had no effect upon the hard-hearted money-lenders, *see vs.* 11. **brother,** fellow-citizen. **set . . them,**[c] refer the matter to large and influential gathering. (8) **have redeemed,** *i. e.* Neh. purchased the release of many Jews when put up for sale before his return to Jerus. Now in the holy city he finds the Jews not only ready to sell their brethren, but also to buy them, rather than redeem them. **will . . brethren,** *etc.*, are we to hold in bondage those who by birthright are free?

b Ex. xxii. 25; Le. xxv. 36; Ma. xxv. 27. Usury, from Lat. *usura*, Fr. *usure*, formerly denoted interest, or a sum paid for the *use* of money; now applied to excessive exactions of that kind.

c De xxiii. 4; Ma. xviii 17; 1 Cor. vi. 1-4.

"It is the usual plea of poverty to blame misfortune, when the ill-finished cause of complaint is a work of their own forging. I will either make my fortunes good, or be content they are no worse. If they are not so good as I would they should have been, they are not so bad as I know they might have been. What though I am not so happy as I desire? 'tis well I am not so wretched as I deserve." — *Warwick.*

The passion for power. — Christianity has joined with all history in inspiring me with a peculiar dread and abhorrence of the passion for power, for dominion over men. There is nothing in the view of our Divine Teacher so hostile to His Divine spirit as the lust of domination. This we are accustomed to regard as eminently the sin of the arch-fiend. "By this sin fell the angels." It is the most Satanic of all human passions, and it has inflicted more terrible evils on the human family than all others. It has made the names of kings and priests the most appalling in history. There is no crime which has not been perpetrated for the strange pleasure of treading men under foot, of fastening chains on the body or mind. The strongest ties of nature have been rent asunder, her holiest feelings smothered, parents, children, brothers murdered to secure dominion over man. The people have now been robbed of the necessaries of life, and now driven to the field of slaughter like flocks of sheep to make one man the master of millions. Through this passion government, ordained by God to defend the weak against the strong, to exalt right above might, has up to this time been the great wrong-doer. Its crimes throw those of private men into the shade. Its murders reduce to insignificance those of the bandits, pirates, highwaymen, assassins against whom it undertakes to protect society. Power trampling on right, whether in the person of king or priest, or in the shape of democracies or majorities, is the saddest sight to him who honors human nature and desires its enlargement and happiness. — *W. E. Channing.*

the usurers are rebuked

9—11. (9) **ought . . enemies,**[d] the people of God were, in their individual character, and political affairs to be a pattern to other nations. (10) **might**

d Le. xxv. 36; 1 Sa. xii. 14; Ro. ii. 24; 1 Pet. ii. 12.

exact, *etc., R. V.,* "do lend them money and corn on usury." "Nehemiah himself lent 'on usury' to his countrymen. The words are not, as *A. V.*, 'I . . . and my brethren, *etc.*,' but 'I, my brethren, *etc.*' Nehemiah takes the reply out of the mouth of his opponents. He confesses he is himself not free from blame. For 'his own kinsfolk and dependents' lent 'on usury,' and he, their head and representative, was responsible for them. They may have been generous and forbearing, but they had violated the principle which he was upholding: and in so far Nehemiah accepted the blame of his house. — *Cam. B.* **let . . off,** Neh. invites the nobles to follow him in abandoning this evil and dangerous custom. (11) **hundredth,** = to 12 per cent. per an. bec. paid monthly.[a]

The cost of a good example. — I. To set a good example should be the aim of a servant of God. II. For the sake of doing this it will be necessary to sometimes forego one's personal advantage. III. One should be willing to surrender profit and gain in order that the mind of the worldly man may be impressed with the spirit of the gospel. IV. Thus the world may learn that a Christian regards brotherly love, and the property of the poor, as of greater importance than his own personal gain.

The power of example. — Lord Langdale, looking back upon the admirable example set him by his mother, declared, "If the whole world were put into one scale and my mother into the other, the world would kick the beam." Mrs. Schimmel-Penninck, in her old age, was accustomed to call to mind the personal influence exercised by her mother upon the society amidst which she moved. When she entered a room it had the effect of immediately raising the tone of conversation, and as if purifying the moral atmosphere, all seeming to breathe more freely and stand more erectly. "In her presence," says her daughter, "I became for the time transformed into another person."—*Smiles.*

The alchemy of influence. — There lived once a young girl whose perfect grace of character was the wonder of those who knew her. She wore on her neck a gold locket which no one was ever allowed to open. One day in a moment of unusual confidence, one of her companions was allowed to touch its spring and learn its secret. She saw within these words, — "*Whom having not seen, I love.*" That was the secret of her beautiful life. She had been changed into the same image. — *Drummond.*

12, 13. (12) **will . . them,** in way of interest. **priests . . promise,**[b] oath to confirm their words; and priests as witnesses, that the oath might be regarded as more solemn and binding. (13) **lap,** bosom,[c] *i. e.* of the garment.[d] A malediction to prevent the breaking of this covenant. "This was virtually a threat of confiscation and excommunication."

The promise kept.—I. Observe that the promise was extorted from the people by the arguments of a good man. II. It was made with the knowledge of the loss that would be entailed. III. Although so extorted, and made with this knowledge, it was kept. IV. It was made and kept for example's sake.

Clenching a good resolution. — "In a time of danger we understand a general interest. Every one is called in to take a part in the struggle that we make for liberty. And yet when the toil was a little over some of them acted as if they thought that Providence was not a public friend, but only a sort of a factor to a few private families. It is a misrepresentation of Him who gives us the mercy if we do not make it extensive. He accepts not the persons of princes nor regards the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of His hands. You must not think He is so lavish of His bounty to the great men of the earth merely that they may glitter upon a throne, but be His ministers for good; and this they cannot be if they resolve to confine their influence. Princes love to be called God's representatives, but they usually understand it in no other attribute than His power; whereas, that is uncommunicable; it is a glory that He never gives to another. The chief titles in which He would be represented by them are those of justice and mercy." These strong, brave, and true words were written by Thomas Bradbury more than a century and a half ago, and applied to his own times. The human heart is the same in all ages. It is treacherous Nehemiah knew this. The words of the oppressors were fairseeming. "We will restore." "We will require nothing of them." "We will do as thou sayest." But the very greatness of the promise constitutes its danger. It is too good to be true; needs binding force. The priest's presence will give the oath "legal validity for judicial decisions." It

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[a] "Volney tells us that the usual rate of interest in Syria, in his time, was 20 per cent." — *Trav* ii. 410

"To live with Socrates — with unveiled face — must have made one wise; with Aristides, just; Francis of Assisi must have made one gentle; Savonarola, strong. But to have lived with Christ must have made one like Christ, that is to say, *a Christian.*"-*Drummond.*

"The pulpit only 'teaches' to be honest; the market-place 'trains' to overreaching and fraud; and teaching has not a tithe of the efficiency of training. Christ never wrote a tract, but He went about doing good." — *Horace Mann.*

they promise amendment

[b] Ezr. x. 5; Jer. xxxiv. 8, 9.

[c] Lat. *sinum;* for example of the *effusio sinûs* as a symbolic act, see *Livy* xxi. 18. See Ps. cxxix. 7; Isa. xlix. 22; Ru. iii. 15. Comp. also metaphor of a sling, 1 Sa. xxv. 29; girdle, Jer. xiii. 9-11; pitcher, Jer. xix. 10, 11.

[d] Mat. x. 14, Ac. xiii. 51; xviii. 6.

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We may make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."
— *Longfellow.*

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will also impart solemnity. If tempted to oppress again the awful oath will rise to recollection:—*Hom. Com.*

Nehemiah took no income of the people

14, 15. from . . king,[a] the date of Neh.'s return to Persia; *i. e.* fr. B. C. 445 to 432. **have . . governor,**[b] did not exact the salary due to his office as governor. (15) **taken . . silver,** the word rendered "beside" may mean "at the rate of." So prob. we are to understand th. the former governors received (daily?) "bread and wine to the value of 40 shekels,"=about 25 dollars. **servants . . rule,** "the oppression exercised by the domestics and other hangers-on of rulers is often worse than their own. This is especially the case in the East, where eunuchs and other domestics have been the most fearful tyrants."—*Pulp. Com.* **so . . God,** bec. he feared a just and merciful God, and neither oppressed himself nor suffered his servants to oppress.[c]

a See xiii. 6.

b 1 Co. ix. 4, 15.

The fear of God a principle of action.—Now it will be no unedifying subject if we consider—I. The principle by which he was actuated. By the fear of the Lord we are to understand—1. A respect to His word as the rule of our conduct; 2. His authority as the reason of our conduct; 3. His glory as the end of our conduct. Such being the principle by which Nehemiah was actuated, let us notice—II. The effect it produced on his life and conversation, which should teach us the following lessons. 1. Not to conform ourselves to any other custom till we have examined it with care; 2. Not to suffer ourselves to be biased by any personal interests in forming our judgment of doubtful matters; 3. Not to fear condemning what our consciences do not approve.

c "When the servants of governors oppress the people, it is their master's doing, or at least, their suffering."—*Bp. Sanderson.*

Singularity.—We must learn to say "No." We must dare, if need be, to be singular. Like the young Joseph, when you are tempted astray by seducing voices, let your answer be, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Like the young Daniel, when forbidden pleasures and questionable delights are urged upon your appetites, "be purposed in" your "heart that" you "will not defile" yourself with them, and choose pulse and water with the relish of a good conscience rather than such dainties. Like the same Daniel, when the crowd are flocking at the sound of the sackbut and psaltery to worship some golden image, keep your knees unbent amidst the madness, learn to stand erect though you alone are upright in the midst of a groveling multitude, and protest, "We will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Like Nehemiah, dare to lose money rather than adopt sources of profit which others may use without a thought, but which your conscience shrinks from; and to all the various enticements of pleasure, and gain, and ease, and popular loose maxims for the conduct oppose immovable resistance, founded on a higher law and a mightier motive. "So did not I, because of the fear of God."—*A. Maclaren.*

"Be more prudent for your children than perhaps you have been for yourself. When they, too, are parents they will imitate you, and each of you will have prepared happy generations, who will transmit, together with your memory, the worship of your wisdom."—*La Beaume.*

but supported himself and his house

16—19. (16) **I . . wall,** nor thought of personal gain. Attended exclusively to public work, without thought of private speculations. **neither . . land,**[d] esp. of those who, through poverty, were forced to sell. **all . . work,** they, too, were similarly employed. (17) **at . . rulers,**[e] he abstained fr. all emolument, and observed the rights of hospitality. **beside . . us,** "by this seems to be intended the somewhat numerous class of Jews, who, having resided among the neighboring nations detached themselves from time to time, and came to join their brethren in or near Jerusalem. These were Jews, whose forefathers had never been carried captive to Babylon, but had settled in foreign lands either for purposes of trade or from fear of the invaders."—*Cam. B.* (18) **which . . daily,** *etc.*, Neh. must have been a rich man to have continued this for so many years. **yet for all this,** *etc.*, *i. e.* in spite of all this outlay to support the rulers and the immigrants, I did not demand what rightfully belonged to me. **because . . people,** the tribute was heavy, and the people were employed in great labors. (19) **Think,** *etc.*, Neh. thought of the recompense of the reward.

d See *Juvenal*, viii. 107, on the conduct of Roman governors

e 2 Sa ix. 7; 1 K. xviii. 19.

"There are bad examples which are worse than crimes; and more states have perished from the violation of morality than from the violation of the law."—*Montesquieu.*

Nehemiah's consideration for the poor.—Besides the relief which he afforded to the poorer sort of people by these measures, Nehemiah goes on to show that he spared them also in other ways: (1) In requiring no taxation for the support of himself and court; (2) In declining to buy the lands of the necessitous (*vs.* 16); and (3) In taking his full share of the burden of building the wall (*ibid.*). Thus a single idea pervades the whole chapter.—*Peop. Bib.*

"The turnpike-road to people's hearts, I find, lies through their mouths; or I mistake mankind."—*Warton.*

The governor's table.—Nehemiah calculated the expense of his table not

by the money he paid, but by the provisions consumed by his guests. Such is still the practice in the East. So De la Motraye informs us of the seraglio at Constantinople: "One may judge of the numbers who live in this palace by the prodigious quantity of provisions consumed in it yearly, which some of the hattchis, or cooks, assured me amounted to more than 30,000 oxen, 20,000 calves, 60,000 sheep, 16,000 lambs, 10,000 kids, 100,000 turkeys, geese, and goslings, 200,000 fowls and chickens, 100,000 pigeons, without reckoning wild-fowl or fish, of the last of which he only named 130,000 calcam-bats, or turbots."—*Burder. Perseverance.*—The story of Timour the Tartar, learning a lesson of perseverance under adversity from the spider, is well known and need not be repeated; but not less interesting is the following anecdote of Audubon, the American ornithologist, related by himself. "An accident," he says, "which happened to 200 of my original drawings, nearly put a stop to my researches in ornithology. I shall relate it, merely to show how far enthusiasm—for by no other name can I call my perseverance—may enable the preserver of Nature to surmount the most disheartening difficulties. I left the village of Henderson, in Kentucky, where I resided for several years, to proceed to Philadelphia on business. I looked to my drawings before my departure, placed them carefully in a wooden box, and gave them in charge of a relative, with injunctions to see that no injury should happen to them. My absence was of several months; and when I returned, after having enjoyed the pleasures of home for a few days, I inquired after my box. It was produced and opened; but, reader, feel for me; a pair of Norway rats had taken possession of the whole, and reared a young family among the gnawed bits of paper, which but a few months previous represented nearly 1,000 inhabitants of air! The burning heat which instantly rushed through my brain was too great to be endured without affecting my whole nervous system. I slept for several nights, and the days passed like days of oblivion, until the animal powers, being recalled into action thro' the strength of my constitution, I took up my gun, note-book and pencils, and went forth to the woods as gaily as if nothing had happened. I felt pleased that I might now make better drawings than before; and, ere a period not exceeding three years had elapsed, my portfolio was again filled."—*Smiles.*

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"He was a kind and thankful toad, whose heart dilated in proportion as his skin was filled with good cheer; and whose spirits rose with eating, as some men's do with drink. He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he ate, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of unimaginable luxury."—*Washington Irving.*

"Gluttony is the source of all our infirmities, and the fountain of all our diseases. As a lamp is choked by a superabundance of oil, a fire extinguished by excess of fuel, so is the natural heat of the body destroyed by intemperate diet."—*Burton.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—4. (1) **Sanballat,** *etc.*, see ii. 19; iv. 7. **no breach,** no part left unbuilded. **though . . gates,** the gate-houses were built, but the gates themselves were not hung. (2) **Ono,** nr. Lydda.[a] Perh. at *Kefr-Auna*, ab. 8 ms. E. of Jaffa, and 6 ms. N. of Lydda. They tried to accomplish by deceit what they failed to effect by threats and opposition. Neh. was to select the particular village. **But . . mischief,**[b] Neh. is astute enough to see through the proposition. (3) **sent,** instead of going as they desired. **I . . work,** they could not propose a greater or better. **so . . down,** to leave a great religious duty is a moral coming down. **why . . cease,** he courteously assumes that the only evil that would result fr. his accepting the invitation would be the retarding of the work. (4) **sent . . sort,** to show their earnestness.

the craft of the enemy

[a] 1 Ch. viii. 12.

[b] Ps. xxxvii. 12, 22; Pr. xxvi. 24, 25.

"Of all the evil spirits abroad at this hour in the world, insincerity is the most dangerous."—*Froude.*

Nehemiah's firmness.—I. What efforts men will make to divert us from the service of God. 1. By artifice; 2. By intimidation; 3. By ridicule. II. In what manner we should withstand them. Two things in particular I would notice. 1. His wisdom; 2. His firmness. Let us learn from hence—(1) What are we to expect if we will serve God; (2) How we must act if we would approve ourselves to Him.

"Cunning is none of the best nor worst qualities; it floats between virtue and vice; there is scarce any exigence where it may not, and perhaps ought not to be supplied by prudence."—*Bruyère.*

Persistency.—John Bunyan saw in his dream a gate leading to a beautiful palace. At the gate sat a man with a book to record the names of such as would enter. Around the gate stood armed foes to drive back all who came. At length a man with "a stout countenance" came, and said to the recorder, "Set down my name, sir!" and then, girding on his sword, he set to and fought his way in, "but not before he had given and received many wounds," It is thus that most of enter into life. Persistent opposition beaten back by persistent determination.—*Hom. Com. The will and the way.*—Savonarola broke down in his first sermon, and was humiliated beyond expression. Resolved, however, to succeed, he kept on, preaching to peasants and children, and in the solitude of his own chamber, till at last he acquired a facility of utterance and a command of striking language which made him the prophet

"George III. was a man of firm mind. His speech on the Roman Catholic question shows his character 'I can give up my crown, and retire from power; I

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of his age and the first orator in Italy. Bulwer's whole life was a series of temporary failures, crowned with ultimate triumphs. His first novel was a failure, his first poems were failures; and so were his first speeches. But he fought his way to eminence — fought it thro' defeat and ridicule, till now he has his own enchanted circle, where "none durst walk but he," and stands on one of the three-peaked summits, the compeer of Dickens and Thackeray. — *Matthews.*

"can quit my palace and live in a cottage, I can lay my head on a block, and lose my life; but I can *not* break my oath."—*Twiss.*

5—7. (5) **fifth . . letter,** the previous had been private communications. This is of the nature of a threat. **open,** "an open letter on a delicate subject is in the East an insult, and this step of Sanballat's could only have been taken in order to excite the mind of Nehemiah's subjects, and to bring pressure to bear on him from them. Nehemiah, however, was not to be intimidated, or diverted from his purpose." — *Pulp. Com.* (6) **reported . . heathen,** and the more likely to be false, bec. reported fr. such a quarter. **Gashmu,** or Geshem, *i. e.* it is asserted by persons of standing and reputation. **that . . rebel,** and yet Sanballat, who insinuates the charge, wishes, so he averred, to be friendly with the rebel. There were two rumors: (*a*) The Jews were about to rebel; (*b*) Neh. was on the point of proclaiming himself king. **according . . words,** perhaps equivalent to "and so forth." *See* Ezr. iv. 10, 11, 17. (7) **it . . words,** though it be only a report, the truth of wh. was not proven.

the open letter

In E. Asia, the Persians make up their letters in the form of a roll about six inches long, and a bit of paper is fastened round it with gum, and sealed with an impression of ink, which resembles our printer's ink, but it is not so thick. Letters were, and are still, sent to persons of distinction in a bag or purse, and even to equals they are enclosed, the tie being made with a colored ribbon; but to inferiors, the letters were sent open, or not enclosed in a bag.

Slander. — In St. James' day, as now, it would appear that there were idle men and idle women, who went about from house to house, dropping slander as they went, and yet you could not take up that slander and detect the falsehood there. You could not evaporate the truth in the slow process of the crucible, and then show the residuum of falsehood glittering and visible. You could not fasten upon any word or sentence and say that it was calumny; for in order to constitute slander it is not necessary that the word spoken should be false — half truths are often more calumnious than whole falsehoods. It is not even necessary that a word should be distinctly uttered; a dropped lip, an arched eyebrow, a shrugged shoulder, a significant look, an incredulous expression of countenance, nay, even an emphatic silence, may do the work; and when the light and trifling thing which has done the mischief has fluttered off, the venom is left behind, to work and rankle, to inflame hearts, to fever human existence, and to poison human society at the fountain springs of life. Very emphatically was it said by one whose whole being had smarted under such affliction, "Adders' poison is under their lips." — *F. W. Robertson.* *Zeal in religious enterprises.* — A baronet was one day examining some works of the celebrated sculptor, Mr. Bacon, and observed a bust of Mr. Whitefield among them, which led him to remark, "After all that has been said, this was truly a great man: he was the founder of a new religion." "A new religion, sir!" replied Mr. B. "Yes," said the baronet: "what do you call it?" "Nothing," was the reply, "but the old religion revived with new energy, and treated as if the preacher meant what he said."

"A lie, like a weed, if it is not nipped in the bud, sheds seeds which every wind of gossip will spread far and wide, so that it soon becomes impossible to stamp it out." — *Exp. Bib.*

8, 9. (8) **There . . heart,** a bold, honest, straightforward answer: there is no such rumor; there is no foundation for Sanballat's statements. Neh. perceived that the prime object was to frighten the people. (9) **they . . afraid,** tried to do so; Neh. was not frightened. **Now . . hands,** prayer was his common resource, and God his constant helper.

Nehemiah's bold reply

The toiler's prayer. — "Strengthen my hands." I. Consider how many things tend to weaken them — as the increasing claims of home, as the growing infirmities of age, as the fluctuations in trade and labor reward. II. The source of the workman's strength. Not strikes; but God. III. How God strengthens the workman's hands. By providentially introducing inventions; by increasing skill; by raising up helpers; by restoring health; by infusing cheerfulness into the mind; by granting success.

"It is common for that which is the sense only of the malicious, to be falsely represented by them as the sense of the many." — *M. Henry.*

Men of courage — men of convictions. — This Jewish reformer and liberator reminds us of Martin Luther, the stories of whose boldness have passed into proverbs; and of John Knox, whom Scotland delights to honor. Of him Carlyle tells the following story in his own inimitable way: "In the galleys of the river Loire, whither Knox and the others, after their castle of St. Andrew's was taken, had been sent as galley slaves, some officer or priest one day presented them an image of the Virgin Mother, requiring that they, the blasphemous heretics, should do it reverence. 'Mother! mother of God!'

"False praise can please, and calumny affright none but the vicious and the hypocrite." — *Horace.*

said Knox, when the turn came to him. 'This is no mother of God; this is "a pented bredd" — a piece of wood, I tell you, with paint on it. She is fitter for swimming, I think, than for being worshiped,' added Knox, and flung the thing into he river." Rather dangerous sport, that! "The courage of his convictions" makes a man a hero. — *Hom. Com.* *Ejaculatory prayer.* — Ejaculatory prayer is prayer darted up from the heart to God, not at stated intervals, but in the course of our daily occupations and amusements. The word 'ejaculatory" is derived from the Latin word for a dart or arrow, and there is an idea in it which one would be loth indeed to forfeit. Imagine an English archer strolling through a forest in the old times of Crecy and Agincourt, when the yeomen of this island were trained to deliver their arrows with the same unfailing precision as "a left-handed Gibeonite" discharging a stone bullet from his sling. A bird rises in the brushwood under his feet, a bird of gorgeous plumage or savory flesh. He takes an arrow from his quiver, draws his bow to its full stretch, and sends the shaft after the bird with the speed of lightning. Scarcely an instant elapses before his prey is at his feet. It has been struck with unerring aim in the critical part, and drops on the instant. Very similar in the spiritual world is the force of what is called ejaculatory prayer. The Christian catches suddenly a glimpse of some blessing, deliverance, relief, a longing after which is induced by the circumstances into which he is thrown. Presently it shall be his. As the archer first draws the bow in towards himself, so the Christian retires, by a momentary act of recollection, into his own mind, and there realizes the presence of God. Then he launches one short, fervent petition into the ear of that awful Presence, throwing his whole soul into the request. And lo! it is done! The blessing descends, prosecuted, overtaken, pierced, fetched down from the vault of heaven by the winged arrow of prayer. — *Goulburn.*

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"Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny."—*Shakespeare.*

"Nothing is so swift as calumny; nothing is more easily uttered; nothing more readily received; nothing more widely dispersed."—*Cicero.*

"I never listen to calumnies, because, if they are untrue, I run the risk of being deceived, and if they be true, of hating persons not worth thinking about."—*Montesquieu.*

10—14. (10) **Shemaiah** (*Jehovah heareth him*), a bad man with a good name; a common name, for there are 20 ref. to in Scripture who bore it. **who . . up,** he was "shut up" (*a*) in the sense that he was prevented by ceremonial pollution from mixing in the society of his countrymen or from approaching the temple; or (*b*) he had shut himself up in his house in order to show by a symbolical action that Nehemiah was prophetically warned to take refuge in some hiding-place. *Cf.* 1 Ki. xxii. 11; or (*c*) "he pretended that he was himself in personal danger as a friend and supporter of the governor, and that therefore he found it necessary to keep himself in seclusion. Thus by his own attitude he would try to work on the fears of Nehemiah." **Let . . temple,** as if the place would prove his sincerity, or sanctify the deed. **yea . . thee,** claiming that he had been warned as a prophet to save Neh. fr. assassination. (11) **Should . . flee,** *etc.*, he who is doing God's work by a special call may expect to be kept in safety without neglecting his work to save his life. **being . . life,** Neh. was not a priest and had no right to take refuge in the temple. This was Shemaiah's purpose to lead Neh. to trespass against the law. Nu. xviii. 7. (12) **perceived,**[a] by reflection, or discovery of the plot. **Tobiah and Sanballat,** the transposition of these two names points out who had done the bribing. These adversaries of Neh. were in communication with the enemies of Ezra and Neh. within the city. Tobiah was related with the aristocracy of Jerus. (13) **Therefore,** for this reason. **afraid,** for my life. **and sin,** "by violating the sanctity of the house of God." (14) **My . . works,**[b] Neh. commended the whole case to the direction of God.

the craft of Shemaiah

a Ez. xiii. 22; Ps. lvi. 2, 3.

b Ps. lxii. 4; Ez. xiii. 17; 2 Ti iv. 14.

"Our firmness will be called obstinacy; our zeal rashness; and our activity ambition; nay, we shall be warned that we are about to affront all our friends, and turn them into enemies; and to bring ourselves into dangers and difficulties, from which we cannot extricate ourselves, unless we follow other counsels and act more circumspectly."—*Scott.*

Christian firmness. — I will take occasion from this particular occurrence to set before you — 1. The subtlety with which our great adversary will assault us. He will propose to us — 1. To neglect our social duties, with a view to the furtherance of our spiritual welfare; 2. To conform to the world with a view to conciliate their regard; 3. To use undue means with a view to the attainment of some desirable end. II. The firmness with which we should resist him. We should set the Lord ever before us, bearing in mind — 1. Our relation to Him; 2. Our obligation to Him; 3. Our expectations from Him; 4. The interest which God Himself has in the whole of our conduct. Learn— (1) to expect temptation; (2) To place your entire confidence in God in every circumstance. — *Simeon.*

Should such a man as I flee? — Cyprian, when on his way to suffer martyrdom, was told by the emperor that he would give him time to consider whether he had not better cast a grain of incense into the fire, in honor of

"When the senate informed Augustus of what some had said of him, 'Tush,' said he, 'we are not at leisure to listen to every slander that's raised of us.' A Christian should be (as is said of Severus, the emperor) careful of what is to be

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done by him, but careless of what is said of him." — *Venning.*

"The worthiest persons are frequently attacked by slanders, as we generally find that to be the best fruit which the birds have been pecking at." — *Bacon.*

idols, than die so degraded a death. The martyr, nobly answered, "There needs no deliberation in the case." John Huss, when at the stake, about to suffer for his attachment to Christ, was offered pardon if he would recant. His reply was, "I am here to suffer death." Ann Askew, when asked, under similar circumstances, to avoid the flames, answered, "I came not here to deny my Lord and Master." Mr. Thomas Hawkes, an Essex gentleman, said on a like occasion, "If I had a hundred bodies, I would suffer them all to be torn in pieces rather than recant." *Human prescience* —Purity can detect the presence of the evil which it does not understand. Just as the dove which has never seen a hawk trembles at its presence, and just as a horse rears uneasily when the wild beast unknown and new to it is near, so innocence understands, yet understands not, the meaning of the unholy look, the guilty tone, the sinful manner. It shudders and shrinks from it by a power given to it, like that which God has conferred on the unreasoning mimosa. Sin gives the same power, but differently. Innocence apprehends the approach of evil by the instinctive tact of contrast; guilt, by the instinctive consciousness of similarity. — *F. W. Robertson.*

the wall is finished

15—19. (15) **Elul,** the sixth mo., corresponds with the latter part of Aug. and the beginning of Sept. **in . . days,** one of the most extraordinary instances of rapid building on record. Neh.'s haste reflected his apprehension lest by some trick his adversaries might gain the ear of Artaxerxes and induce his recall to the royal court. (16) **they . . eyes,**[a] this wd. be often the case if the Ch. were faithful and diligent. **they . . God,** so great a work, done so soon, with such small resources, under such great opposition. (17) **nobles . . them,** those hindered who should have been the most earnest helpers. Neh.'s enemies held high social and religious position. (18) **Shechaniah,** Ezr. ii 5. Hence their correspondence was plausible. (19) **reported . . me,** they tried to annoy him with praise of his enemies, so that he would go out of the city to hold conference with Sanballat and his allies. "It has been well remarked that the rustic tricksters from Samaria were no match for a trained courtier." **and . . him,**[b] revealed his plans and purposes,[c] to the foe. **And . . fear,** wh. armed with private information, he thought he could do.

The expedition with which the wall of Jerusalem was built. — It will be profitable to inquire — I. How it was completed in so short a time. We find that the means whereby this great work was accomplished were — 1. The wisdom and energy of the governor; 2. The union and the perseverance of the people; 3. The peculiar blessing of their God. Having thus traced Nehemiah's success to its true cause, we proceed to set before you — II. The great lesson which we are to learn from it. That we all ought to engage in the work of the Lord with energy and perseverance.

The bad man praised. — The nobles of Judah reporting Tobiah's "good deeds" to Nehemiah is a piece of humorous irony often repeated. What heroes this world does select! "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Historians have made rose-colored villains into heroes. Poets have set to bewitching music names that ought to "blister the tongue." Preachers have written original and beautiful sermons to whitewash poor Cain and Judas and Pilate, and, like the Scotch minister of the story, have looked with almost admiration, at least with sympathy, on the "poor deil." Sometimes this is mawkish perverted sentiment, sometimes cant. — *Hom. Com.*

The builders. —

All are architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show,
Strengthens and supports the rest.

In the elder days of art,
Builders wrought with greatest care,
Each minute and unseen part;
For the gods see everywhere.

a Ps. xiv. 15; cxxvi. 2, 3.

b Le. xix. 16; Pr. xx. 19; xxvi. 20.

c *Heb.* matters.

"Man has but one state of probation, and that of an exceeding short continuance: and, therefore, since he cannot serve God long, he should serve Him much; employ every minute of his life to the best advantage; thicken his devotions; hallow every day in his calendar by religious exercises, and every action in his life by holy reference and designments; for let him make what haste he can to be wise, 'Time will outrun him."—*J. Norris.*

"God's work may be done, well done, and successfully, and yet different methods taken in doing it; which is a good reason why we should neither arraign others' management, nor make our own standard."— *M. Henry.*

Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen;
Make the house, where God may dwell,
Beautiful, entire, and clean.

Else our lives are incomplete,
Standing in these walls of Time,
Broken stairways, where the feet
Stumble as they seek to climb.

Thus alone can we attain
To those turrets, where the eye
Sees the world as one vast plain,
And one boundless reach of sky.—*Longfellow.*

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A listless youth approached some fishermen, expressing a wish for a basket of fish. An old fisherman advised him to cast a line for himself. He did so, and soon found his wish gratified.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

the gates are set up

1—4. (1) **set . . doors,** left to the last, *see* vi. 1. **porters,** of the temple.[a] Neh. placed all the city gates under the care of these Levitical porters and singers, who were the ancient "police." (2) **gave . . Hanani,**[b] i. 2. **palace,** fortress, ii. 8. **charge,** over the gates, *etc.* **feared . . many,**[c] *i. e.* more than most; a good qualification for office. One who feared God would be just towards man. (3) **until . . hot,** the day well begun, and light. **while . . by,** *etc.*, the regularly appointed watch were personally to superintend the opening and closing of the doors. **every . . house,** "every man was to belong to some particular guard-house, and take his turn in sentinel duty." (4) **city . . great,** *Heb.* broad in spaces. **but . . builded,** hence needed the more careful watching.

a 1 Ch. ix. 17, 27.

b Neh. x. 1, 23.

c Ex. xviii. 21.

Something left undone. —

Labor with what zeal we will,
Something still remains undone,
Something uncompleted still
Waits the rising of the sun.

Waits, and will not go away;
Waits, and will not be gainsaid;
By the cares of yesterday
Each to-day is heavier made:

Till at length the burden seems
Greater than our strength can bear,
Heavy as the weight of dreams,
Pressing on us everywhere. —*Longfellow.*

"One reason why the bulk of the Jews (who were originally pastoral, and lovers of agriculture) might rather choose to live in the country than at Jerusalem, was because it was more suited to their genius and manner of life; but at this time their enemies were so enraged to see the walls built again, and so restless in their designs to keep the city from rising to its former splendor, that it terrified many from coming to dwell there, thinking themselves more safe in the country, where their enemies had no pretense to disturb them." — *Stackhouse.*

"*He was a faithful man and feared God above many.*" — It is said of Obadiah that he feared the Lord greatly. Every saint fears the Lord, but every saint does not greatly fear Him. Oh, there are but few Obadiahs in the world. I mean among the saints on earth. As Paul said of Timothy, "I have none 'like minded,'" so it may be said of some concerning the fear of the Lord: they have scarce a fellow. Hananiah had got, as to the exercise of and growth in this grace, the start of many of his brethren. He "feared God above many." Now, then, seeing this grace admits of degrees, and is in some stronger, and in some weaker, let us be all awakened, as to other graces, so to this grace also; that like as you abound in everything, in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in *this* grace also. — *Bunyan.*

the register of the genealogy

5—11. (5) **And . . heart,** *etc.*, as he sought God's help, so also he attributes to Him all he was led to do. **reckoned by genealogy,** "As Nehemiah contemplated the vast empty spaces within the city walls, and considered with himself how they might best be peopled, the thought came to him — and he hailed it as a Divine inspiration — that by taking a census of the people he might pave the way for some transfer of the inhabitants of the country districts into the capital." — *Pulp. Com.* **And . . register,** wh. is here

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inserted. **them . . first,** with Zerubbabel, *etc.*, ab. 100 yrs. bef.[a] (6) **province,** Ezr. ii. 1–70. (7) **Azariah,** or Seraiah.[b]

The nobleness of religious decision. — If there be a loftiness and nobleness in decision, it is most lofty, most noble in religion. You need not go for instances of this, and for the admiration which they are calculated to afford, to such examples as Foster brings before you in his inimitable essay, to the examples selected from history, to Marius, sitting amidst the ruins of Carthage, to Pizarro, to Richard III., to Cromwell, nor even to those drawn from the records of Scripture, to Daniel and to Shadrach, Meshach Abednego; nor to those supplied by Christian martyrology, to John Huss and Jerome of Prague; nor to those borrowed from the annals of philanthrophy, to Howard, to Wilberforce, and to Mrs. Fry — these are all grand, impressive, beautiful, but they are not the only ones that may be cited; nor with whatever lurid or milder radiance they may be surrounded and emblazoned, are they those which are the most appropriate for you to contemplate, or which perhaps will have with you the greatest weight. Look at that manly, pious young man, who has left the shelter and protecting wing of his father's house and home, and is now placed in a modern establishment, and surrounded by fifty or a hundred fellow-shopmen, among whom he finds not one to countenance him in the maintenance of his religious profession, and the greater part of whom select him on account of his religion as the object of their pity, their scorn, their hatred or their contempt. Among them are infidels, who ply him with flippant and specious cavils against the Bible; pleasure-takers who use every effort to engage him in their Sunday parties and their polluting amusements; men of light morality, who assail his integrity; a few lovers of science and general knowledge, who endeavor to allure him from religion to philosophy. How fearful is his situation — and how perilous! Usually it would be better to leave it, for how few can hold fast their integrity in such a situation. But there he — this decided, this inflexible, this noble-minded youth — stands firm, unyielding, decided. He is neither ashamed nor afraid of his principles — he neither denies nor conceals them. Before that laughing crowd he bends his knees and prays — in presence of that jeering set he opens his Bible and reads — from that pleasure-taking company he breaks off, amidst their scoffs to go to the house of God. He bears the peltings of their pitiless storm of ridicule or rage, unruffled in temper, unmoved in principle, and only casts upon his persecutors a look of gentle pity, or utters a mild word of expostulation, or silently presents the prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He keeps by his firmness the whole pack at bay. Some are half subdued by his wonderful firmness. A secret admiration is bestowed upon him by others, while even they who hate him most, often are astonished most at his inflexible resolution, and it may be that one and another, at length, take hold of the skirt of his garment and say to him, "We must go with you, for we see God is with you." Talk of decision of character — there it is in all its force, beauty and utility. I know of no case in God's world in which it is exemplified with more power than in that. — *J. A. James.*

[a] B. C. 536.

[b] Ezr. ii. 2.

"Some decent regulated pre-eminence, some preference—not exclusive appropriation—given to birth, is neither unnatural, nor unjust, nor impolitic." — *Burke.*

"He who boasts of his lineage boasts of that which does not properly belong to him" — *Seneca.*

"What heredity has to do for us is determined outside ourselves. No man can select his own parents. But every man to some extent can choose his own environment. His relation to it, however largely determined by heredity in the first instance, is always open to alteration. And so great is his control over environment and so radical its influence over him, that he can so direct it as either to undo, modify, perpetuate, or intensify the earlier hereditary influence within certain limits." — *Drummond.*

Elam and others

12—17. (15) **Binnui,** or Bani.

The family. — There are the two opposite poles of masculine and feminine, which contain within them the entire of our humanity — which together, not separately, make up the whole of man. Then there are the diversities in the degrees and kinds of affection. For when we speak of family affection, we must remember that it is made up of many diversities. There is nothing more different than the love which the sister bears toward the brother, compared with that which the brother bears toward the sister. The affection which a man bears towards his father is quite distinct from that which he feels towards his mother; it is something quite different towards his sister; totally diverse, again, towards his brother. And then there are diversities of character. First the mature wisdom and stern integrity of the father; then the exuberant tenderness of the mother. And then one is brave and enthusiastic, another thoughtful and another tender. One is remarkable for being full of rich humor; another is sad, mournful, even melancholy. Again, besides these, there are diversities of condition in life. First, there is the heir, sustaining the name and honor of the family; then, perchance, the soldier, in whose career all the anxiety and solicitude of the family is centered, then the man of business, to whom they look up, trusting his advice, expecting his

"It is, indeed, a blessing when the virtues of noble races are hereditary; and do derive themselves from the imitation of virtuous ancestors." — *Nabb.*

"Some men by ancestry are only the shadow of a mighty name." — *Lucan.*

counsel ; lastly, perhaps, there is the invalid, from the very cradle trembling between life and death, drawing out all the sympathies and anxieties of each member of the family, and so uniting them all more closely from their having one common point of sympathy and solicitude. — *F. W. Robertson.*

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18—23. (18) **Adonikam,** *etc.*, Ezra. ii. 3–19.

Happiness. — The most obvious lesson in Christ's teaching is that there is no happiness in having or getting anything, but only in giving. And half the world is on the wrong scent in pursuit of happiness. They think it consists in having and getting, and in being served by others. It consists in giving and in serving others. He that would be great among you, said Christ, let him serve. He that would be happy, let him remember that there is but one way — it is more blessed, it is more happy, to give than to receive. — *Drummond.*

Adonikam and others

"A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one and destroy the other "— *Bacon.*

"Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die " — *Young.*

24—28. (24) **Hariph,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 20–24. (25) **Gibeon,** "Gibbar (prob. a mistake) in Ezra."

The indomitable force of will. — The last Hastings of Daylesford had . . . . presented the parish living to his second son, and it was in his house, many years later, that Warren Hastings, his grandson, was born. The boy learned his letters at the village school of Daylesford, on the same bench with children of the peasantry. He played in the fields which his fathers had owned ; and what the loyal and brave Hastings of Daylesford had been, was ever in the boy's thoughts. His young ambition was fired, and it is said that one summer's day, when only seven years old, as he laid him down on the bank of the stream which flows thro' the old domain, he formed in his mind, the resolution that he would yet recover possession of the family lands. It was the romantic vision of a mere boy, yet he lived to realize it. The dream became a passion and he pursued his determination thro' youth up to manhood with that calm but indomitable force of will which was the most striking peculiarity of his character. The poor orphan boy became one of the most powerful men of his time. He retrieved the fortunes of his line, bought back the old estate and rebuilt the family mansion. "When under a tropical sun he ruled 50 millions of Asiatics." — *Smiles. Fruits of religious decision.* — More than half a century ago, a boy was put apprentice to one of our ordinary trades. There was nothing very remarkable about him, with perhaps one exception — he promised to be a pious lad. But alas ! in his case as in many others, his early goodness passed away. He had to sleep with an ungodly apprentice ; and, on retiring to rest, shame of being seen to pray so shook his firmness that, like his wicked companion, he hurried to bed without bending the knee. Again and again this was done. His regard for old lessons got less and less ; by-and-by he threw them off altogether, and seemed like a boy who had never known anything better. In course of time, however, another apprentice came to his master. He also slept in the same room. Like a lad accustomed to pray, the new apprentice quietly knelt to offer prayer to God on retiring to rest. This was seen with deep emotion by the other. Conscience at once and severely condemned his want of firmness. Shame to pray in the presence of his fellow-apprentice was the first step in his downward course. The poor unhappy and fallen youth was once more brought to reflection, and, with a firmer purpose than ever, he consecrated himself to the service of God. In after life he became a useful and honored minister ; and a month or two ago after turning very many to righteousness, he passed away to glory This minister was the beloved and reverend John Angell James of Birmingham . How much harm may we get from one act of indecision, and how much good may be done by one act of decision !

Hariph and others

"It is of no consequence of what parents any man is born, so that he be a man of merit." — *Horace*

"Good deeds lie in the memory of age like the coral islands, green and sunny, amidst the melancholy waste of ocean." — *D Thomas.*

Good deeds, like sunbeams, shine by a lustre purely their own; nor can their brightness be tarnished by all the calumnies of the slanderer's tongue.

"He that does good to another man does also good to himself, not only in the consequences but in the very act of doing it, for the conscience of well-doing is an ample reward "— *Seneca.*

"True fortitude is seen in great exploits that justice warrants and that wisdom guides "— *Addison.*

29—33. (29) **Kirjath-jearim,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 25–29.

Great men of humble origin. — Was it not an obscure monk who split in twain the Catholic church, and a still obscurer countryman of his, who, by the invention of the printing press, revolutionized the whole intellectual aspect of society? Have you never heard of Clarkson, a man originally of no mark or promise, who by the accidental reading of a pamphlet when the slave-trade was at the zenith of its popularity. was led to see its horrors, solemnly dedicated himself to its extinction, and amid scorn and obloquy, lived to accomplish a purpose which, at its annunciation was ridiculed as an enthusiast's dream. — *Wm. Matthews.*

men of Kirjath-jearim and others

"Be happy but be so by piety." — *Mme. de Stael.*

"To fear is to conquer our fate " — *Campbell*

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the other Elam and others

"Philosophy does not regard pedigree; she did not receive Plato as a noble, but she made him so." — *Seneca.*

the priests

a 1 Ch. xxiv. 7–9, 14.

"Of all vanities of fopperies the vanity of high birth is the greatest. True nobility is derived from virtue, not from birth. Titles indeed may be purchased, but virtue is the only coin that makes the bargain valid." — *Burton.*

34—38. (33) **Men . . Nebo,** the word "other" has prob. come into the text by accident fr. *vs.* 34. (34) **Elam,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 30–35.

Great men. — How do I know Shakespeare or Dante? By communing with their word and thoughts. Many men know Dante better than their own fathers. He influences them more. As a spiritual presence he is more near to them, as a spiritual force more real. Is there any reason why a greater than Shakespeare or Dante, who also walked this earth, who left great words behind Him, who has great works everywhere in the world now, should not also instruct, inspire, and mold the characters of men? — *Drummond.*

39—42. (39) **priests,** *etc.*,[a] Ezr. ii. 36–39.

Man not dependent on good fortune. —

He's not the happy man to whom is given
A plenteous fortune by indulgent heaven;
Whose gilded roofs on shining columns rise,
And painted walls enchant the gazer's eyes;
Whose table flows with hospitable cheer,
And all the various bounty of the year;
Whose valleys smile, whose gardens breathe the spring,
Whose carved mountains bleat and forests sing:
For whom the cooling shade in summer twines,
While his full cellars give their generous wines;
From whose wide fields unbounded autumn pours
A golden tide into his swelling stores;
Whose winter laughs; for whom the liberal gales
Stretch the big sheet, and toiling commerce sails;
Whom yielding crowds attend, and pleasure serves;
While youth, and health, and vigor string his nerves. — *J. Thomas.*

the Levites

43—45. (43) **Levites,** Ezr. ii. 40. (44) **singers,** Ezr. ii. 41. (45) **porters,** Ezr. ii. 42.

Missionaries and music. — The Rev. Jonathan Lees, of the London Mission, Tienstin, North China, has sent Mr. Sankey two little Chinese books, one containing the words of twenty of the well-known *Songs and Solos*, which he has translated into Chinese, and the other giving the music of ten of them printed in the Chinese version of the tonic sol-fa notation. Mr. Lees says the songs have already proved their fitness to deepen and cheer the Christian life in a most pleasing way. He says the musical faculty is one which seems well-nigh extinct in China, but the northern people are far ahead of the southern in this capacity, and the Tientsin church bids fair to be a musical one. Mr. Lees adds that this is not the first attempt to introduce the tonic sol-fa, but it is in a new form, and one which is thoroughly Chinese. The Rev. J. S. Barradale, another of the missionaries, writing to a friend in England, explains why the ordinary staff notation can never be used by the Chinese. Their letters are ranged in perpendicular columns, and they read from the right-hand side of the page to the left. The tonic sol-fa letters can be placed in this way with ease, but not so with the staff, which is necessarily horizontal. Mr. Barradale says that "the sol-fa notation can be made to retain all its easiness in its Chinese dress, while thoroughly conforming to Chinese usage."

"God sent his singers upon earth
With songs of sadness and of mirth
That they might touch the hearts of men,
And bring them back to heaven again."
— *Longfellow.*

"Tones are the cadences which emotion gives to thought." — *Herbert Spencer*

Quieting songs. —

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction,
That follows after prayer.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away. — *Longfellow.*

the Nethinim

"Being well satisfied that for a man who thinks himself to be somebody, there is nothing more disgraceful than to hold himself up as honored,

46—51. (46) **Nethinims,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 43–45.

The genealogy of the poor. — I. The records of the poor have seldom a place in human history. II. The working man is not overlooked in the Word of God. III. The lowest work, even that of the porter, is worthy of note. IV. Much of the world's noblest undertakings is dependent on the hodman.

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The Nethinim. — The appearance of the Nethinim in the genealogies is a forcible illustration of the impartial grace of God. That grace which would bring in all the Gentiles as children was foretokened by the brotherly position of the Nethinim (of Gentile blood) among the people of God — the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. — *Crosby. Genealogies.* — The frequent use of the patronymic in Greek, the stories of particular races, the lists of priests, and kings, and conquerors at the games preserved at Sparta, Olympia, and elsewhere; the hereditary monarchies and priesthoods; the division, as old as Homer, into tribes, fratriæ, and γένη, and the existence of the *tribe*, the *gens*, and the *familia* among the Romans; the Celtic clans, the Saxon families using a common patronymic, and their royal genealogies running back to the Teutonic gods, these are among the many instances that may be cited to prove the strong family and genealogical instinct of the ancient world. Coming nearer to the Israelites, it will be enough to allude to the hereditary principle and the vast genealogical records of the Egyptians as regards their kings and priests, and to the passion for genealogies among the Arabs, mentioned by Layard and others, in order to show that the attention paid by the Jews to genealogies is in entire accordance with the manners and tendencies of their contemporaries. — *Hom. Com.*

not on his own account, but for the sake of his forefathers. Yet hereditary honors are a noble and splendid treasure to descendants."–*Plato.*

"The influence of a pious example descends downwards from the head of a family, diffuses itself over the main body, till it reaches the very lowest of it." — *Seed.*

"Title and ancestry render a good man more illustrious, but an ill one more contemptible. Vice is infamous though in a prince, and virtue honorable, though in a peasant." — *Addison*

"As they who deck themselves have the looking-glass before their eyes, so they who go about any worthy thing must have the example of worthy men in mind, and do it in that manner that others may not scorn to make them their example." — *Cawdray.*

52–56. (52) **Besai,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 46–54.

Reason. —

Two angels guide
The path of man, both aged and yet young,
As angels are, ripening through endless years,
On one he leans; some call her Memory,
And some Tradition; and her voice is sweet,
With deep, mysterious accords: the other
Floating above, holds down a lamp which streams
A light divine, and searching on the earth,
Compelling eyes and footsteps. Memory yields,
Yet clings with loving check, and shines anew,
Reflecting all the rays of that bright lamp
Our angel Reason holds. We had not walked
But for Tradition; we walk evermore
To higher paths, by brightening Reason's lamp.
— *George Eliot.*

57–62. (57) **children . . servants,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 55–60. (61) **fathers' house,** *R. V.*, "fathers' houses." **seed,** pedigree.

the children of Solomon's servants

The restoration of man. — A researcher of art in Italy, reading in some book that there was a portrait of Dante painted by Giotto, was led to suspect where it had been placed. There was an apartment used as an outhouse for the storing of wood, hay, and the like. He besought and obtained permission to examine it. Clearing out the rubbish, and experimenting upon the white-washed wall, he soon detected the signs of the long-hidden portrait. Little by little with loving skill he opened up the sad, thoughtful, stern face of the old Tuscan poet. Sin has done for man what the whitewash did for the painting. It has covered over the likeness of God upon the soul; and it is only by the Spirit of God Himself that the long-hidden likeness can be manifested again.

"Pride of origin, whether high or low, springs from the same principle in human nature; one is but the positive, the other the negative, people of a single weakness." — *Lowell.*

63–65. (63) **priests,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 61–63. (65) **Tirshatha,**[a] governor, *i. e.* Zerubbabel. **till . . Thummim,** Ezr. ii. 63.

the register of some of the priests lost

Service versus self-seeking. — Napoleon sought to rule men; Washington aimed to serve them. You see the results of the two systems in what is left of them. At Waterloo to-day you find a great waste desert, in the centre of which is simply a mound to commemorate a great battle. But around the field of Bunker Hill sprang up the great city of colleges and schools, and those influences that went out through all the world; that is the result of the service which Washington rendered in contrast to the domination of Napoleon. You find at Mount Vernon a very plain structure for the tomb of Washington, scarcely to be noticed, except one goes out of his way to see it. Napoleon's tomb is in the heart of Paris, and a marble casket holds his remains. Washington's remains are as broad as the continent. That is the result of service as opposed to self-seeking. — *Alexander McKenzie.*

[a] Neh. viii. 9.

"If it is fortunate to be of noble ancestry, it is not less so to be such as that people do not care to be informed whether you are noble or ignoble." — *Bruyère.*

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the number of the whole congregation

"Let the world have their maygames, their dancings, their puppet shows, hobby-horses, bagpipes, balls, and whatever sports please them best, providing they be followed with discretion."—*Burton.*

the contributions to the work

66—69. (66) **The . . together,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 64.

A difficulty well met. — There was once a difficulty amongst the singers of Dr. Samuel West's church, New Bedford, United States, and it was reported that the choir would not sing a note on the next Sunday. The doctor commenced that morning's worship by giving out Watts's hymn, "Come ye, who love the Lord." After reading it through, he looked up very emphatically at the choir, and said, "You will begin at the second verse :—

"'Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God.'"

They sang that hymn.

70—73. (70) **some,** part. **Tirshatha,** either in addition to the information contained in Ezra, or described in greater detail. **the treasure,** *R. V.*, "the treasury," also *vs.* 71, viii. 9. **drams,**[a] darics. The daric. an anc. Persian gold coin = about 5 dollars. (71) **pound of silver,** a *mina* = 60 shekels = about 20 dollars. (72) **garments,** a customary gift in the E. (73) **So,** *etc.*, hence the use of this register in guiding the people to their cities. **month,** Tisri,[b] ch. vii. should terminate with the words, "dwelt in their cities," as it does in the LXX. "Having completed the account of what happened in the sixth month, Elul (ch. vi. 15), and transcribed the register which he had the good fortune to discover at that date, Nehemiah proceeds to relate events belonging to the seventh month." — *Pulp. Com.*

Proportionate giving. — I. The chiefs of the people gave with a princely munificence. II. The rest of the people gave as much collectively, by each one giving as much as he could. III. The gifts of the poor not to be despised; the widow's mite was registered in heaven.

Rest from toil. — One great danger in our time is that every man is so active; every man has so much to think about and to do. Nothing moves slowly. If we had the refashioning of the year, we would make it twenty-four months. If we had the refashioning of the day, we would make it forty-eight hours. If we had our own refashioning, we would kindle in ourselves a fire that would burn forty-eight hours without replenishing. Intensity of life, over-wrought occupation comes from the very social, political and commercial conditions in which we live. And, as if this were not enough, we try, by strong stimulus, to wind up the flagging nerve, worn out by too much excitement. We want, in that way, to make twelve hours do the work of twenty-four. — *Beecher.*

a Ezr. ii. 69.

b Ezr. iii. 1.

Their donations consisted principally of garments. This would appear a singular description of gifts to be made by any one amongst us; but in the East a present of garments is conformable to the prevailing sentiments and customs of society.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

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the people gathered to hear the law

1—4. (1) **all . . man,** to celebrate the Feast of Trumpets.[c] **the street,** *R. V.*, "the broad place." **into . . gate,** in S. rampart.[d] **they . . scribe,** who had come to Jerus. ab. 12 yrs. bef. Neh.[e] The people who have not kept the law are nevertheless anxious to hear it. The omission of Ezra's name up to this point is very singular in view of the social conditions wh. confronted Neh. "It is suggested that Ezra, after accomplishing the reforms described in Ezr. ix., x., returned to Babylon; that after an absence of 12 years, he revisited Jerusalem in time to witness the completion of the city walls by Nehemiah, and was requested by the people to renew his former practice of expounding the law in public." — *Cam. B.* Others sugges that this whole chapter recounts the events wh. took place in 457 B. C., the second year after Ezra's arrival, just before his great reformation. *Cf.* 1 Esdras ix. 37 *ff.*, and Josephus. **bring . . Moses,** the wall being finished the Jews become jealous to revive the distinctive national characteristics. They were ready now to adopt the civil and religious policy of Ezra and Neh. (2) **all . . understanding,**[f] all old enough, or who knew the language. **seventh month,** *i. e.* the opening day of the civil year and also of the sabbatical month. (3) **ears . . law,** a long service, but an attentive congregation. (4) **pulpit,** *lit.* tower. **and . . stood,** hence this pulpit must have been a high platform, to afford standing-room for 13 persons, prob. laymen.

The oldest pulpit. — This is the first account we have of a pulpit. In structure it was evidently not a very elegant one. It was extemporized for the occasion; it was more of a platform than modern pulpit. The words of the text leads us to make three remarks on this old pulpit. I. It was occupied by duly qualified men. They were the recognized teachers of Israel

c "First day of 7th eccles. year; and New Year's day of the civil year." Le. xxiii. 24; 1 K. viii. 2.

d Through this gate the Nethinim brought water into the temple, and there was a large area bef. it.

e B. C. 458, with commission fr. Artaxerxes, Ezr. vii. 8-28; viii. 1.

f De. xxxi. 12.

"Five or six hours together they spent in holy duties, whereas the most amongst us think long of an hour; they sit, as it were, in the stocks while

A greater curse to Christianity is scarcely to be found than unqualified preachers. II. This old pulpit was attended by an exemplary congregation. 1. It was a congregation disposed to hear; 2. It was a congregation competent to understand; 3. It was a congregation deeply interested in the discourse; 4. It was a congregation inspired with religious reverence. III. This old pulpit accomplished the grand end of preaching. 1. It imparted spiritual instruction; 2. It made a deep religious impression; 3. It stimulated a practical godliness. — *D. Thomas.*

Long religious services. — Complaints against long religious services are very frequent. Few things appear so bad to some persons as to be kept in the house of God more than one or two hours. Let us see how it was in the seventeenth century. Mr. Howe was then minister of Great Torrington, in Devonshire. His labors here were characteristic of the times. On the public fasts, it was his common method to begin about nine in the morning, with a prayer for about a quarter of an hour, in which he begged a blessing on the work of the day; he afterwards read and expounded a chapter of psalm, in which he spent about three-quarters of an hour; then prayed an hour; preached another hour; and prayed again for half an hour. After this he retired, and took a little refreshment for a quarter of an hour or more, the people singing all the while. He then returned to the pulpit, prayed for another hour, gave then another sermon of about an hour's length, and so concluded the service of the day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, with half an hour or more of prayer. *God's word.* — The commandment was a lamp, and the law a light. The Greeks call the law the standing mind of God. And if Demosthenes could say of men's laws, that they were the invention of God; if Xenophon could say of the Persian laws, that they kept the people even from coveting any wickedness; if Cicero durst say of the Roman laws, that they far excelled and exceeded all the learned libraries of the philosophers, both in weight and worth, how much more may all this and more be said of this perfect law of God, the book whereof was here brought forth by Ezra, and read and expounded in the ears of all the people? — *Hom. Com.*

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they hear the Word read or preached, and come out of the church, when the tedious sermon runneth somewhat beyond the glass like prisoners out of a gaol."—*Trapp.*

"The devout man exults in the indications of his being fixed and irretrievable. He feels this confirmed habit as the grasp of the hand of God, which will never let him go. From this advanced state he looks with firmness and joy on futurity, and says, 'I carry the eternal mark upon me that I belong to God; I am free of the universe; and I am ready to go to any world to which He shall please to transmit me — certain that everywhere in height or depth, He will acknowledge me forever."—*Foster.*

5—8. (5) **opened,** unrolled. **all . . up,** reverence for the law of God,[a] prob. sat down again to listen to the reading and explanation. (6) **Amen,**[b] so be it; or so let it be. Thus they expressed thanks for it, and affirmed their allegiance to it. **with . . hands,**[c] in supplication to God to grant a blessing. (7) **Bani,** *etc.*, xii. 8. **and the Levites,** *i. e.* the rest of the Levites in addition to the thirteen just mentioned. **caused . . law,** perh. by means of transla. of Heb. into Chaldee. **stood . . place,** better "were in their place," *i. e.* did not leave their place during the seven hours of reading and expounding. (8) **so . . distinctly,** *lit.* they read it, so that it was clearly *laid out, spread out.* A hint to both readers and expositors of the Bible. **and . . reading,** the people understood, *etc.*[d]

Ezra reads the law to the people

a Jud. iii. 20; Job xxix. 8; xxvii. 14.

b 1 Co. xiv. 16.

c Lam. iii. 14; 1 Ti. ii. 8.

d Hooker shows that the reading of the Bible to the people is the best preaching, V., xxi.; xxii.

Effect of Ezra's preaching. — I. The mode adopted by Ezra, namely the expository, we conceive to be peculiarly worthy of imitation. 1. It led the people into a better acquaintance with the Scriptures; 2. It brought every part of the sacred records into view; 3. It brought home truth to the conscience with more authority. But, in considering the Word of God as explained at Jerusalem, we are more particularly led to notice — II. In what manner it should be heard. Truly admirable was the conduct of the people on this occasion. Observe — 1. Their reverential awe; 2. Their devout affection; 3. Their unreserved obedience. — *C. Simeon.*

The Bible in Iceland. — Dr. Ebenezer Henderson was sent to Iceland by the Bible Society to distribute the Icelandic Scriptures amongst the inhabitants. It was found by Henderson that there was a famine of the Word of God in the island, often only one copy of the Scriptures in a whole parish. During the course of his first and his two subsequent journeys, he disposed, or arranged for the disposal, by gratuitous distribution or by purchase, of 4,055 Bibles, and 6,634 New Testaments, and thousands of tracts, with which the Icelanders might beguile their long winter evenings. The rapture with which his gift of a New Testament was frequently hailed may be gathered from such an incident as the following: He had sent, as was his custom, a notice round the neighborhood where he traveled of the object of his journey. In response, a young man, amongst others, had been despatched by his poor and aged parents to learn the truth of the message they had heard. On receiving a Testament, it was hardly possible for him to contain his joy. As a number of the people

Constantine the Great and our King Edward the VI. would not hear a sermon but standing.

"Though Fortune's malice overthrow my state, my mind exceeds the compass of her wheel."—*Shakespeare.*

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had at the time collected around the door of the tent, he caused the young man to read the third chapter of the Gospel of John. He had scarcely begun when the people all sat down or knelt on the grass, and listened with the most devout attention. As he proceeded, the tears began to trickle down their cheeks, and they were all much affected. The scene was doubtless as new to them as it was to Henderson; and on his remarking, after the young man was done, what important instructions were contained in the Scripture that had been read, they all gave their assent, adding, with a sigh, that these truths were too little attended to. "It is impossible," adds Henderson, "for me to describe the pleasure I felt on this occasion. I forgot all the fatigues of traveling over the mountains, and indeed, to enjoy another such evening, I could travel twice the distance." — *O. T. Anec.*

"Man feels a thousand deaths in fearing one."— *Young.*

the people weeping are reproved

9—12. (9) **Tirshatha,** the Persian title; the Heb. would be Pechah.[a] **weep,** they wept tears of sorrow at their sins, and of joy at God's goodness. **wept,** "in the new light of the higher truth we suddenly discover that the 'robe of righteousness' in which we have been parading is but as 'filthy rags.' Then our once vaunted attainments become despicable in our own eyes. The eminence on which we have been standing so proudly is seen to be a wretched mole-hill compared with the awful snow-peak from which the clouds have just dispersed. Can we ever climb that?"— *Exp. Bib.* 2 Ki. xxii. 11. (10) **sweet,** new wine. A proverbial expression equiv. to "go and enjoy this day, it is a feast day, let there be no fasting." **sorry,** *i. e.* grieved. **and . . prepared,**[b] they were to be mindful of the absent and the poor. **joy,** "a mirthfulness wh. springs fr. right relations to God is an element and sign of spiritual strength." (11) **Levites,** following the example, and obeying the command of their leaders. (12) **people,** *etc.*, thus comforted, ceased weeping.

a As in *vs.* 14.

b Est. ix. 19, 22; Re. xi. 10; De. xvi. 14.

"Holy joy is like oil to the wheels of our obedience." — *M. Henry.*

The manner in which the law was heard. — Observe — 1. Their reverential awe. How rarely do we find persons duly inspired with a sense of their obligation to God for giving them a revelation of His will! How rarely do men at this day look through the preacher unto God, and hear God speaking to them by the voice of His servants! 2. Their devout affections. "When the people heard the words of the law," they all wept, as feeling that they had sinned greatly against it (*vs.* 9). And when they were reminded that, as the design of the present feast was to bring to their view the tender mercies of their God and to encourage them to expect all manner of blessings at His hands, they ought rather to rejoice (*vss.* 10, 11), they did rejoice. 3. Their unreserved obedience. No sooner was it discovered that an ordinance appointed by Moses had been neglected, than they hastened to observe it, according to the strict letter of the law, and actually did observe it with greater fidelity than it had ever been observed.— *Hom. Com.*

"Joy in God is a religious duty. The devout soul derives strength fr. godly thankfulness and holy joy, bec. it knows that God will help those who praise Him and rejoice in Him. If the strength of the Lord is our joy, then the joy of the Lord will be our strength." — *Bp. Wordsworth.*

Sending portions.— The Eastern princes and the Eastern people not only invite their friends to feasts, but it is their custom to send a portion of the banquet to those that cannot well come to it, especially their relations, and those in a state of mourning. This sending of portions to those for whom nothing was prepared has been understood by those commentators I have consulted to mean the poor; sending portions, however, to one another is expressly distinguished in Esth. ix. 22 from gifts to the poor. There would not have been the shadow of a difficulty in this had the historian been speaking of a private feast, but he is describing a national festival, where every one was supposed to be equally concerned: those, then, for whom nothing was prepared, it should seem, means those that were in a state of mourning; mourning for private calamities being here supposed to take the place of rejoicing for public concerns. But it is not only to those that are in a state of mourning that provisions are sometimes sent; others are honored by princes in the same manner, who could not conveniently attend to the royal table, or to whom it was supposed not to be convenient. So when the grand emir found it incommoded Monsieur D'Arvieux to eat with him, he complaisantly desired him to take his own time for eating, and sent him what he liked from his kitchen, and at the time he chose.— *Harmer.*

"Nehemiah had Jovianus the emperor's happiness, which was, that he might govern wise men, and that wise men might govern him." — *Trapp.*

the feast of tabernacles

13—15. (13) **on . . day,** of the feast.[c] **were . . fathers,** the desire of the people to hear the law made it the more needful that these should be able to teach. **unto . . scribe,** a recognized master in Israel. (14) **And . . law,**[d] *i. e.* they came to the place in the course of their reading. **which . . Moses,**

c See *vs.* 1.

d Le. xxiii. 34, 42; De. xvi. 13.

R. V., "how that the Lord, *etc.*" **dwell . . month,** Feast of Tabernacles. (15) **Go . . mount,** of Olives, or perchance "the hill country of Judah." **olive . . pine,** olive and wild olive.

Obedience. — When Leonard Woods, president of Bowdoin college, was in France, he was invited to dine with the king. He presented himself at the palace, and was met by the king with his accustomed courtesy, who said, "We did not know that we were to have the pleasure of your company to-day. You did not answer our invitation." Leonard Woods said, "I thought the invitation of a king was to be obeyed, not answered." When the Spirit says come, it is equal to a command, and we would better put off all other engagements, and come. No matter how gently and winsomely the invitation comes, let us never forget that there is a voice of royal, imperial, imperious urgency and authority behind it.— *John McNeill.*

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"Divine knowledge is as a great lady, that will not be easily acquainted with us but upon further suit."— *Trapp.*

Æneas Sylvius was wont to say of knowledge, popular men should esteem it as silver, noblemen as gold, princes prize it as pearls.

16—18. (16) **So . . forth,** there were 13 days in wh. to make all necessary preparations. **roof . . house,**[a] the roof was flat. **courts,** *etc.*,[b] *i. e.* they utilized all open spaces for this purpose. (17) **since . . so,** *i. e.* the feast had not been kept with such fulness of joy and close attention to the law of it. **And . . gladness,**[c] the joy was general as well as deep. "This then is the first application of the law which the people have received with so much distress. It ordains a glad festival. So much brighter is religion when it is understood and practiced than when it is only contemplated from afar!"— *Exp. Bib.* (18) **Also . . God,** they were not weary of hearing the Word. **eighth day,** the great day of the feast.[d] **solemn assembly,** *R. V.*, marg., "closing festival," **manner,** *R. V.*, "ordinance."

the feast is kept with great joy

[a] De. xxii. 8.

[b] Ex. xxiii. 14, 17; De xvi. 16; Nu. x, 10; Ps. lxxxi. 3.

[c] 2 Ch. xxx. 21.

[d] Le, xxiii. 36; Jo. vii. 37.

Christian joy. — This same communication of gladness is seen in the life of our Lord, not only during those early sunny days in Galilee when His ministry opened under a cloudless sky, but even amid the darkness of the last hours at Jerusalem, for in His final discourses Jesus prayed that His joy might be in His disciples in order that their joy might be full. A more generous perception of this truth would make religion like sunshine and music, like the blooming of spring flowers and the outburst of woodland melody about the path of the Christian pilgrim. It is clear that Jesus Christ expected this to be the case since He commenced His teaching with the word "Blessed." St. Paul, too, saw the same possibility, as his repeated encouragements to "Rejoice" bear witness. Religion may be compared to one of those Italian city churches which are left outwardly bare and gloomy, while within they are replete with treasures of art. We must cross the threshold, push aside the heavy curtain, and tread the sacred pavement, if we would see the beauty of sculptured column and mural fresco and jeweled altar-piece. — *Exp. Bib. Delight in the Word of God.* — "A very poor woman in Edinburgh, who was so nearly blind as not to be able to peruse the Bible, could get no one to read it to her. She was greatly distressed to live day after day without the comfort and direction of this blessed book. She thought of many plans, and made many inquiries, but all in vain. At last she made a bargain with another woman to read her a chapter every night; and for this service she paid her a penny a week out of her scanty pittance." Lady Jane Grey was once asked by one of her friends how she could forego the pleasures of the chase and prefer sitting at home reading her Bible. She replied, "All amusements of that description are but the shadow of the pleasure which I enjoy in reading this book."

"They had listened on the first day of the month from morning unto midday; but the more they heard the Word of God, the more desirous were they to hear it. The more men converse with the Scriptures, the more they will wish and love to do so."—*Wordsworth.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1—3. (1) **Now,** *etc.*,[e] "after the celebration of the 'solemn assembly' on the 22d of the month Tisri one day's interval is allowed, and on the 24th a special religious function is performed by the whole people, consisting (1) of a humble confession of national sin; (2) of a national covenant to obey the law." The reformers would avail themselves of the great religious zeal aroused by the feast. **sack-clothes,** *R. V.*, "sackcloth." **earth upon them,** *i. e.* upon their head. (2) **strangers,**[f] "compare ch. x. 28, by which it appears that the 'strangers' are 'the people of the lands,' or neighboring heathen, of whom there were at all times considerable numbers in Jerusalem. It was not fitting that these aliens should take part in a ceremony of which the main object was that the special people of God should renew their covenant with Him." — *Pulp. Com.* (3) **they . . place,** prob. this refs. to Ezra and the

solemn repentance of the people

[e] 1 S. iv. 12; 2 S. i. 2; Job ii. 12.

[f] Ezr. ix. 2; x. 2.

"A telegraph wire must be completely insulated before it can convey the electric communication. So we must be separated from the

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world before God's message to sinners an have free course through us." — *G. F. Pentecost.*

"Whatever else may be said about the Bible, I am sure no man can deny that it is the best book to guide men toward practical virtue and true holiness that ever has appeared in the world. As a practical book, as a light to a man's feet and a lamp to his path, it has proved itself to be, and can by investigation be shown to be, the wisest book to follow that is known." — *H. W. Beecher.*

readers, who read and explained the law for 3 hrs. **worshipped,** literally "prostrated themselves."

The confession of sin. — I. It was general. Not one class of people alone. Each had sinned. II. It was public. They had sinned publicly. They would publicly confess that they had sinned. III. It was far-reaching. Into the past. They confessed the sins of the nation in all ages. IV It was accompanied with a purpose of amendment.

The Bible a treasure. — A good man once entered a house in Germany, and found it very wretched, no fire, no furniture, no food. Everything bore the appearance of utter poverty. But, glancing round, he saw, in a neglected corner, a copy of the Bible; and when he went away he said to the poor inmates, "There is a treasure in this house that would make you all rich." After he had gone, the people began to search the house for what they thought must be a jewel or a pot of gold, and finding nothing they went to dig up the very floor, in hopes of discovering the hidden store of wealth. All in vain One day after that the mother lifted up the old Bible, and found written on the fly-leaf of it, taken from its own pages, these words, "Thy testimonies are better to me than ten thousands of gold and silver." "Ah!" she said, "can this be the treasure the stranger spoke of?" So she told her thought to the rest; they began to read the Bible, became changed in character, and a blessing came in to stay with them. The stranger came back to find poverty gone, contentment and peace in its place, and a hearty Christian welcome, while, with grateful joy, the family told him, "We found the treasure, and it has proved all that you said to us it would."

the Levites stand up and bless the Lord

a Neh. iii. 17; vii. 43; x. 10, 14; xiv. 8, 24; Ezr. ii. 40; iii. 9.

b De. x. 14; 1 Ki. viii. 27. See also *Bp. Pearson, Creed,* i. 64-66.

It may be true, as Jay says, that a sportsman has fired into a flight of birds, and not killed one, and he has killed one when he had only one to aim at, but on the other hand, if two anglers went out with rod and line to fish, he would surely catch the largest number in a pond where fish were abundant than he who angled where fish were scarce.

4—6. (4) **stairs,** the scaffold or platform, ch. viii. 4. **cried . . God,** these eight Levites were set apart to recite in unison some special form of prayer. (5) **Levites,** for these names consult refs.[a] **Stand up,** *etc.*, opening exhortation to the people to unite with one accord in gen. confess. of faith. **bless . . ever,** *R. V.*, "fr. everlasting to everlasting," words connected with "God," rather than the verb "bless." **thy glorious name,** the name is the Being of God made known to man; the glory of it is its manifestation (Ex. xxxiii. 18, 22). (6) **Thou . . alone,**[b] *etc.*, confess. of unity, omnipresence, *etc.*, of God; in opposition to heathen errors. **heaven . . host,** *i. e.* the heavens in all their immeasurable greatness, the clouds and the stars, the whole solar system. Perhaps "the host" refers to the angelic beings.

The prayer is very like some of the historical psalms. By pointing to the variegated picture of the History of Israel, it shows how God reveals Himself through events. This suggests the probability that the three hours' reading of the fast day had been taken from the historical parts of the Pentateuch. The religious teachers of Israel knew what riches of instruction were buried in the history of their nation, and they had the wisdom to unearth those treasures for the benefit of their own age. In tracking the course of revelation through history, the author of the prayer follows two threads. First one and then the other is uppermost, but it is the interweaving of them that gives the definite pattern of the whole picture. These are God's grace and man's sin. The method of the prayer is to bring them into view alternately, as they are illustrated in the History of Israel. The result is like a drama of several acts, and three scenes in each act. Although we see progress and a continuous heightening of effect, there is a startling resemblance between the successive acts, and the relative characters of the scenes remain the same throughout. In the *first* scene we always behold the free and generous favor of God offered to the people He condescends to bless, altogether apart from any merits or claims on their part. In the *second* we are forced to look at the ugly picture of Israel's ingratitude and rebellion. But this is invariably followed by a *third* scene, which depicts the wonderful patience and long-suffering of God, and His active aid in delivering His guilty people from the troubles they have brought on their own heads by their sins, whenever they turn to Him in penitence. — *Exp. Bib.*

they recount His good in the past

c Ac. vii. 1-4.

d He. xi. 8.

e Ge. xv. 18-21; xvii. 7, 8; Jos. xxiii. 14.

f Ex. iii. 7; xiv. 10, 15

g Ex. xviii. 11; Ps. cv. 26, 27; lxxviii. 12, 43.

7—10. (7) **who . . Abram,** "the selection of the 'chosen people' was the free act of God's love;" Ac. xiii. 17. **and . . Chaldees,**[c] prob. situated in the northern part of Assyria; Ge. xii. 1. **Abraham,** Ge. xvii. 5; the significant fact is not the meaning of the word "Abraham," but that the change of name took place in connection with the rite of circumcision. It was the covenant name. (8) **And . . thee,**[d] Ge. xv. 6. **and . . land,**[e] Ge. xii. 7. (9) **see,** *etc.*,[f] Ex. ii. 25. (10) **signs,** *etc.*,[g] the plagues, Ex. vii.–xii.

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The path of duty the path of trial. — Observe — I. That the path of duty here runs through great trials. Sometimes — 1. It involves the sacrifice of the most endeared friendship; 2. The sacrifice of worldly prospects; 3. The endangering of life itself; 4 An outrage on our tender sentiments. II. That great trials serve to test the principles of pilgrims. 1. It reveals the bad principles of the heart; 2. It reveals the good principles of the heart. III. That unbounded faith in God is essential to carry us safely through the path of duty with all its great trials. — *Thomas.*

Obedience to duty. —

I traveled once a rocky road;
  A weary road it was to go;
With burdens, too, a heavy load,
  And where it led, I did not know.

A weary road with rivers high;
  Wild beasts were standing on the rocks;
And clouds came drifting through the sky,
  Filled deep with fires and thunder shocks.

But thro' the clouds, and thro' the flame,
  And foaming floods, as on I went,
A voice of hope and cheering came,
  "Fear not to go where God hath sent."

That voice is ringing in my ears;
  Let mountains rise, let oceans flow;
It matters not. Away with fears,
  If God doth send me, let me go. — *T. C. Upham.*

"The painter's soul is no doubt thrown into his painting, and the sculptor's and architect's into their statues and buildings; but their souls meanwhile exist apart, and are capable of other acts besides these. In a sense, as true as it is grand, the soul of the Creator is streaming through the order and life of creation; but meanwhile He exists independent of and far above them." — *McCosh.*

11—14. (11) **divide,** *etc.*,[a] Ps. lxxiv. 13. (12) **leddest,**[b] *etc.*, Ex. xiii. 21. (13) **Sinai,**[c] Ex. xix. 20. **judgments . . commandments,** "'Right judgments' or 'equitable decisions' opposed to the perversions of justice by partiality or bribery; 'true laws' or 'teachings of truth,' to erroneous teachings. 'Good statutes and commandments' relate, the one to positive enactments upon religious matters, the other to legislation generally." — *Cam. Bib.* (14) **sabbath,** *etc.*,[d] Ge. ii. 3. **and laws,** *R. V.*, "and a law" *i. e.* "religious instructions as distinguished fr. positive rules."

His wonders at Sinai

[a] Ps. lxxviii. 13; Ex. xiv 21, 28; He. xi. 29; Ex. xv. 5, 10.

[b] Ex. xl. 38; Ps. lxxviii. 14; cv. 39.

[c] Ps. xix. 8, 9; Ro. vii. 12.

[d] Ex. xvi. 25, 26; xx. 8–11.

The Word of God. — For my part I propose to addict myself with more incessant assiduity to this delightful and divine study of the Book of God. Away, my Homer, I have no need of being entertained by you, since Job and the prophets furnish me with images much more magnificent, and lessons infinitely more important. Away, my Horace; nor shall I suffer any loss by your absence, while the sweet singer of Israel tunes his lyre, and inspirits me with the noblest strains of devotion; and even my prime favorite, my Virgil, may withdraw, since in Isaiah I enjoy all his correctness of judgment and all his beautiful propriety of diction. — *Hervey.* *Jewish Sabbath observance.* — And now the weekly Sabbath, the pledge between Israel and God, had once more come. To meet it as a bride or queen, each house was adorned on the Friday evening. The Sabbath lamp was lighted: the festive garments put on; the table provided with the best which the family could afford; and the *Jiddush*, or benediction, spoken over the cup of wine, which, as always, was mixed with water. And as Sabbath morning broke, they hastened with quick steps to the synagogue; for such was the rabbinic rule in going, while it was prescribed to return with slow and lingering steps . . . . On no other subject is rabbinic teaching more painfully minute and more manifestly incongruous to its professed object. For, if we rightly apprehend what underlay the complicated and intolerably burdensome laws and rules of Pharisaic Sabbath observance, it was to secure negatively absolute rest from all labor, and positively to make the Sabbath a delight. — *Edersheim.*

"And made a covenant to be his God and the God of his seed. This was *divini mellis alveare*, the beehive of the heavenly honey; this was more than to be monarch of the whole world. — *Trapp.*

15—17. (15) **bread . . hunger,**[e] Ex. xvi. 4, *ff.* **water,**[f] Ex. xvii. 6. **promisedst,** *R. V.*, "commandedst." **sworn,**[g] *R. V.*, "lifted up thine hand." De i. 8. (16) **fathers,**[h] omit "and" before "our fathers;" it should be "they, *i. e* our fathers." **proudly,** presumptuously. De. xxxi. 27. (17) **And . . obey,**[i] Nu. xiv. 4. **ready to pardon,** *Heb.* "a God of forgiveness."

their past disobedience is owned

[e] Ps. lxxviii. 23, 24; cv. 40; Jo. vi. 31.

[f] Nu. xx. 10, 11; Ps. lxxviii. 15-20; cv. 41; cxiv. 8.

[g] Nu. xiv. 30.

[h] 2 Ki. xvii. 14; 2 Ch. xxx. 8; Jer. xix. 15; Ac. vii. 51.

[i] Ps. lxxviii. 10, 11, 42, 43; cvi.

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13, 21, 24, 25; Ex. xxxiv. 6; Nu. xiv. 18; Ps. lxxxvi. 5; Joel ii. 13; Jon. iv. 2.

"It is our comfort that we have to do with a forgiving, sin-pardoning God, that doth it naturally, plentifully, constantly. This should be a perpetual picture in our hearts."—*Trapp.*

Pardoning mercy.— I. The text prefers an important charge. 1. A charge of obstinate disobedience; 2. Of criminal forgetfulness; 3. Of hardened impenitence. II. The text contains a gracious declaration; "Thou art a God ready to pardon," *etc.* The truth of this is manifest and undeniable. Consider—1. The perfections of the Divine character; 2. The glorious scheme of human redemption; 3. The testimonies and promises of Scripture; 4. The multitudes that have obtained forgiveness. III. The text suggests appropriate instruction. We may here learn — 1. The necessity of seeking forgiveness; 2. The possibility of obtaining forgiveness; 3. The felicity of participating in forgiveness.

God's mercy to sinners. — A story is told concerning a bold rebel that had made a great party against one of the Roman emperors. A proclamation was therefore sent abroad that whosoever could bring in the rebel, dead or alive, he should have a great sum of money for his reward. The outlaw, hearing of it, comes, and, presenting himself before the emperor, demands the sum of money proposed. The emperor bethinks himself that if he should put him to death, the world would be ready to say that he did it to save his money; and so he freely pardons the rebel, and gives him the money. Here now was light in a dark lantern, mercy in a very heathen. And shall such a one do thus that had but a drop of mercy and compassion in him, and will not Christ do much more that hath all fulness of grace and mercy in Himself? Surely His bowels yearn to the worst of sinners repenting; let them but come in, and they shall find Him ready to pardon, yea, One that is altogether made up of pardoning mercies. — *Whitecross.*

mercies and sins in the wilderness

18—19. (18) **calf,** *etc.*, Ex. xxxii. 4. (19) **manifold mercies,** *etc.*,[a] Ps. lxxviii. 38. **and . . go,** the LXX. omits "and," thus rendering the clause in apposition with the "light." (20) **spirit,** *etc.*[b] Nu. xi. 17. **manna,**[c] Ex. xvi. 35. **water,**[d] Ex. xvii. 6. (21) **sustain,**[e] *etc.*, De. ii. 7.

God's goodness in the past.— I. This should not be forgotten. II. The remembrance of it should affect our present feelings towards Him. III. What God has once been, that He will ever be. IV. The past should teach us gratitude and trust.

Providential care.— Luther was one day walking with his brother, when a violent storm of thunder and lightning overtook him; his brother was struck dead upon the spot, and the future reformer spared. Bunyan enlisted as a soldier, but when the time to leave home came, he got some person to go for him as his substitute; the man was shot, and Bunyan spared. Doddridge, when born, was so weakly an infant that it was thought he was dead; but a nurse, standing by, fancied she saw some symptoms of life, and the feeble spark was saved from being extinguished. Wesley when a child was only just preserved from fire; almost the moment he was rescued the roof of the house fell in. Philip Henry had a similar escape. Dr. Adam Clarke was narrowly recovered from being drowned when a boy. Charles of Balk put his saddle-bags into a wrong boat, as he thought; but the boat in which he intended to go was lost, and every hand drowned. The originator of the Bible society was preserved.—*Bowls.*

a Ps xcix. 8; cvi. 45; Ex. xiii. 32; Nu xiv. 14; 1 Co. x. 1.

b Isa. lxiii. 11.

c Jos. v. 12.

d 1 Co. x. 4.

e De. viii. 4; xxix. 5.

"There is an old tradition among the Jews that the manna tasted like whatever you were hungry for every morning. If you woke up, for example, hungry for Egyptian cucumbers and leeks, and did not murmur after them, but thankfully took your manna, the manna tasted like them."—*John MacNeill.*

their possession of Canaan

22—25. (22) **and . . corners,** *R. V.*, "which thou didst allot after their portions." **Sihon,** Nu. xxi. 24, 32–35. (23) **Their . . heaven,**[f] Ge. xv. 5. (24) **thou . . kings,** *etc.*,[g] Jos. xxiii. 4. (25) **And . . cities,** *etc.*,[h] *R. V.*, "fenced cities," *e. g.* Jericho, Ai, Hebron, but Jerusalem held out until the time of Dav.'s reign. **fat land,** *i. e.* fertile soil. **wells digged,** *R. V.*, "cisterns hewn out." **became fat,** "grew wanton and self-indulgent." **delighted,** luxuriated, *i. e.* became effeminate and degenerate, De. iii. 5.

Prosperity. — Riches are the stairs whereby men climb up into the height of dignity, the fortification that defends it, the food it lives upon, the oil that keeps the lamp of honor from going out. Honor is a bare robe if riches do not lace and flourish it, and riches a dull lump till honor give a soul to quicken it.— *Adams.* Prosperity most usually makes us proud, insolent, forgetful of God, and of all duties we owe unto Him. It chokes and extinguishes, or at least cools and abates, the heat and vigor of all virtue in us. And as the ivy whilst it embraces the oak sucks the sap from the root, and in time makes it rot and perish, so worldy prosperity kills us with kindness, whilst it sucks from us the sap of God's graces, and so makes our spiritual growth and strength to decay and languish. Neither do men ever

f Ge. xxii. 17.

g Jos. xxiv. 11, 12; Ps. xliv. 1–3.

h Nu. xiii 27; De viii. 7, 8; Ez. xx. 6; Ps. cv. 44; Jos. xxiv. 13; De. vi. 11.

almost suffer an eclipse of their virtues and good parts, but when they are in the full of worldly prosperity.— *Downame.* *God's gifts.*— A Scotchwoman who received kind letters from her son found bank bills inside them, but having never seen such money, thought them only pretty pictures and put them aside. Many people think the promises found in the Bible are very pretty pictures, and perhaps some of you have put them away in an old teapot. Is it not time to understand that they are drafts on the bank of heaven that will be honored night and day.— *A. J. Gordon.*

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The Emperor Theodosius wrote out the New Testament with his own hand, and read some part of it every day.

26—29. (26) **prophets,**[a] Ma. xxiii. 37; 2 Ch. xxiv. 20–22; Jer. xxvi. 20–23. (27) **saviours,**[b] deliverers; *e. g.* Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Eli. (28) **rest,**[c] fr. war, or oppression. (29) **and . . shoulder,**[d] like an ox shrinking fr., or resisting, the yoke.

Great saviours. — I. In the course of a nation's history God in His goodness sends great deliverances — as Cromwell, William the Third, Washington, Lincoln. II. This is as true of personal history. III. There is only one Saviour from sin and its consequence. A great One.

God's pardoning love. — It is harder to get sin felt by the creature than the burden when felt removed by the hand of a forgiving God. Never was tender-hearted surgeon more willing to take up the vein, and bind up the wound of his fainting patient when he hath bled enough, than God is by His pardoning mercy to ease the troubled spirit of a mourning penitent.—*Gurnall.* God will pardon a repentant sinner more quickly than a mother would snatch her child out of the fire. — *Vianney.* *Disobedience.* — Our first parents forfeited Eden by their disobedience, and Christ, the second Adam, takes up the battle in the wilderness and fights His way back to Paradise. We have to do the same. We have forfeited our Eden of innocence and peace with God by disobedience to some higher law. We have lost our Eden, and we find ourselves in the wilderness, and we must take up the battle, and under Christ's leadership, and relying on His sympathy, and help fight our way back again to Paradise. — *H. C. A. Hall.* *Obedience prompted by faith.* — We hear much these days about God's sovereignty and man's free agency. Christ said to the woman of Canaan, "Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." Here is something that looks like human sovereignty and divine agency. Free to do what we please, because we please to do God's will. Such is the free agency of faith that takes hold of the arm that moves the world. Such free agency Moses had when the Red Sea was no obstacle in the way of his progress. The walls of Jericho fell by this free agency of faith. By means of it any little David is more then a match for the strongest Goliath. — *A. C. Dixon.*

their troubles in the time of the Judges

a Ez. xx. 21; Ac. vii. 52; 1 Th. ii. 15.

b Jud. iii. 9.

c Ps. cvi. 41, 42; Jud. ii. 14; iii. 8; Ps. lxxviii. 34–36.

d Zec. vii. 11; Hos. iv. 16.

"God often lets His people reach the shore as on the planks of a shipwrecked vessel. He frequently takes away our supports, not that we may fall to the ground, but that He may Himself become our rod and our staff. The embarrassments of His people are only the festive scaffoldings on which His might, His faithfulness, and His mercy celebrate their triumphs."— *F. W. Krummacher.*

30—33. (30) **forbear,** *R. V.*, "bear with them;" reference to the earlier monarchic period. **and . . prophets,**[e] 1 Pet. i. 10, 11; 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. **therefore . . lands,** Isa. v. 5; xlii. 24. (31) **Nevertheless,** *etc.*,[f] Isa. lvii. 16. (32) **God . . great,** *etc.*, note how this description of God points the next thought. **let . . thee,** "trouble," *R. V.*, "travail," if the history of a cottage seem petty in the eyes of the palace, how much smaller must human vicissitudes be in the eye of the Almighty! Things relatively little to Him may be very great with us. **on . . people,** "the nation is here described under a threefold division, (1) the aristocracy, the king and the nobles, (2) the religious castes, the priestly officials and the prophetic schools, (3) the laity generally, the heads of the houses or fathers and the mass of the nation." (33) **just . . us,**[g] we have not suffered beyond our deserts. **we . . wickedly,** we as a nation, throughout our history.

Divine forbearance. — I. This forbearance of God was marked by constant reproof. Otherwise it might have been construed into approval of their conduct. II. It was marked by constant exhibitions of grace and mercy. III. There is a limit to the forbearance of God. IV. When He at length punishes, all will own that the punishment is just.

Influence of sin on posterity.— He who commits any one sin injures the whole human race. It is often supposed that we ought not to suffer on account of the sins of others, but apart altogether from biblical doctrine we find in history itself that sin, done by whomsoever, carries with it consequences to the third and fourth generation. No man can drink away his senses, or steep himself in sensuality, or give the bridle to his lusts and passions, and yet save his posterity from evil consequences. Though the law may seem to operate unfairly in this one direction, yet the law of the Lord is equal; no man can

their captivity

e 2 Ki. xvii. 13; 2 Ch. xxxvi. 15; Je. vii. 25; xxv. 4; Hos. vi. 5.

f Jer. v. 18.

g Da. ix. 14; Ps. cxix. 137.

"It is a high point of heavenly wisdom, in the beginning of our petitions to propound God to ourselves under such holy notions and fit expressions, as wherein we may see an answer to our prayers as here."— *Trapp.*

Erasmus, speaking of Jerome, says, "Who ever learned by heart the whole Scripture, or imbibed or meditated upon it as he did?"

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attend to the laws of health, be wise, true, prudent, and wholly good, without his children reaping great advantage from such discipline and culture. — *Peop. Bib.*

they profess to be servants of God, and make a covenant

34—38. (34) **kings . . fathers,** much less the common people who followed these great ones. (35) **For . . kingdom,** *i. e.* when they had a kingdom of their own and were not subjects of some foreign power. And yet men will delay the service of God till they acquire wealth, power, *etc.* **goodness,** *i. e.* material prosperity. (36) **we . . day,** *etc.*,[a] paying tribute to a foreign power, and only here by sufferance. (37) **increase,** profit in form of tribute. (38) In the Heb. *vs.* 38 is *vs.* 1 of ch. x. **because . . this,** *i. e.* God's great mercy and forbearance in spite of the continued wickedness of Israel. *R. V.*, "and yet for all this" refers to the people's afflictions wh. have not destroyed faith in the covenant mercies of God. **covenant,** a solemn league and covenant. **princes . . it,**[b] as our representatives, and with our assent, to authenticate the document.

[a] De. xxviii. 48; Ezr. ix. 9.

Covenants. — Each party impressed his seal on moist clay, which was then hardened. It is not enough to make a general covenant; the covenant must be single and individual, each man regarding it as if he were severally responsible for it. Verily, this is a joint and several note presented to God by humbled and penitent souls. It is nobly signed if we look at the infinite number of the signatures, and it is pathetically signed if we look at the signatures one by one, each soul saying — I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: I have lost my inheritance: God be merciful to me a sinner! There is great utility in solemn vows and covenants; they have a tonic effect upon the soul. Who could look over all the covenants and vows which he has written down as promised to heaven, and yet remain unmoved by the melancholy writing?—*Peop. Bib.*

[b] 2 Ki. xxiii. 3; 2 Ch. xxxiv. 31; Neh. x. 29; Ezr. x. 3.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

the signing of the covenant

by Nehemiah and the rulers

1—8. Now Nehemiah, *etc.*,[c] "in the East it is always the seal that authenticates a document. Babylonian documents were often stamped with half a dozen seals or more. These were impressed upon the moist clay, and then the clay was baked. Sometimes each party to the contract stamped his seal upon a separate piece of sealing clay, which he then attached to the document by means of a string."—*Pulp. Com.* **Zidkijah,** *R. V.*, "Zedekiah," prob. an official, ranking next to Neh. (8) That 21 and not 24 are recorded, is noteworthy. Various conjectures have been hazarded, *e. g.* that names have dropped out from the text, or that three of the priestly tribes refused to sign the document, or that the complete list of priestly houses has not yet been reorganized. — *Cam. Bib.*

The solemn league and covenant. — I. It was entered into by all the people with common consent. II. It was signed first of all by the leaders of the people as an example to the others. III. All regarded themselves as bound by what the leaders had done in their name, and on their behalf.

[c] Ne. xii. 1-7; Ezr. ii. 1, *etc.*

Oriental Seals. — The importance attached to seals in the East is so great that without one no document is regarded as authentic. The use of some method of sealing is obviously, therefore, of remote antiquity. Among such methods used in Egypt at a very early period were engraved stones, pierced through their length and hung by a string or chain from the arm or neck, or set in rings for the finger. The most ancient form used for this purpose was the scarabæus formed of precious or common stone, or even of blue pottery or porcelain, on the flat side of which the inscription or device was engraved. Cylinders of stone or pottery bearing devices were also used as signets. One in the Alnwick Museum bears the date of Osirtasen I., or between 2000 and 3000 B. C. Besides finger-rings, the Egyptians, and also the Assyrians and Babylonians, made use of cylinders of precious stone or terra-cotta, which were probably set in a frame and rolled over the document which was to be sealed. The document, especially among the two latter nations, was itself often made of baked clay, sealed while it was wet and burnt afterwards. But in many cases the seal consisted of a lump of clay, impressed with the seal and attached to the document, whether of papyrus or other material, by strings. These clay lumps often bear the impress of the finger, and also the remains of the strings by which they had been fastened. One such found at

"Example has more followers than reason. We unconsciously imitate what pleases us, and insensibly approximate to the characters we most admire. In this way a generous habit of thought and of action carries with it an incalculable influence." — *Bovee.*

Nimroud was the seal of Sabaco, king of Egypt, B. C. 711, and another is believed by Mr. Layard to have been the seal of Sennacherib. — *Smith, Bib. Dict.*

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9—13. Levites,[a] these prob. signed on behalf of their order.

by the Levites

A material witness. — A rich old citizen of Bergamo had lent to one of his countrymen at Florence four hundred crowns, which he advanced without any witness, and without requiring a written acknowledgment. When the stipulated time had elapsed, the creditor required his money; but the borrower, well apprised that no proof could be brought against him, positively denied that he had ever received it. After many fruitless attempts to recover it, the lender was advised to resort to the duke, who would find some method of doing him justice. Alessandro accordingly ordered both the parties before him; and after hearing the assertions of the one, and the positive denial of the other, he turned to the creditor, saying, "Is it possible, then, friend, that you can have lent your money when no one was present?" "There was no one indeed," replied the creditor: "I counted the money to him on a post." "Go bring the post then, this instant," said the duke, "and I will make it confess the truth." The creditor, though astonished on receiving such an order, hastened to obey, having first received a secret caution from the duke not to be very speedy in his return. Meantime the duke employed himself in transacting the affairs of his other suitors, till at length, turning to the borrower, he said, "This man stays a long time with his post." "It is so heavy, sir," replied the other, "that he could not yet have brought it." Again Alessandro left him, and returning some time afterward, carelessly exclaimed, "What kind of men are they that lend their money without evidence? Was there no one present but the post?" "No, indeed, sir!" replied the knave. "The post is a good witness, then," said the duke, "and shall make thee pay the man his money."

a Ne. xii. 8, 9, 24; Ezr. ii. 40.

"Nothing enlarges the gulf of atheism more than the wide passage which lies between the faith and lives of men pretending to be Christians."—*Stillingfleet.*

"The Word of God is the water of life; the more ye lave it forth, the fresher it runneth; it is the fire of God's glory; the more ye blow it, the clearer it burneth; it is the sword of the Spirit; the more it is scoured, the brighter it shineth."—*Bp. Jewel.*

14—27. (14) **chief . . people,**[b] the people thus represented, as every one in the country could not possibly affix their names. Signed by houses, not as individuals. Many more names than are found under the same head in Ezra ii. or Neh. vii. Prob. many families returned fr Babylon, since the age of Jerubbabel.

by the chiefs of the people

Unity. — There is a familiar story about John Wesley and others going to the river that bounds the heavenly city, and finding, to their astonishment, that they had to drop their cloaks and garments in which they approached. One drops his cloak, another his robe, another his surplice, and they came out on the other side astonished to find that they are all in the same white, beautiful robe, the robe of righteousness, which is Christ Jesus our Lord. Cannot we gain a little more of heaven upon earth by holding out more of the right hand of fellowship? "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind."—*H. W. Webb-Peploe.*

b Ne. vii. 6-27; Ezr. ii. 3, 6-8. 10-17, 19, 23.

28—31. (28) **rest,** *etc.*, regarded themselves as having personally signed; gave their full assent to what their representatives now did. **they . . themselves,** either the Jews who had not gone into exile, but fell into idolatry; or the proselytes fr. the heathen who had embraced the Jewish religion. **knowledge . . understanding,** *i. e.* all old enough to know and comprehend the significance of the covenant. (29) **clave to,** agreed with. **curse . . oath,** thus solemnly pledged themselves. "The 'curse' is the penalty which they invoked if they were faithless to the covenant; the 'oath' is the solemn obligation of a duty which they vowed to perform." **observe,** *etc.*,[c] and now follow the chief points in their solemn engagement. (30) **that . . give,** *etc.*, but follow the law of God.[d] (31) **sabbath,**[e] the proper observance would save men fr. many sins. **the holy day,** *R. V.*, "a holy day," they would not traffic on any holy day. *Cf.* Nu. xxviii., xxxi. **would leave . . debt,**[f] *i. e.* "we would leave fallow the land each seventh year, and remit at that time the debt of every hand." "By a common error it has been supposed that debts were on this year altogether remitted. The analogy of the 'fallow' land shows that the debts remained, but were not exacted; payment was 'hung up' for a whole year." They would keep not only the Sabbath day, but also the Sabbatic year.

the people promise to keep the law

c Ps. cxix. 106; De. xxix. 12-15.

d De. vii. 3; Ex. xxxiv. 14-16.

e De. v. 12; Ex. xx. 10; Le. xxiii. 3.

f Ex xxiii. 10, 11; Le. xxv. 4; De. xv. 1, 2.

The Lord's day. — Stations on the line of your journey are not your journey's end, but each one brings you nearer. Such are our Lord's days. A

"I knew a man who was governed by no one princi-

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haven is not *home*, but it is a place of quiet and rest, where the rough waves are stayed. Such is the "Lord's Day." A garden is a piece of common land, and yet it has ceased to be common land. It is an effort to regain Paradise. Such is "The Lord's Day." A bud is not a flower, but it is the promise of a flower. Such is "The Lord's Day." The world's week tempts you to sell your soul to the flesh and the world: "The Lord's Day" calls you to remembrance, and begs you rather to sacrifice earth to heaven and time to eternity, than heaven to earth and eternity to time. The six days not only claim you as captives of the earth, but do their best to keep the prison-doors shut that you may forget *the way out*. "The Lord's Day" sets before you an open door. Samson has carried the gates away. "The Lord's Day summons you to the threshold of your house of bondage, to look forth unto immortality, *your immortality*. The true Lord's Day is the Eternal life; but a type of it is given to you on earth, that you may be refreshed with the anticipation and foretaste of your rest. — *John Pulsford.*

"ple in the world but fear. He had no manner of objection to going to church, but lest the devil might take it ill.'" — *Sterne.*

The rest of the Sabbath. —

Fresh glides the brook and blows the gale,
Yet yonder halts the quiet mill!
The whirling wheel, the rushing sail,
How motionless and still!
Six days of toil, poor child of Cain,
Thy strength the slave of want may be;
The seventh thy limbs escape the chain —
A God hath made thee free!

Ah, tender was the law that gave
This holy respite to the breast.
To breathe the gale to watch the wave,
And know the wheel may rest!
But where the waves the gentlest glide
What image charms to lift thine eyes?
The spire reflected on the tide,
Invites thee to the skies.

To teach the soul its nobler worth
This rest from mortal toil is given;
Go, snatch the brief reprieve from earth,
And pass — a guest to Heaven,
Six days may rank divide the poor,
O Dives, from thy banquet hall;
The seventh, the Father opes the door
And holds His feast for all. — *E. B. Lytton.*

"I have all reverence for principles which grow out of sentiments. But as to sentiments which grow out of principles, you shall scarcely build a house of cards thereon." — *Jacobi.*

"No man is so insignificant as to be sure his example can do no hurt." — *Lord Clarendon.*

they make ordinances for themselves

32, 33. (32) **third . . shekel,**[a] this ordinance wh. they made for themselves, although demanded by the prevailing conditions, was within the spirit of the law. A voluntary poll-tax to be paid by all males. This differed fr. the tax levied in Ex. xxx., wh. was levied only when a census of the people was taken. (33) **For,** *etc.*,[b] this was the purpose of this poll-tax, levied upon all above the age of twenty. **shewbread,** 12 unleavened cakes of fine meal freshly placed every Sabbath upon the table in the Holy Place. It was the "bread of the face," *i. e.* God's presence. **meat offering,** *R. V.*, "meal offering." This was offered twice a day, morning and evening, in conjunction with two lambs, the **burnt offering.** It is styled "continual" because offered at regular stated times. **set feasts,** the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Feast of Tabernacles, *cf.* Nu. xxviii., xxix. **holy things,** prob. "wave offerings" and "peace offerings," Lev. xxiii. 10, 17, 19. **sin offerings,** *i. e.* (1) the regular offering in connection with the continual burnt offering; and (2) the exceptional offering on behalf of some national transgression, *cf.* Lev. iv. 13.

a Ex. xxx. 13; 2 Ch. xxiv. 6. It was half a shekel in our Lord's time. Ma. xvii. 24. War and captivity had reduced their resources, and they had to pay foreign tribute, hence they agreed to a third.

b Nu. xxviii. 2-6; 9-15.

Giving. — There is no truly Christian man who keeps an unconverted pocketbook. God's universal law of unselfish service is as supreme in the domain of material possessions — in the realm of that wealth which extends a man's power "to bring things to pass" — as it is in any other department of man's possible efforts. The unvarying law of God which attaches an obligation to every opportunity and places a duty over against every right

Two Port Royal divines visiting Arnauld, desired Nicole to assist him in a new work; when the latter observed, "We are now old; is it not time to rest?" "Rest!" returned Arnauld; "have we not all eternity to rest in?"

makes no exception of wealth with its vast powers of service. — *Merrill E. Gates.*

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34—37. (34) **wood offering,**[a] for use of temple, fuel for sacrifices, *etc.*[b] (35) **firstfruits,**[c] Ex. xxiii. 19. (36) **firstborn,**[d] were redeemed for 5 shekels. The firstborn of all unclean beasts only were redeemable, Ex. xiii. 2. (37) **dough,** *R. V.*, "coarse meal" offerings, *i. e.* "heave offerings." **have the tithes,**[e] *i. e.* the Levites were to collect the "tithes of the ground" and store them in villages near the place of collection, Nu. xv. 21.

Giving. — Men may say they prefer to give their missionary money nearer home, where they see what becomes of it. But remember that it is by setting up standards and beacons, getting hold of a few here and there and Christianizing them, even when results look small, that a great testimony to Christ is finally given. Make the gospel "witness to all nations," before the end comes. The apostles traveled and sailed, casting their bread upon the waters, not too anxious to count up visible results. The great commission was, "Go, preach the gospel to all nations." There is no knowing where the fruit will spring. — *Bishop Huntington.*

they cast lots for offerings

[a] Isa. xl. 16.

[b] On the 22d of Ab. the 5th mo.; *Josephus, Bel.* ii. 17, 6.

[c] Le. xxiii. 10; Nu. xviii. 12; De. xxvi. 2.

[d] Le. xxvii. 26, 27; Nu. xviii. 15; De. xii 6.

[e] Le. xxvii. 30; 2 Ch. xxxi. 11, 12.

38, 39. (38) **priest . . tithes,** "some representative (or representatives) of the priestly order was to be present whenever the Levites collected the tithes, to take note of the quantity, and prevent the Levites from depriving the priests of their due share," and for the people's sake, to see that they gave the due proportion. **the tithe . . tithes,** "this tenth, being thus ascertained, was to be conveyed to Jerusalem at the expense of the Levites, and deposited in its appropriate store-chamber." (39) **children of Israel,** *i. e.* the laity in distinction fr. the priests and the Levites. **the offering,** *R. V.*, "heave offering." "This 'heave offering' includes both 'the firstfruits' of the children of Israel (*vss.* 36, 37) and 'the tithe of the tithe' paid by the Levite to the priests (37). It is the special designation of the tithe paid both by Israel and by the house of Levi in Num. xviii. 24–28." **we . . God,**[f] by wh. all our homes are blessed: and in wh. He is worshipped from whom all prosperity — personal and national — comes.

The house of God. — We call our churches temples. Now you know, or ought to know, they are not temples. They have never had, never can have, anything whatever to do with temples. They are "synagogues," — "gathering-places," — where you gather yourselves together as an assembly; and by not calling them so, you again miss the force of another mighty text — "Thou, when thou prayest, shall not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the churches (we should translate it), that they may be seen of men; but thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is" — not in chancel nor in aisle, but — "in secret." Now you feel, as I say this to you — I know you feel — as if I were trying to take away the honor of your churches. Not so; I am trying to prove to you the honor of your houses and your hills; I am trying to show you not that the church is not sacred, but that the whole earth is. I would have you feel what careless, what constant, what infectious sin there is in all modes of thought whereby, in calling your churches only "holy," you call your hearths and homes profane; and have separated yourselves from the heathen by casting all your household gods to the ground, instead of recognizing, in the place of their many and feeble Lares, the presence of your One and Mighty Lord. — *Ruskin.*

they promise not to forsake the house of their God

[f] He. x. 25.

Christians in Greenland very seldom, if ever absent themselves from public worship on account of the weather. When it is so cold that their breath freezes, and forms icicles on their faces, they yet go long distances, — men, women, and children, — through snow and ice and storm, to the house of prayer.

"Thankfulness is measured, both by God and good men, not by the weight, but by the will, of the retributor. God doth highly accept the small offerings of his weak servants when he seeth them to proceed from great love." — *Anon.*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1—6. "The connection of ch. xi. is with ch. vii. 4, 5. Having spoken in that place of the insufficiency of the population of Jerusalem, Nehemiah now proceeds to explain the steps which he took to remedy it. He made, it would seem, a census of the entire nation, and required each town and district to transfer one-tenth of its population to the capital. The men in the various localities determined among themselves by lot who should stay and who should go, and Nehemiah no doubt made the necessary arrangements for the reception of the new-comers at Jerusalem."— *Pulp. Com.* (1) **rulers . . Jerusalem,** true patriots take the post of honor and danger. **rest . . lots,** *etc.*, as he could not increase the population fr. the rulers Neh. was obliged to resort

the rulers dwell at Jerusalem

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to the middle and lower classes. (2) **that . . themselves,**[a] their service the more valuable bec. voluntary. (3) "From this verse to xii. 26 we have a succession of lists: (1) the chiefs of the provinces that dwelt in Jerusalem, 4-26; (2) the town and villages occupied by the Jews, 25-36; (3) the priests and Levites that went up, with Zerubbabel from Babylon, xii. 1-9; (4) the genealogy of the high-priests, beginning at Jeshua, xii. 10, 11; (5) the heads of the priestly houses in the days of Joiakim, xii. 12-21; (6) of the Levitical houses at the same period, xii. 22-26." **province,**[b] Judah. **but . . cities,** 1 Ch. ix. 2. **Israel,**[c] the nation as a whole. (4) **dwelt . . Judah,** *etc.*, 1 Ch. ix. 3, *ff.*

Fidelity to duty. — In those scenes of confusion, flight, horror, and despair, which took place on the Atlantic steamer Arctic, which struck another steamer and sunk in four hours, and three hundred souls perished, there is one act, between the time of her accident and her sinking, which looms up with a mournful grandeur never to be forgotten — the firing of the signal gun. This duty belonged to Stewart Holland, a young man of the engineering department, who, when all his comrades deserted the ship, faced the danger and stood at his post. "About two hours after the Arctic was struck, the firing of the gun attracted my attention," says the third mate, "and I recollect when I saw Stewart, it struck me as remarkably strange that he alone of all belonging to the engineering body should be there. He must have had a good chance to go in the chief engineer's boat and be saved; but he did not, it seems, make the slightest exertion to save himself, while there was duty to be done on shipboard. I recollect that, about an hour before the ship sunk, I was hurriedly searching for spikes to make a raft with. I had just passed through the saloon; on the sofas were men who had fainted, and there were many of them, too; the ladies were in little groups, clasped together, strangely quiet and resigned. And as I came out again the scene that presented itself was one that I hope never to see again. Here and there were strong, stout men on their knees in the attitude of prayer; and others, who when spoken to, were immovable, stupefied. In the midst of this scene, Stewart came running up to me, crying, 'Dorian, my powder is out; I want more; give me the key.' 'Never mind the key,' I replied, 'take an axe and break open the door.' He snatched one close beside me, and down into the ship's hold he dived, and I went over the ship's side to my raft. I recollect distinctly his appearance as he once more hailed me from the deck; the right side of his face was black with powder, and when he spoke his face seemed to be lighted up with a quiet smile." During all those terrible hours of anxiety and dread, his signal gun boomed over the wild waste of waters, telling its fearful story of distress, of danger, and of death. His comrades fled, strong men quailed, and cries of agony went up to heaven, but Stewart *never flinched;* and his last act when the ship went down was to fire his signal gun, in the lingering hope that some passing sail might yet learn their danger and come to their rescue. "His whole conduct can be accounted for by the simple word *duty*, and nothing else." It was this which gave him his calmness, and inspired him with courage, and made him superior to every consideration of personal safety, and causes the name of *Stewart Holland* to be pronounced all over this great land with admiration and reverence. — *Anon.*

a Jud. v. 9.

b Ezr. ii. 1.

c Ezr. ii. 70; x. 10; Ne. vii. 61; xiii. 3. No one can make sacrifice for another, without establishing a bond of interest between them. A boy is rescued from death, and, ever after, he loves to tell, "That man one saved my life." The rescuer, too feels a special interest in the one he has saved.

"Those who are trying to bring men home to God must be on their way to God's home themselves." — *R. W. Dale.*

"It is not from the few conspicuous deeds of life that the blessings chiefly come which make the world better, sweeter, happier; but from the countless lowly ministries of the every-days, the little faithfulnesses that fill long years." — *J. R. Miller.*

"To guard the mind against the temptation of thinking that there are no good people, say to them, 'Be such as you would like to see others,' and you will find those who resemble you." — *Bossuet.*

7—9. (7) **Sallu,** 1 Ch. ix. 7. (9) **second . . city,** either second in command,[d] or over second part of the city.[e]

Service. — The first thing a man must do if he desires to be used in the Lord's work is to make an unconditional surrender of himself to God. He must *consecrate* and then *concentrate.* A man who does not put his whole life into one channel, does not count for much, and the man who goes into work with only half a heart, does not amount to much. We are living in an intense age, and if a man is to succeed he must set himself apart for the work and throw all his energy into it. — *D. L. Moody.*

the sons of Benjamin

d As Vulg., LXX.

e As *Gesenius.*

10—14. (10) **priests,** 1 Ch. ix. 10. **Jedaiah,** *etc.*, prob. names of chiefs of classes of priests. (11) **ruler,** *etc.*, *i. e.* "the high priest; or, rather, the family which furnished the high priests at this time. The actual high priest was Eliashib, the son of Joiakim, and grandson of Jeshua (*see* ch. xii. 10; xiii. 4)." (12) **eight . . two,** 1 Ch. ix. 13. (14) **son . . men,**[f] *R. V.*, "son of Haggedolim;" Hag. being a proper name.

All the workers shall be rewarded. — Each shall find that he has a share in the completed results, where the labors of all are represented. What does it

the priests

f So LXX. and Vulg.

"In this world there is one godlike thing, the essence of all that ever was or ever will be of

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matter in which stage of the great process our co-operation has been enlisted? Every man that has had a part in the building shall have a share in the glory. What does it matter whether we have been set to dig out the foundation, working amongst mud and wet, or have laid the lowermost courses, which are all covered up and forgotten, or happen to have been amongst those who bring forth the head-stone with shoutings? We are all builders all the same The main thing is that we have some work there. Never mind whereabouts it is. Never mind whether it be visible or no. Never mind whether your name is associated with it. You may never see the issues of your toils. If you can see them they will generally not be worth looking at. We work for eternity. We may well wait for the scaffolding to be taken away. Then we shall find that preparatory work is all represented in the final issue; even as the first film of alluvium, deposited in its delta by some mighty stream, is the real foundation for the last, which, long ages after, rise above the surface and bear waving corn and the homes of men. —*A. Maclaren.*

godlike in this world—the veneration done to human worth by the hearts of men."—*Carlyle.*

"All look as if they knew the day, the hour; and felt with man the need and joy of thanks. Well I ween, where sacrifice is not is never fire."—*Bailey.*

15—19. (16) **outward business,**[a] its civil and judicial affairs.[b] (17) **begin . . prayer,** one who, with a loud clear voice, led the rest. "The leader of the choir which chanted the public praise at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice." **Bakbukiah . . Abda,** *i. e.* Bak. was the chief assistant, and Abda held third place in the choir. (19) **kept the gates,** *R. V.*, "kept watch at the gate."

Giving of thanks.—Saints are not to be always singing praises, or with their lips expressing gratitude; yet there is a sense in which they are always to be "giving thanks." They ought to cherish a thankful heart, a disposition of gratitude; and should frequently take occasion, by every suitable means, to manifest and express it. Thanksgiving should therefore be offered to the end of life, and in every changing circumstance of life. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," *etc.* (Phil. iv. 6). This service is never unseasonable; and sometimes it is peculiarly appropriate.—*Kidd.*

the Levites

[a] 1 Ch. xxvi. 29, Acts vi. 2-5.

[b] So *Wordsworth*, but some think those things wh. were done outside, or in the country, such as collecting provisions.

20—23. (20) This *vs.* seems out of place; it belongs bet. *vss.* 24 and 25. (21) **Ophel,** iii. 26. The hill S. of the temple height. (22) **over . . God,** as dist. fr. "outward" business, *vs.* 16. "The *R. V.*, rightly takes the whole verse to be one sentence, defining first the descent and then the duties of Uzzi. The word 'overseer' must be joined with 'over the business;' while 'the singers' is in apposition to 'the sons of Asaph.'" (23) **For . . them,**[c] *i. e.* king of Persia.[d] **portion,** or a sure ordinance. **due . . day,** as their service so their pay was, daily.

the residue of Israel

[c] Ezr. vi. 8, 9; vii. 20.

[d] No doubt this was ordered by request of Neh. or Ezra.

The singers' portion.—I. The service of song in the house of the Lord is one of the most important parts of Divine worship. II. Those who take part in this should be persons with hearts in sympathy with the Being praised, and with the congregation whose praises they lead. III. Too often the singers' portion is much criticism and few thanks from those who have the advantage of their services, and who know little of music or the difficulties of singers. IV. Under the temple ritual, the singers were a paid choir; but then they gave their whole time to this work, and their duties were very onerous. V. The singers' best portion is the joy and satisfaction felt by those who know they are offering the gift of a sweet voice to make the service of God attractive to those who are without.

It was not uncommon for soldiers who had to undergo amputation to drive the gloom away with songs. One, as he lay upon the amputating table, quieted his pain by making the hospital resound with the hymn, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds!" *etc.* Another, in like circumstances, sang, "There'll be no more sorrow there," *etc.*

Singing in eternity.—A young lady who had an exquisitely sweet voice, but who had no love for the Saviour in her heart, and lived only for the pleasures of the world, was one day in company with an earnest Christian minister, who knew her well. After hearing her sing a song with great feeling and power, he went to her side, and in a low voice said, "You have a beautiful voice; where will you sing in eternity?" The "word in season" was like an arrow piercing her heart; she could not forget it; and had no rest until she found rest in Jesus.

24—29. (24) **king's . . people,** an official who adjusted civil matters, or fiscal concerns. "The exact office borne by Pethahiah cannot be determined; but he evidently held a confidential position, which made him an intermediary for certain purposes between the Persian king and the Jewish people. Perhaps he received and forwarded petitions and complaints" (25) **Kirjath-arba,** Hebron.[e] **Dibon,** Josh. xv. 22. **villages,** *lit.* daughters.[f] **Jekabzeel,** Kabzeel.[g] (26–29) *See* Josh. xv. 26–40.

Pethahiah

[e] Ge. xxiii. 2.

[f] Josh. xv. 45.

[g] Josh. xv. 21.

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Working for the unknown future.— An old tattered volume found among his father's books, Bunny's "Resolutions," aroused Richard Baxter to concern; and Sibb's "Bruised Reed" led him to the Saviour. From Baxter's pen proceeded "The Call to the Unconverted," which, in addition to its most extensive circulation elsewhere, was given by a beggar at the door where Philip Doddridge lived. It was the voice of God to the youthful reader, who became the author of "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul"— a book which gave the first impression to William Wilberforce. He became the author of "A Practical View of Christianity," which was blessed to the conversion of Leigh Richmond, a successful minister, and author of "The Dairyman's Daughter" and "Young Cottager," little works that have had many seals in souls won to God. The "Practical View" was also instrumental in the saving change of Dr. Chalmers, whose works are world-wide, and whose labors were so eminently owned for the revival of religion in the ministry and people of Scotland.— *Steel.*

"Labor is one of the great elements of society,— the greatest substantial interest on which we all stand."— *D. Webster.*

villages of the craftsmen, etc.

30—36. (30) **dwelt . . Hinnom,** *R. V.*, "so they encamped, *etc.*," thus scattered through the land S. of Jerus. (31) **Geba,**[a] Josh. xii. 12–24. (35) **Lod . . Ono,**[b] Ezr. ii. 33. **the . . craftsmen,** they appear to have dwelt together for convenience of their calling.[c] (36) **Levites . . Benjamin,** *R. V.*, "certain courses in Judah were joined to Benj." Those who were not in Jerus. had settlements here.

Faithful performance of duty.— Napoleon's aim was "Glory"; Wellington's watchword, like Nelson's, was "Duty." The former word, it is said, does not once occur in his dispatches; the latter often, but never accompanied by any high sounding professions. The greatest difficulties could neither embarrass nor intimidate Wellington; his energy invariably rising in proportion to the obstacles to be surmounted. The patience, the firmness, the resolution, with which he bore himself thro' the maddening vexations and gigantic difficulties of the peninsular campaigns, is perhaps, one of the sublimest things to be found in history. In Spain, Wellington not only exhibited the genius of the general, but the comprehensive wisdom of the statesman.— *Smiles.*

a Ezr. ii. 26–35.

b Ne. vi. 2; vii. 37.

c Thus the bakers, Jer. xxxvii. 21. In London there are curious examples of trade settlements; as publishers in Paternoster Row; watchmakers in Clerkenwell; weavers in Spitalfields, *etc.*

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

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priests, etc., who went up with Zerubbabel

1—9. (1) **Now priests.** *i. e. vs.* 7, "the chief of the priests," the heads of the 24 courses,[d] only 4 of wh. returned fr. the captivity,[e] wh. 4 were divided by Joshua, or Zerubbabel, into orig. num., of these 22 are enumerated here and 20 in *vss.* 12–21. **Ezra,** not *the* Ezra.[f] (4) **Abijah,** ancestor of Jo. the Baptist.[g] (8) **Levites,** *etc.*, Ezr. ii. 40. **thanksgiving,** *R. V.*, marg. "the choirs." (9) **watches,** or stations, *vs.* 24, "ministered in their courses, as the others did, and kept their stations over against them in their turns of attendance, which are called their 'watches' or wards."

The sphere of work springing from the sphere of sin. — Bad men are usually acquainted with human life. They know the dispositions of their fellow-men, and whatever knowledge there is of bad men they have. And such men are bound to consecrate their knowledge and to bring it into the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has forgiven them and renewed their life, if they are born again. No man ought to be so glad to pluck men out of the burning, as those men who have been themselves brands in the burning, and have been rescued. If a man has been rescued from drunkenness, he ought to take a special interest in those who are in that burning realm. If a man has been a gambler, and is converted from his wicked way, that ought to be a sphere in which he feels peculiarly called to labor. If a man has been a dissipated man, he, more than all others, ought to feel that he is an apostle to the Gentiles in that regard. If a man has from his youth gone step by step down toward wickedness, when he is converted he ought not to be ashamed of his past life in such a way that he will not use it for the good of others.— *Beecher.*

d 1 Ch. xxiv. 1-20.

e Ne. vii. 39-42; Ezr ii. 36-39.

f Who returned B. C. 458, 78 yrs. aft. return of Zerubbabel, and labored with Neh. 100 yrs. aft. that return.

g Lu. i. 5.

"It is only by labor that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labor can be made happy, the two cannot be separated with impunity."— *Ruskin.*

genealogy of the high priest

10—21. (10) **Jeshua,** "important enumeration, as establishing individual purity of descent." "The six names cover a space of at least 205 years— from the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, B. C. 538, to the submission of Jerusalem to Alexander the Great, B. C. 333, which gives very long generations, but still such as are historically possible." This list shows that the compilation of this book must have been later than 330 B. C. (11) **Joiada,** whose

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son mar. a dau. of Sanballat.[a] **Jaddua,** son of Jonathan, *vs.* 22. (22) **days . . fathers,** as in the days of Jeshua; the sons filled the priestly office in the room of their fathers, though somewere yet alive.

a xiii. 28.

Sacredness of labor. — Two men I honor, and no third. First, the toil-worn craftsman that with earth-made implement laboriously conquers the earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand — crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the sceptre of this planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a man living manlike. O, but the more venerable for thy rudeness, and even because we must pity as well as love thee! Hardly entreated brother! for us was thy back so bent, for us were thy straight limbs and fingers so deformed; thou wert our conscript, on whom the lot fell, and fighting our battles wert so marred. For in thee too lay a God-created form, but it was not to be unfolded; encrusted must it stand with the thick adhesions and defacements of labor; and thy body, like thy soul, was not to know freedom. Yet toil on, toil on; THOU art in thy duty, be out of it if who may; thou toilest for the altogether indispensable, for daily bread. A second man I honor, and still more highly; him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the bread of life. Is not he too in his duty; endeavoring towards inward harmony; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavors, be they high or low? Highest of all when his outward and inward endeavors are one; when we can name him artist; not earthly craftsman only, but inspired thinker, who with heaven-made implement conquers heaven for us! If the poor and humble toil that we have food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have light, have guidance, freedom, immortality? These two, in all their degrees, I honor: all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth. Unspeakably touching is it, however, when I find both dignities united, and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man's wants is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimer in this world know I nothing than a peasant saint, could such now anywhere be met with. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself; thou wilt see the splendor of heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of earth, like a light shining in great darkness. — *Carlyle.*

"As we are born to work, so others are born to watch over us while we are working." — *Goldsmith.*

"Man, it is not thy works, which are all mortal, infinitely little, and the greatest no greater than the least, but only the spirit thou workest in, that can have worth or continuance." — *Carlyle.*

22—26. (22) **Levites . . fathers,** those were registered who were chief of the fathers. **also . . priests,** who were priests. **Darius,** *i.e.* Darius III., Codomannus (336–331). The best commentators are agreed that *vss.* 22, 23 were interjected by some later compiler. (23) **book . . chronicles,** not the bk. of the sacred canon, but public records of the nation. (24) **ward,** *vs.* 9, one company opposite another; reference is to the antiphonal singing in the worship of the temple. (25) **thresholds,** *R. V.*, "storehouses."

certain chief Levites

Workshop of the world. — There was, and is, a sense in which we are to frown upon this world; that is, we are to frown upon that spirit in the world which represents selfishness, and pride, and lust. But the world is a working place, where we are to be drilled through the instrumentalities of cares, burdens, hopings, bafflings, fears, enterprises, and industries. Why, this is the very wonder of wisdom; it is God's school-house, in which we are to be developed! A man who undertakes to live without these instrumentalities in this natural and business world will come short of his purpose. There may be special exceptions, in which God ministers special blessings. A man living the life of an invalid, and secluded, may have grace according to his day and situation. But when there is such a case it is an exception; whereas the general truth is this: we are to employ the world, and put our bodies into it, with the understanding that God has made all secular things as means of grace to us. — *Beecher.*

"I find that successful exertion is a powerful means of exhilaration, which discharges itself in good-humor upon others." — *Chalmers.*

"Letting down buckets into empty wells, and growing old with drawing nothing up." — *Cowper.*

27—30. (27) **at . . wall,** he turns to earlier parts of the hist.[b] **they . . places,** provincial towns and villages. **cymbals,**[c] instruments of percussion, two metallic discs wh. were struck together. **psalteries,** or viols, stringed, shape uncertain, a kind of lyre with 10 strings, played with both hands. **harps,** stringed, often played with plectrum. (28) **And . . singers,** *i. e.* of the chief singers. **out . . country,** *R. V.*, marg. "the circuit," *i. e.* the country round about Jerus. **Netophathi,** per. nr. Bethlehem.[d] (29) **for . . villages,** sug. of their num. and importance. **round . . Jerusalem,** country people with strong, clear voices: nr. the scene of their chief work. (30)

the dedication of the walls

b Ne. vi. 15; viii. 1-13, *etc.*; this dedication was in B.C. 444.

c 2 Sa. vi. 5; 1 Ch. xiii. 8; xv. 16–28; xvi. 5; two kinds named in Ps. cl. 5; see *Topics*, ii. 122, 123.

d Ne. ii. 26; 1 Ch. ii. 34; ix. 16.

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purified, *etc.*, that all — the officials and their work — might be holy to the Lord.

Dedication of the wall — Therefore the ceremony at the new walls was designed in the first instance to direct attention to the very fact of their newness, and to call up those thoughts and feelings that are suitable in the consideration of a time of commencement. We must all acknowledge that such a time is one for very earnest thought. All our beginnings in life — the birth of a child, a young man's start in the world, the wedding that founds the home, the occupation of a new house, the entrance on a fresh line of business — all such beginnings come to rouse us from the indifference of routine, to speak to us with the voice of Providence, to bid us look forward and prepare ourselves for the future. We have rounded a corner, and a new vista has opened up to our view. As we gaze down the long aisle we must be heedless indeed if we can contemplate the vision without a thrill of emotion, without a thought of anticipation. The new departure in external affairs is an opportunity for a new turn in our lives. One of the charms of the Bible is that, like nature, it is full of fresh starts. Inasmuch as a perennial breath of new life plays among the pages of these ancient scriptures, we have only to drink it in to feel what inspiration there is here for every momentous beginning. — *Exp. Bib.*

"Some of the Fathers went so far as to esteem the love of music a sign of predestination, as a thing Divine, and reserved for the felicities of heaven itself." — *Sir W Temple.*

"Music is the fourth great material want of our natures; first, food, then raiment, then shelter, then music." — *Bovee.*

31—36. (31) **two . . thanks,** of wh. Neh. and Ezr. were leaders. **one**[a] **. . dung gate,**[b] the parties started in opposite directions, to meet presently and unite in one song of praise.[c] (32) **after them,** the priests, the singers and the musicians led the princes in this giving of thanks. (33) **Ezra,** not the scribe. (35) **trumpets,** Nu. x. 2–8. **namely Zechariah,** *R. V.* omits "namely" — Zech. was not a priest; he was a Levite. He led a company distinct fr. the young trumpeters. (36) **musical . . God,** 1 Ch. xxiii. 5. **before them,** *i. e.* heading one of the processions.

Songs born out of trial. — Luther's version of the 46th Psalm, which one has called "The Marseillaise of the Reformation," was born out of the stormy life of the great reformer; and Archbishop Trench, writing of the 30 yrs. war in Germany, has said: "There is one fact most noteworthy as a sign of the temper in which this great tribulation was met by those who had to drink of its cup of pain deeper, perhaps, than any other, that very many of the most glorious compositions in the hymn book of Protestant Germany date from the period of the Thirty Years' War; and, most noticeable of all, these contributions are rich, not so much as one might have expected, in themes and lamentations, Misereres, and cries De Profundis as in Te Deums and Magnificats, hymns of high hope and holy joy." Who knows not also that Paul Gerhardt's hymn, "Give to the winds thy fears," was the cry of his soul in an hour of greatest extremity; or that the ode of Cowper, beginning, "God moves in a mysterious way," was the last sane utterance of his mind, as the cloud which darkened his reason was settling over his spirit. . . . A friend, speaking to Mr. Whittier about a well-known hymn, . . . received this answer from the poet: "I do not wonder at your preference. That hymn was born out of the inmost anguish of my heart." Thus the church has been enriched and the souls of all its members refreshed by the recorded experiences of those who have clung to God thro' trial. — *W. M. Taylor.*

the right-hand company

a vs. 38.

b Ne. ii. 13; iii. 13

c vs. 40.

"A person being once cast upon a desolate island, spent a day in fasting and prayer for his deliverance, but no help came. It occurred to him then to keep a day of thanksgiving and praise, and he had no sooner done it than relief was brought to him. You see, as soon as he began to sing of mercy exercised, the exercels of mercy was renewed to him. The Lord heard the voice of his praise." — *Nevins.*

37—39. (37) **And . . gate,** ii. 14; iii. 15. **stairs . . David,** iii. 15. **even . . eastward,** iii. 26. (38) **went . . them,** in opp. direction. (38, 39) *See* ii. 1–11 for places named. **they . . gate,**[d] *R. V.*, "gate of the guard," where they met aft. making the circuit of the walls.

Singing — a service to God. — We want the spirit of Levitical consecration in the heart of every worshiper. Oh! if we but remembered that, as Christians, we are anointed by God's Spirit for His peculiar service, and if we did only faintly realize that the praise of the sanctuary was a portion of that service to which we have been thus set apart, we should be more willing to give the time and attention which are needful to qualify ourselves for it. We have fallen into the grievous mistake of supposing that the music of the sanctuary is for human ears more than for the ear of God: and in seeking to please men by it, we have allowed devotion almost to disappear from it. Nay, we have thereby come even to displease men by it; for it is here, as in so many other things, they who seek human appreciation and applause as the

the left-hand company

d Jer. xxxii. 2.

"In mining operations, the full and empty carriages, or vessels, being connected together, those which have been emptied are from time to time raised up an ascent by the descending of those that have been filled. In this way let the descent of God's mercies, and

main ends, invariably, in the long run, lose that which they so desired; while they who think mainly and especially of doing honor to God do at last receive also the respect of men. When in our praise, we can merge all tho't of self in the eager, earnest effort to please God; when, feeling that we are singing to God, we try to give him of our best; then also the ears of men will be turned toward us, and the hymns of the service will, because they are the sincere expression of our hearts, produce the most salutary impressions on those who hear them, and will be as much a means of edification and conversion as the prayers or the discourses. — *W. M. Taylor.*

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the gifts bestowed out of His fullness, raise your empty vessels to receive again and again from His inexhaustible treasury all that you need." — *Bickersteth.*

40—43. (40) **So stood,** at the prison gate.[a] **in . . God,** *i. e.* in the vicinity of the house of God. (41, 42) *See vss.* 32–38 for names. **singers . . loud,** *lit.* made their voice to be heard. A great noise, but full of melody and of heart music. (43) **God . . joy,** hence not mere animal or emotional excitement, but true spiritual joy. **wives . . rejoiced,** happy wives, mothers, children. **joy . . off,** so, our Jerusalem should be the joy of the whole earth.

the two companies meet and sing praises

[a] *vs.* 39.

The joy of Jerusalem (*vs.* 43). — We have in this verse — I. The record of an interesting event in Jewish history. Their joy was — 1. The joy of gratitude; 2. Of devout love; 3. Of hope; 4. It was universal — wives and children; 5. It was of Divine origin — God had made them to rejoice. II. We have a clear manifestation of a phase of Christian experience — joyousness. 1. The God of Israel is our God and Father; 2. He is constantly creating occasions of the liveliest joy; 3. It is the duty of His children to rejoice and be glad in Him, and show that theirs is a joy-producing religion. III. We have further a prediction of a glorious future. 1. A happy time for the church; 2. A hopeful time for the world.

"Real joy seems dissonant from the human character in its present condition; and if it be felt, it must come from a higher region, for the world is shadowed by sorrow; the very clouds seem to shed a tear on man's grave, who departs, unlike the beauties of summer, to return no more; who fades unlike the sons of the forest, which another summer beholds new clothed, when he is unclothed and forgotten." — *Andrews.*

Origin of a hymn. — As Chas. Wesley was sitting by an open window one beautiful day, looking out over the landscape, he saw a hawk swooping down towards a little bird. The poor frightened thing was darting in every direction to escape the fierce grasp of the hawk; and it seemed for a time as tho' it could find no hiding-place. Suddenly seeing the open window, the bird in its terror flew into it, and with beating heart, found refuge in Mr. Wesley's bosom. It is said Mr. Wesley was at the time suffering severe trials, and felt the need of a refuge as much as the poor, trembling, little bird. He took up his pen and wrote the beautiful hymn: "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." — *Anon.*

44—47. (44) **time . . treasurers,**[b] *etc.*, their intense spiritual joy did not cause them to overlook practical religion, but for which such joy will soon abate. **out of the fields,** *R. V.*, "according to the fields," *i. e.* "out of the portion of cultivable soil attached to each provincial town." **portions of,** *i. e.* portions appointed by the law. **Judah . . waited,**[c] this was one reason for their attention to the secularities of religion. (45) **kept . . God,** *R. V.*, "And they kept . . . and so did the singers and the porters. The verse, according to the rendering of the *R. V.* states first that the priest and Levites performed the due ceremonial obligations and then that the same strict conformity to rule was practiced by the singers and porters." **according,** *etc.*, 1 Ch. xxv., xxvi. (46) **Asaph,** 2 Ch. xxix. 30; xxxv. 15. (47) **sanctified . . Levites,** *etc.*, Nu. xviii. 21–26; *sanctified* = set apart for the use of the Levites. There the Levites set apart 'the tithe of the tithes' for the priests." **children . . Aaron,**[d] = priests.

the officers of the temple

[b] 2 Ch. xxxi. 11, 12.

[c] Or stood, *i. e.* ministered before the Lord.

[d] Ne. x. 38.

Songs of thanksgiving. — When true gratitude is manifested, it moves us intensely, even from its very rarity. At the close of the cotton famine in Lancashire, Eng., it stirred the whole British nation to its depths. It was in the town of Staleybridge, which for many months had been suffering the deepest distress. All those weary weeks, its factories had been silent, and its tall chimneys smokeless, and its operatives, all their savings gone, were reduced to a want which they bore with the most heroic endurance. At length the war was ended and a consignment of cotton came to the town. Hastening to the railway depot, the men unyoked the horses from the first wagon and drew it themselves into the courtyard of one of the factories. Soon an immense crowd surrounded it, and the tears filled the eyes of the multitude as they gazed upon it, for it meant employment, and employment meant bread. Just then while all were deeply moved, one solitary voice began to sing the grand old Doxology, "Praise God, from whom all

"Music is one of the fairest and most glorious gifts of God, to which Satan is a bitter enemy; for it removes from the heart the weight of sorrow, and the fascination of evil thoughts." — *Luther.*

"Where should this music be — in the air or the earth?" — *Shakespeare.*

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blessings flow," and in a moment, every one in the vast assemblage joined in, while on the gaunt and famine-stricken cheeks of faces upturned to heaven the big tears kept coursing down. Often has that simple strain been sung in the most inspiring circumstances, but never with more depth of feeling or more fervor of gratitude than on that occasion. — *Taylor.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

the reading of the law

1—3. (1) **On that day,** equiv. to "about that time." **and . . written,**[a] what we find written in the book we should be willing to practice. We should read in order to learn. **come . . congregation,** *R. V.*, "enter into the assemblage." (2) **because,** *etc.*, thus the heinousness of the sin of inhospitality was to be marked. **but . . them,** Nu. xxii. 5; Jos. xxiv. 9, 10. **howbeit . . blessing,**[b] God, in His mercy, often brings good out of intended evil. (3) **when . . law,** *etc.*,[c] they earnestly practiced what they learned. Previously the Jews withdrew from the strangers, now they expel the strangers fr. among them.

a De. xxiii. 3, 4.

b Nu. xxiii. 11; xxiv. 10.

c Ne. ix. 2; x. 28.

Sorrow. — God has turned the curse of sorrow into a blessing. Sweet are the uses of adversity! In God's hand indeed they are: when he puts his children into the furnace of affliction, it is that he may thoroughly purge away all their dross. A great writer has spoken with great beauty of the resources which God has placed within us for bringing good out of evil, or, at least, for greatly alleviating our trials in the cases of sickness and misfortune. "The cutting and irritating grain of sand," he says, "which by accident or incaution has got within the shell, incites the living inmate to secrete from its own resources the means of coating the intrusive substance. And it is not, or may it not be, even so with the irregularities and unevenness of health and fortune in our own case?" We too may turn diseases into pearls. But how much more wonderful are the wisdom and mercy of God, in making the spiritual trials and distresses of His people their necessary discipline for their highest good, the means for the greatest perfection and stability of their characters! This is indeed a wonderful transformation. "God," says holy Leighton, "hath many sharp cutting instruments and rough files for the polishing of His jewels; and those He especially esteems and means to make the most resplendent, He hath oftenest His tools upon." — *Cheever.*

"Authority, though it err like others, hath yet a kind of medicine in itself, that skins the vice of the top" — *Shakespeare.*

"There is nothing sooner overthrows a weak head than opinion of authority; like too strong a liquor for a frail glass." — *Sir P Sidney.*

the alliance of Eliashib and Tobiah

4, 5. (4) An interval of more than twelve years intervenes bet. *vss.* 3, and 4. "We may assume that Nehemiah's memoirs embraced the whole interval of twelve years. The compiler, however, makes no extract from the intervening portion. The words 'before this' have therefore no reference to the events of the preceding verses; their retention only shows the exactness with which the extract is reproduced." — *Cam. Bib.* **Eliashib,**[d] the high priest. **having . . chamber,** apartments pertaining to temple. **Tobiah,**[e] notorious enemy of Israel. Alliance prob. by marriage. (5) **prepared . . chamber,** made a state room out of a sacred store-room. **meat offerings,** *i. e.* the meal offering. **offerings . . priests,** *R. V.*, "heave offerings for the priests," *i. e.* the "tithe of the tithes."

d Ne. iii. 1.

Eliashib's sin.—Though one of the three leading enemies of Nehemiah, the ally and supporter of the Samaritan governor Sanballat, this man was actually permitted to have a lodging in the precincts of the temple. The locality was selected doubtless, because it was within the immediate jurisdiction of the priests, among whom the Jewish opponents of Nehemiah were found. It is as though, in his quarrel with Henry, Thomas à Becket had lodged a papal envoy in the cathedral close at Canterbury. To a Jew who did not treat the ordinances of religion with the Sadducean laxity that was always to be found in some of the leading members of the priesthood, this was most abhorrent. He saw in it a defilement of the neighborhood of the temple, if not of the sacred enclosure itself, as well as an insult to the former governor of the city. Tobiah may have used his room for the purpose of entertaining visitors in state; but it may only have been a ware-house for trade stores, as it had previously been a place in which the bulky sacrificial gifts were stowed away. Such a degradation of it, superseding its previous sacred use, would aggravate the evil in the sight of so strict a man as Nehemiah. The outrage was easily accounted for. Tobiah was allied by marriage to the priest who was the steward of this chamber. Thus we have a clear case of trouble arising out of the system of foreign marriages which Ezra had so strenuously opposed. — *Exp. Bib.*

e Ne. iv. 3; vi. 12-14, 17-19.

Four kinds of pride to be avoided; race pride, face pride, place pride, grace pride

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Nehemiah commands the chambers to be cleaned

6–9. (6) **But . . Jerusalem,**[a] and this advantage was taken of his absence; as of absence of Moses to make the golden calf. **certain days,** literally 'at the end of days.' No method of computing the duration of Neh.'s absence. The degenerate condition in Jerus. would signify a considerable interval. (7) **evil . . Tobiah,** in thus profaning the temple and associating publicly with an idolator. (8) **And . . sore,** *etc.*, directly he heard of this abuse he set himself to reform it: as Moses when he came down from the mount. **household stuff,** old Eng. word for furniture. (9) **thither . . God,** *etc.*,[b] restoring the place to its proper use.

Nehemiah's temper. — What a different man is Nehemiah when the first chapter and the last of his book are brought into contrast! In the first chapter Nehemiah is meek enough; we read that — it came to pass, when he heard certain words, that he "sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven" (1–4), — all that could be done in a private house. In the last chapter we find him laying about him with tremendous fury. He hurls everything out of his way in a righteous rage. There is nothing about weeping, and mourning, and fasting. The last chapter is a thunderstorm. Yet the first and the last are related; the man who cannot weep — that is to say, the man who cannot feel deeply and acutely — can never do any great and permanent reforming work in the world; the man who cannot fast — that is to say, hold himself in severest control — can never strike with any real effect; the man who cannot pray — that is to say, connect himself with all the highest forces and energies of the universe, ally himself with the very omnipotence of God — can never stand forth in heroic fearlessness and courage almost divine. In the first chapter we have the man's inner nature — in the last chapter we have the man at work; and between the two, though the contrast is outwardly so striking, there is an intimate and necessary relation. —*Peop. Bib.*

a *vs.* 14. Ab. B. C. 432.

b 2 Ch. xxix. 5, 15–18.

"He who reforms himself has done more towards reforming the public than a crowd of noisy, impotent patriots." — *Lavater.*

Nehemiah reforms the offices of the temple

10, 11. (10) **portions . . them,**[c] the people withheld their offerings when they saw how things were mismanaged. **fled . . field,**[d] there to obtain their livelihood. (11) **Then . . rulers,**[e] the people urged to do their duty through the rulers, who were to set the example. **set . . place,** the posts of duty wh. they had abandoned.

Reformers. — Luther and Knox were by express vocation priests, and did faithfully perform that function in its common sense, yet it will suit us better here to consider them chiefly in their historical character — rather as reformers than priests. Is not every true reformer by the nature of him a priest first of all? He appeals to heaven's invisible justice against earth's visible force; knows that it, the invisible, is strong. He is a believer in the divine truth of things; a seer, seeing thro' the shows of things; a worshiper of the divine truth of things — a priest that is. If he be not first a priest, he will never be good for much as a reformer. Thus then as we have seen, great men in various situations building up religions, heroic forms of human existence in this world, theories of life worthy to be sung by a Dante, practices of life by a Shakespeare. — *Carlyle.*

c Mal. iii. 8.

d Nu. xxxv. 2.

e *vss.* 17, 25; Pro. xxviii. 4.

"Ministers and people who forsake religion and its services and magistrates, who do not what they can to keep them to it, will have much to answer for hereafter." — *M. Henry.*

tithes paid and treasurers appointed

12–14. (12) **brought . . treasuries,**[f] stored it in the appointed place for its legitimate use. (13) **treasurers,** storekeepers. **next to them,** *i. e.* attending and aiding the treasurers. **for . . faithful,**[g] they had a good reputation for honesty and impartiality. **office . . brethren,** hence the need of right-minded men. (14) **Remember,** *etc.*,[h] Neh. looks to God as his paymaster. He took no reward fr. man. **offices,** *R. V.*, "the observances."

Faithfulness. — The path reveals the purpose, the life confirms the lip. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Faulty conduct does not adorn a faultless creed. Notable devotion in church must be supported by noteworthy uprightness in business. If the temple of our character rests upon pillars of dishonesty, its rottenness and instability will soon appear. If the first table of commandments be written in the chancel, the second table must be suspended in the counting-house. If the laws of trade are not compatible with the laws of God, so much the worse for the laws of trade. You may bend if you will, but alas if you cringe because you must! You must forgive your enemies, you must not fear them. Men of the world seal the lips of (so-called) Christian men when these show inconsistencies in life. Would you reprove sin? Then your daily life must rebuke it. Do you desire to maintain the character of a God-fearing man? The penalty you must pay is to deserve the character of a faithful man. — *Hom. Com.*

f Ne. x. 38, 39; xii. 44.

g Ne. vii. 2; 1 Cor. iv. 2.

h See *J. Mede, Wks.* 177. He shows that it is lawful to do good works with a view to a future reward.

B. C. *cir.* 432.

the violation of the Sabbath

a Ex. xx. 10.

b Ne. x. 31.

c Jer. xvii. 21-23.

"He that has energy enough in his constitution to root out a vice should go a little further and try to plant a virtue in its place; otherwise he will have his labor to renew. A strong soil that has produced weeds may be made to produce wheat with far less difficulty than it would cost to make it produce nothing."- *Colton.*

"Reform, like charity, must begin at home. Once well at home, how will it radiate outwards, irrepressible, — into all that we touch and handle, speak and work, — kindling ever new light by incalculable contagion; spreading in geometric ratio, far and wide,doing good only wherever it spreads, and not evil." — *Carlyle.*

15—18. (15) **saw . . sabbath,**[a] note the vigilance of the good governor; and his zeal for holy days, as well as places. **day . . victuals,** as *vs.* 16 is directed against the *selling* of wares on the Sabbath the thought here may be: Neh. objected to the Sabbath labor by wh. the produce was conveyed to the city. (16) **Tyre,** *etc.*,[b] if heathen men are willing to *sell*, Israel ought not to be willing to *buy* on the Sabbath. The laxity of the church may increase the thoughtlessness of the world. (17) **What . . do,** *etc.*, they were responsible in that, being rulers, they permitted it to be done. (18) **Did . . thus,** *etc.*[c] such sin in the past had its punishment. **yet . . sabbath,** not only doing a present wrong, but treating past warnings with thoughtless indifference.

The Sabbath. — The Sabbath is the guardian of every other Divine institution. The sin of profaning Sabbath stamps in the individual, the family, or the nation, which is guilty of it, the character of irreligious, and speedily ripens them for the judgments of God. This is the danger of being any way concerned in this iniquity, we are furthering an evil which would ultimately destroy religion itself, and which will assuredly prove as ruinous to the temporal renown, as the spiritual interests, of our country. — *J. A. Wylie.* Each should do what his talent and influence in society enjoin and permit. It is the principle upon which I insist. If we cannot absolutely shut the gates of our great cities to the entrance of merchandise, we may do something to lessen the evil. We may shut the door of our houses — we may prohibit the purchase or reception of articles of consumption by our servants and dependents — we may encourage those upon whom we have any influence to observe the sacred day. Let only the zeal, the courage, the firmness, the disinterestedness of Ezra and Nehemiah be connected with their piety and love to the house of their God, and much would be done. — *Bishop Wilson. Conscientiousness.* — In December, says Mr. Barsoe, the missionary, a pleasing circumstance occurred; it showed the reverence of our Esquimaux for the Lord's day. Owing to the state of the weather, during the preceding month, but few seals had been taken; and Saturday, the 2d December, was the first day on which the state of the ice permitted our people to go out on the seal hunt. Considering the great uncertainty which ever attends this occupation, the inducement to pursue it on the following day, in the hope of securing a better provision for their families, was anything but slight. We were, therefore, not a little pleased to learn that a meeting of fathers of families had been convened on the Saturday evening, and that it had been resolved that they would none of them go out on the ensuing day of the Lord, but would spend it in a manner becoming the disciples of Christ, who were invited thankfully to commemorate His coming into the world to save sinners. They expressed their belief that their heavenly Father was able to grant them, on Monday, a sufficiency for the supply of their wants. Their confidence in God was not put to shame. On Monday the weather proved so favorable that they captured no fewer than one hundred seals.

Neh. orders the gates to be shut at sunset

d Le. xxiii. 32.

e xii. 30.

f xiv. 31.

"Each year one vicious habit rooted out, in time might make the worst man good." — *Franklin.*

The queen of England is scrupulous in the observance of the Sabbath, not allowing matters of state to encroach upon holy time, not even if presented by the nobility.

19—22. (19) **commanded,** *etc.*,[d] took practical steps to prevent this Sabbath market being held. **servants,** personal attendants whom Neh. could trust. **no burden . . day,** individuals could pass freely in and out, but merchandise of every kind was prohibited. (20) **merchants . . Jerusalem,** their wares spoiling, themselves disappointed. Many of them carrying on trade with the Jews, who would come outside the city to deal with them. This unlawful traffic Neh. determined to stop. **once or twice,** a few times, till they found out the inconvenience of the new and stringent rule. (21) **Then,** *etc.*, he sent messages of warning. Good rulers will do their best to reduce temptations fr. wh. people suffer. (22) **commanded,** *etc.*,[e] having abolished the abuse, he instituted the use of the Sabbath. **Remember . . also,**[f] happy is he who at the close of ea. undertaking can pray to be remembered "concerning this also."

Sabbath keeping. – The importance attached to this matter is a sign of the prominence given to Sabbath-keeping in Judaism. The same thing was seen earlier in the selection of the law of the Sabbath as one of the two or three rules to be specially noted, and to which the Jews were to particularly pledge themselves in the covenant. Reference was then made to the very act of the Tyrians now complained of, the offering of wares and food for sale in Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. Putting these two passages together, we can see where the Sabbath-breaking came from. It was the invasion of a foreign

custom—like the dreaded introduction of the "Continental Sunday" into England. Now to Nehemiah the fact of the foreign origin of the custom would be a heavy condemnation for it. Next to circumcision, Sabbath-keeping was the principal mark of the Jew. In the days of our Lord it was the most highly prized feature of the ancient faith. This was then so obvious that it was laid hold of by Roman satirists, who knew little about the strange traders in the *Ghetto* except that they "sabbatized." Nehemiah saw that if the sacred day of rest were to be abandoned, one of his bulwarks of separation would be lost. Thus for him, with his fixed policy, and in view of the dangers of his age, there was a very urgent reason for maintaining the Sabbath.—*Exp. Bib.*

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"I never knew a man to escape failures in either mind or body, who worked seven days in a week."—*Sir R. Peel.*

23—25. (23) **Jews . . Moab,**[a] *R. V.*, "saw I the Jews," *i. e.* a certain set of Jews, not a general accusation. (24) **children,** *etc.*, illus. of effect of ill-assorted marriages. (25) **cursed,** *R. V.*, marg., "reviled," as one in authority he denounced the Divine judgments upon them. **smote,** *etc.*, ordered them to be scourged. **made . . God,**[b] took an oath of them to abstain fr. this evil.

marriages with strange wives

a Ezr. ix. 2.

b Ezr. x. 5; Ne. x. 29, 30.

"*Jew's language.*"—Throughout the exile, the knowledge of Hebrew was undoubtedly preserved; for the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah (*circ.* 516), are written in pure Hebrew, and the same may be said of the prophecy of Malachi and the memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah, in the century after the return from the exile (460–430). In the fourth and third centuries B. C. the Hebrews had many of them become bilingual. Greek for a time threatened to dispute the position. But the Aramaic dialect prevailed; and although Hebrew remained as the language of the learned, of the law, of tradition, and of religious literature, the dialect spoken by the Jews in the 1st cent. B. C. was Aramaic. — *Ryle.*

"It must be remembered that Neh. was a person invested with public authority, and that, as such, he was authorized to denounce God's judgments on those who broke his law."—*Wordsworth.*

26—28. (26) **Did . . things?** 1 K. xi. 1, *ff.* **yet . . him,**[c] hence he should have been the more careful of his example. **nevertheless . . sin,**[d] notwithstanding his wisdom, and religious profession, how could *they* hope to escape the same evil. (27) **Shall,** *etc.*,[e] as if you could resist the evil influences of this connection, or escape the just wrath of God. (28) **Joiada,** prob. his name was Manasseh.[f] **therefore . . me,** expelled him fr. his office, and personal friendship; perhaps, forced him into exile.

Neh. exhorts the people

c 1 Ki. iii. 13; 2 Ch. i. 12; 2 S. xii. 24.

d 1 Ki. xi. 4 *ff.*

e Ezr. x. 2.

f *Jos. Ant.* xi. 8, 3.

"*Beloved of his God.*"—I. The objects of God's special regard. 1. They are often the children of His servants—like Solomon; 2. They are ever the subjects of special grace—as Solomon; 3. They are always faulty and erring—as Solomon; 4. They are seldom such backsliders as Solomon. II. The reason of God's special regard. The reason why He loves them is only answered by referring to Jesus. It was not the riches, wisdom, zeal, or the success of Solomon, for all these things were bestowed because He was loved. III. The tokens of God's special regard. 1. An experimental knowledge of His love; 2. A passionate, ardent return of His love; 3. Success in labors.

"Our appetites of one or another kind are excellent spurs to our reason, which otherwise might feebly set about the great ends of preserving and continuing the species."—*C. Lamb.*

Nehemiah's earnestness.—Here, then, we have discipline, earnestness, definiteness,—the very Cromwell of the Old Testament, the man with a rod in his hand: and nothing stands in his way when he has right to vindicate, when he has law to protect. Where are the Nehemiahs of to-day? There are none. Where are the Cromwells of to-day? They are in the grave. Look at this man's attitude. He is not ashamed to speak of himself. He was indeed the only man of his time worth speaking about. He was as the very spirit of judgment amongst the people. If we do not want Nehemiah's violence we want his earnestness. Never forget the distinction between these two terms. There may be those who condemn the violence of Nehemiah, and then sink into indifference regarding all that is sacred and noble and useful in human history. Do not let us escape on the plea that the day of violence has gone: the day of earnestness ought never to go.—*Peop. Bib.*

"These appetites are very humiliating weaknesses. That our grace depends so largely upon animal condition is not quite flattering to those who are hyperspiritual."—*Beecher.*

29—31. (29) **because,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, marg. "for the defilings of." "Nehemiah feels that every sin is worse in a priest than in one who is not a priest; that a priest who contracts a pollution 'pollutes the priesthood;' and that there is a tacit covenant by which priests and Levites bind themselves to holiness of life more absolutely and definitely than others."—*Pulp. Com.* (30) **Thus,** *etc.*,[g] in the manner herein bef. descr. (31) **Remember . . good,** God will certainly "remember," us all. Can ea. reader hope he will be remembered "for good?"

Neh. prays that he may be remembered for good

g x. 30; xii. 1, *ff.*

B. C. *cir.* 432.

"The ending of this Bk. may at first seem rather abrupt; and, since the date of the Bk of Esther is prior to that of Neh., the last words of Neh. are the last words of Biblical hist."—*Wordsworth.*

Nehemiah's character. — On reviewing the character of Nehemiah, we seem unable to find a single fault to counterbalance his many and great virtues. For pure and disinterested patriotism he stands unrivaled. The man whom the account of the misery and ruin of his native country, and the perils with which his countrymen were beset, prompted to leave his splendid banishment, and a post of wealth, power, and influence, in the first court in the world, that he might share and alleviate the sorrows of his native land, must have been pre-eminently a patriot. Every act of his during his government bespeaks one who had no selfishness in his nature. All he did was noble, generous, high-minded, courageous, and to the highest degree upright. But to stern integrity he united great humility and kindness, and a princely hospitality. As a statesman he combined forethought, prudence, and sagacity in counsel with vigor, promptitude and decision in action. In dealing with the enemies of his country he was wary, penetrating and bold. In directing the internal economy of the state, he took a comprehensive view of the real welfare of the people, and adopted the measures best calculated to promote it. In dealing whether with friend or foe, he was utterly free from favor or fear, conspicuous for the simplicity with which he aimed only at doing what was right, without respect of persons. But in nothing was he more remarkable than for his piety, and the singleness of eye with which he walked before God. He seems to have undertaken everything in dependence upon God, with prayer for His blessing and guidance, and to have sought his reward only from God. — *Peop. Bib.* *Nehemiah's prayer.* — With a sense of weary loneliness, taught to feel his own insignificance in that great tide of human life that flows on in its own course, though the most prominent figures drop out of notice, Nehemiah turned to His God, the one Friend who never forgets. He was learning the vanity of the world's fame; yet he shrank from the idea of falling into oblivion. Therefore it was his prayer that he might abide in the memory of God. This was by itself a restful thought. It is cheering to think that we may dwell in the memory of those we love. But to be held in the thought of God is to have a place in the heart of infinite love. And yet this was not the conclusion of the whole matter to Nehemiah. It is really nothing better than a frivolous vanity, that can induce any one to be willing to sacrifice the prospect of a real eternal life in exchange for the pallid shadow of immortality ascribed to the "choir invisible" of those who are only thought of as living in the memory of the world they have influenced enough to win "a niche in the temple of fame." What is fame to a dead man mouldering in his coffin? Even the higher thought of being remembered by God is a poor consolation in prospect of blank non-existence. Nehemiah expects something better, for he begs God to remember him in *mercy* and for *good*. It is a very narrow, prosaic interpretation of this prayer to say that he only means that he desires a blessing during the remainder of his life in the court at Susa. On the other hand, it may be too much to ascribe the definite hope of a future life to this Old Testament saint. And yet, vague as his thought may be, it is the utterance of a profound yearning of the soul that breaks out in moments of disappointment with an intensity never to be satisfied within the range of our cramped mortal state. In this utterance of Nehemiah we have, at least, a seed thought that should germinate into the great hope of immortality. — *Exp. Bib.*

"Much precious fruit falls into our laps before we by prayer shake the tree. Now, if the water of life do flow in such streams upon us when we pray not, how pleasantly will they flow when they are drawn by the attractive power of prayer! If the Lord is found when we seek not, opens when we knock not, answers when we call not; how much more will He open and answer when we knock and call! If the greatest blessing be vouchsafed before we have hearts to pray, how confident may we be that prayer will obtain the less!"—*Clarkson.*

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

[2337]

Introduction.

I. **Author,** unknown. It has been ascribed to Ezra, to Mordecai, to the high-priest Joiakim and to others, but there is no sufficient evidence in favor of either. II. **Historical character.** The most important question touching the book is, — Shall it be regarded as veritable history, or is it an allegory or parable with perhaps a certain basis of fact? The reasons for counting it genuine history seems well nigh conclusive. The objections drawn from the arbitrary conduct of the monarch, and from the cruel slaughter of the enemies of the Jews, seem less and less weighty the more familiar we become with Xerxes and his times. The observance of the Feast of Purim by the Jews all over the world, beginning some 4 or 5 centuries before Christ, is so linked with the events described in this book as to furnish very strong evidence of its historical character. III. **Purpose.** It shows how the Jews, scattered among the heathen, were preserved, though doomed to destruction. "Though the *name* of God is not found in the bk., His hand is plainly seen, *anticipating* threatened evil, *defeating* and *overruling* it to the greater good of the Jews, and even of the heathen. The Jews in Babylon were not alone in peril. Had Haman succeeded, the Jews throughout the world must have perished, and with them the whole visible Ch. of God, since the power of Persia was then supreme at Jerusalem, and throughout Asia."

In our copies the bk. ends with *vs.* 3 of cap. x: but in Gk. and Vulg. there are ten verses more, together with six more chapters wh. the Gr. and Lat. Churches regard as canonical. These are supposed to have been compiled by some Hellenistic Jew, and as they are not extant in Hebrew, they are expunged fr. the sac. canon by Protestants.

Synopsis.

(*According to Horne.*)

Part I. — The promotion of Esther; and the essential service rendered to the king by Mordecai, in detecting a plot against his life.....i. ii.

Part II. — The advancement of Haman; his designs against the Jews, and their frustration.

Sec. 1. — Promotion of Haman, decree for destroying the Jews.....iii.

Sec. 2. — Affliction of Jews, and measures they pursued.....iv.

Sec. 3 — Defeat of Haman's plot against Mordecai.....v., vi. vii.

Sec. 4. — Defeat of Haman's plot against Jews .....viii., ix. 1–16

Sec. 5. — Institution of feast of Purim..ix. 17–32

Advancement of Mordecai... .x.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—4. (1) **Ahasuerus,** the well-known Xerxes, who figures in Grecian hist. When he came to the throne, B. C. 485, he was about 35 years old. (2) **Shushan,** Susa.[a] **the palace,** occupying a lofty but artificial eminence towards the west, while the city lay at the base of this mound, towards the east. (3) **third . . feast,** *etc.*, this present gathering of his princes and servants was intended to afford opportunity for consultation concerning the famous expedition into Greece. (4) **When,** *etc.*, Persian custom to unite great councils with great festivities.

The feast of Ahasuerus. — The duration of the feast recorded in the above passage is extraordinary. It continued for half a year, as the Persian year consisted of 360 days. Banquets on so grand a scale, and extending over so great a period, have not been unfrequently provided by the luxurious monarchs of Eastern countries, both in ancient and modern times. The early portion of this festive season, however, seems to have been dedicated to amusement, particularly an exhibition of the magnificence and treasures of the court. — *Port. Com. Evils of gluttony.* — Epicurus himself, who placed happiness in pleasure, enjoined temperance as a necessary means of this pleasure. An author of our nation justly observes that when a great multitude of alluring dishes are set upon a table, a wise man may see palsies, apoplexies, and other grievous or mortal distempers lurking amongst them. — *Geo. Lawson.* He is alone temperate who eats not to gratify his taste, but to preserve his life; who is the same at every table as his own; who when he feasts is not cloyed, and sees all the delicacies before him that luxury can accumulate, yet preserves a due abstinence in the midst of them. To govern our appetite is necessary; but there is no necessity that we should always mortify it. Life is no more to be passed in constant self-denial than in a round of sensual enjoyments. — *Dean Bolton. True feasting.* — It is said of the father of Louis XV., king of France, that when his preceptor one day was speaking of this feast of Ahasuerus, and wondered how the prince of Persia could find patience for such a long feast, he replied, "That his wonder was how he could defray the expense of it." He was afraid that the provinces would be compelled to observe a fast for it. On another occasion the same prince said that he did not understand how a king should taste unmingled joy at a feast, unless he could invite all his subjects to partake; or unless he could be assured, at least, that none of them would go supperless to bed. — *Hom. Com.*

5—9. (5) **in the court of the garden.** The "court of the garden" is probably the entire space surrounding the central hall of thirty-six pillars at Susa, including the three detached porticoes of twelve pillars each, described by Mr. Loftus in his "Chaldæa and Susiana" (pp. 365–372).—*Pulp. Com.* (6) **hangings,** awnings of fine white linen, cotton cloth and blue stuff. **beds,** divans. (7) **in . . gold,** hence profusion of the precious metal.[b] Drinking-vessels of gold were found in considerable numbers in the Persian camp near Platæa (Herod., ix. 80) when the Greeks took it. **royal wine,** *lit.* wine of the kingdom, *i. e.* fr. the king's cellar, prob. Chalybonian.[c] (8) **compel,** to begin, or refrain.[d] (9) **queen,** the supreme queen.

Gold and silver beds. — These beds of gold and silver may receive illustration from modern Asiatic furniture; the divan, or hall of audience, as also the room for receiving guests in private houses, is generally covered with a Persian carpet, around which are placed cushions of different shape and size, in cases of gold and silver rincob, or of scarlet cloth embroidered; these are occasionally moved into courts and gardens, and placed under the *shahmyanah* for the accommodation of company. — *Forbes.*

Vanity of earthly glory. — Ahasuerus is gone, his royal city has perished, and even his stately palace has left behind only a few insignificant traces. But the simple story of Esther survives. Palaces of marble, as well as mansions made of the less enduring brick, strangely vanish. Strong fortifications disappear. Wonderful it is that material structures seem less enduring than insubstantial thought structures. Suggestive it is that the man Ahasuerus moves a formless shadow across the stage, while his doings and external greatness are vividly represented. — *Hom. Com. Glory of the new Jerusalem.* — An ancient father, when he first set his foot in Rome, at that time the mis-

the feast of Ahasuerus to the princes

a Neh. i. 1. *Herodotus* (vii. 6, 135, 136; ix. 107). *Æschylus, Pers.* 15, 124, 563.

"Sobriety is that virtue which keeps a *medium* in the pleasures that arise from eating and drinking, with respect both to the quantity and quality thereof." — *Limborch.*

"As houses well stored with provisions are likely to be full of mice, so the bodies of those that eat much are full of diseases." — *Diogenes.*

"Such whose sole bliss is eating, who can give but that one brutal reason why they live." — *Juvenal.*

"The security and peace of nations consist not in magnificent feasts, but in the good government of its people." — *C. Leach.*

the feast made to people

b *Æschylus* (*Pers.* 3) applies the epithet *Polychrusos* to Susa. All these names are not colors; they are substances, they are jewels, they are precious works. Our little snowball of success is looked down upon by the Jangfraus and Mont Blancs with unutterable disdain. — *Peop. Bib.*

c Ezek. xxvii. 18; *Strabo*, xv. 330.

d National habits of princes of provinces respected; some of the mountain tribes famous for their temperance.

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tress and wonder of the world, made this pious observation: "If an earthly kingdom is so glorious, how glorious must the new Jerusalem be!" If you account those men happy who were feasted in the royal gardens of Shushan, how blessed must those men be who are admitted to an eternal feast in Christ's Father's house! Gold and silver and pearls are but poor emblems of its celestial splendor. — *G. Lawson.*

Vashti is summoned, and refuses to obey

10—12. (10) **Mehuman,** *etc.*, writer of this bk., minutely acquainted with palace affairs. **chamberlains,** *R. V.*, marg. "eunuchs." (11) **Vashti . . beauty,** her name = beautiful woman. (12) **refused,**[a] her modesty and rank forbade that she should make a spectacle of herself to gratify a crowd of drunken and licentious revelers. **wroth,** this was like Xerxes, who flogged the sea for destroying his bridge of boats.

The weak king. — 1. It was certainly the king's weakness to send for the queen into his presence when drunk. (1) He dishonored himself as a husband. He ought to have protected, and not exposed, his wife. (2) He diminished himself as a king in commanding that from his wife which she might refuse, much to the honor of her virtue. 2. Perhaps it was not her wisdom to deny him. (1) She refused, though he sent his command by seven honorable messengers. (2) Had she come, while she did it in pure obedience, it had been no reflection upon her modesty. — *M. Henry.*

Historical parallel. — Every classical reader will remember the parallel story of the imprudence of Candaules. Candaules, king of Lydia, whose wife was remarkable for personal attractions, promised in a state of intoxication to "show her beauty" to his favorite, Gyges. This promise he performed by introducing him into the queen's apartment, according to the mythologists, by the use of a ring which rendered the wearer invisible. The outraged queen, disgusted at the brutal drunkenness of her consort, with a significant look and gesture placed a dagger in the hand of Gyges, who instantly slew the king, and, afterwards marrying his widow, obtained the throne of Lydia.

The queen's feast. — The women are not permitted to associate with the other sex at an Eastern banquet; but they are allowed to entertain one another in their own apartments. When Ahasuerus, the king of Persia, treated all the people of his capital with a splended feast, Vashti, the queen, we are informed, "made a banquet for the women in the royal house, which belonged to King Ahasuerus." This, observes Chardin, is the custom of all the East; the women have their feasts at the same time, but apart from the men. And Maillet informs us, in his letters, that the same custom is observed in Egypt. — *Paxton.*

[a] Herodotus v. 18.

"While the king showed the honor of his majesty, the queen and her ladies showed the honor of their modesty, which is truly the majesty of the fair sex."— *M. Henry.*

"Certainly obedience is due to those in authority; but the command of conscience is superior to the commands of husbands, or of kings. The commands of conscience should be supreme."

"Beauty is worse than wine, it intoxicates both the holder and the beholder."— *Zimmerman.*

the king consults with his ministers

13—15. (13) **which . . times,** were adepts in astrology; or knew the laws, what custom required. (14) **seven . . Media,** Ezr. vii. 14. **which . . face,** his privy council, his cabinet ministers. (15) **What . . law,** a momentous question for these great lords. Something must be done, but it must be according to law.

The seven counselors. — Of these Persian privy counselors it is said — 1. That they were wise men. 2. They were skillful in the times, that is, well versed in histories, and well furnished with experiences. 3. That they knew the laws, which they had ready, and at their fingers' ends, as we say. 4. They also knew judgment, that is, equity and moderation, without which utmost right might be utmost wrong, as, indeed, it proved in the case in hand. — *Trapp.*

The beauty of Vashti. — The Persians, on festival occasions, used to produce their women in public. To this purpose Herodotus relates a story of seven Persians being sent to Amyntas, a Grecian prince, who received them hospitably, and gave them a splendid entertainment. When, after the entertainment, they began to drink, one of the Persians thus addressed Amyntas: "Prince of Macedonia, it is a custom with us Persians, whenever we have a public entertainment, to introduce our concubines and young wives." On this principle Ahasuerus gave command to bring his queen Vashti into the public assembly. — *Burder.*

"An Indian philosopher being asked what were according to his opinion the two most beautiful things in the universe, answered, the starry heavens above our heads, and the feeling of duty in our hearts. — *Bossuet.*

We'll keep our aims sublime, our eyes erect,
Although our woman hands should shake and fail.
—*Mrs. Browning.*

Memucan condemns the conduct of Vashti

16—18. (16) **Memucan,** we gather from Memucan's reply that the Persian law had provided no penalty for the case in hand — had, in fact, not contemplated it. He first argues the matter on general grounds of morality (*vs.* 16) and expediency (*vss.* 17, 18), and then proposes the enactment of a

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new law — a *privilegium* — assigning Vashti a special punishment for her contempt of the king's order. The "decree" (*vs* 20) would not have been necessary had there already existed a law on the point. — *Pulp. Com.* (18) **ladies,** *R. V.*, "princesses." **Persia,** is placed before Media, because it had now assumed the precedence. **contempt,** in the women. **wrath,** in the men.

Position of woman in the East. — The true position of the female sex is still so little understood in the East, and even among the Asiatic Hebrews so little regarded, that the following expression forms part of the daily prayer of the Oriental Jew: — "Lord of the world, I thank Thee that Thou hast not made me a woman."

Esther dramatized. — When Racine composed the tragedy of *Esther*, to please Madame Maintenon, she very strongly recommended it at court, and every one was charmed with the performance except an honest curate, who refused to see it. Being very urgently pressed for his reasons, he told Madame M. that she knew he was in the habit of publicly reprobating the stage from the pulpit, and that though the tragedy of *Esther* was far different from the generality of plays, yet it was still known to be a play; adding, that were he to yield to the request, his hearers would compare his conduct with his sermons, and, in their practice, would pursue the course most suited to their sinful inclinations.

"A great English writer has pictured an imaginary character as having a sweet look of goodness, which drew out all that was good in others. There must have been some such Divine attraction to the poor and outcast in the looks and whole person of our Lord."— *Geikie.*

19—22. (19) **laws . . altered,**[a] for if altered, the Q. with regained power might punish those who degraded her. **royal estate,** position, title, portion. **unto . . she,** as they hoped more subservient. (20) **honour,** "here and in the account of the honors paid to Mordecai the word 'honor' is not at all adequate to the translation; its meaning is costliness, or preciousness, designating that which is difficult to get and easy to lose. The idea is that the women will come to regard their husbands as peculiarly valuable and rather precarious possessions, against the alienation of which they need to guard with peculiar care." — *Prof. Willis J. Beecher.* (21) **saying . . princes,** they could contrive nothing better. (22) **writing,**[b] character employed in writing. In the hundred and twenty-seven provinces subject to Persia we have no means of knowing how many different languages were spoken: probably the number was large. **man . . house,**[c] and be lord and master there. **that . . people,**[d] the sense is that a husband should use the language of his people, and constrain his wives — even though foreigners — to do the same.

at his advice the king deposes Vashti

[a] Est. viii. 8; Da. vi. 8, 12, 15.

[b] Est. viii. 9.

[c] Ep. v 22–24; I Ti. ii. 12.

[d] *Heb.* that one should publish it according to the language of his people.

Persian law and gospel law. — 1. Persian law was arbitrary, chiefly according to the caprice of the king; and it was cruel. This is seen in the case of Vashti. 2. Gospel law is righteous; it is founded upon God's justice and righteousnees. Persian laws, being dictated by whim and caprice, were often degrading in their effects. But God's laws are always ennobling and exalting. God is ever ready to forgive. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Merciful is the gospel. "How often shall I forgive?" inquired Peter; "until seven times?" "Yea, until seventy times seven," said the King of Heaven. — *Hom. Com.*

He is royal who is a member of that kingdom which is to extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, which in fact is to include all nations. Other kingdoms shall fail, but Christ's kingdom of love shall ever endure.

Wicked counsel. — A young man devoted himself to a religious life. His ungodly parents sent him many letters to dissuade him. Being fully decided to go on in his chosen course, when any letters came addressed to him he threw them into the fire at once, without opening them. When friends and kindred stand between us and Christ, they must be disregarded. — *Hom. Com.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

a successor to Vashti is to be sought

1—4. (1) **wrath . . was appeased,** *R. V.*, "was pacified" perhaps within a few weeks. (2) **said . . him,** perh. at the dreaded sight of the king's remorse: perh. some of them had reason to dread Vashti's return to power. (3) **gather . . virgins,** vivid picture of the degradation of woman in Persia. **house of the women,** a part of the royal quarter. The remains of the palace of Sargon at Khorsabad are the best illustration of the Assyrian form of a domiciliary palace. **purification,** baths, perfumes, *etc.*

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, These three alone lead life to sovereign power." —*Tennyson.*

The palace and city of Shushan.—For many ages known only by the records of its greatness in sacred and profane history, the site of the palace and city of Shushan (Est. iii. 15) has been veiled in obscurity. Fatal alike to art and prosperity, the Mohammedan conquest of Asia brought it for a short period into notice, but the more completely to entomb it beneath the ravages of war-

"The youth who follows his appetites too soon seizes the cup before it has received its best ingredients, and by antici-

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pating his pleasures robs the remaining part of life of their share, so that his eagerness only produces a manhood of imbecility and an age of pain." — *Goldsmith.*

fare, superstition, and neglect. And it is only since the enterprising explorations of Colonel Williams, in 1849–1852, that the true position of the ancient capital of Persia has been ascertained, and proved to be buried under the three great mounds on the eastern side of the river Shâour, which are to this day called by the Arabs the Mounds of El Shush. Extending over an area of twelve miles in circumference, and the three principal ridges varying from forty to seventy feet in elevation, these desolate tumuli, covered with tall, rigid grasses, straggling acacias, and rampant weeds, present, even to the scrutiny of an experienced eye, little indication of the fallen city which they inearth, and the beauty which their name perpetuates.

Mordecai and Esther

5—7. (5) **Now . . Jew,** certain Jews were oft. found in palaces of heathen kings.[a] (6) **Who,** *i. e.* Kish. **carried . . Jeconiah,** ab. 117 yrs. bef. Three important deportations of the Jews are mentioned: (1) during the reigns of Jehoiakim, 605 B. C. (2) Jehoiachin or Jeconiah, 598 B. C. (3) Zedekiah, 586 B. C., when Jerusalem was destroyed. (7) **Hadassah,** *Heb.* for myrtle. **Esther,** Pers. for star.[b] **uncle's,**[c] by her father Abihail. **maid . . beautiful,** *Heb.* fair of form and good of countenance. Prob. about twenty years old. **took . . daughter,** "Mordecai took Hadassah in her infancy and bore her on his arm with the love and care of a father."

True greatness. — Mordecai is greatest when he saw his little cousin left a poor orphan, and took her to his house and to his heart, and became to her a second father, so gentle and loving that she no longer mourned the loss of her first father. She delighted to render to Mordecai the allegiance of a true, loving daughter. We too often lose sight of the fact that life's little things are really life's great things. We begin with the little and go up to the great. But we do not measure correctly. Our terms are untrue. The great deed was when Mordecai took and brought up Hadassah. The little deed was when he reaped the results of his goodness. For sowing is greater than reaping; but the sowing is done in tears, and the harvest is gathered amid a flourish of trumpets. Men are greatest in their little things. The chariot of Ahasuerus was not checked in its course, the attendant courtiers never condescended to notice, when Mordecai guided to his home the orphaned girl. But he was sowing seed which produced strange and yet glorious fruit. The deed was most attractive. He was true to the claims of relationship and to the dictates of humanity. The orphan's tears touched his heart and evoked his sympathies. Let us not say, A father to the fatherless is God in His holy habitation, and leave the fatherless to starvation and beggary. Orphan homes are the trophies of the humanizing tendencies. But adoption of the orphan is better than crowding a lot of poor orphans together to be drilled and marched out like young soldiers. Esthers grow best when the Mordecais become their fathers. *Hom. Com. Use and abuse of the beautiful.* — I thought in France that the French people were the most interesting people in the world, till I had stayed among them a week or two, when I began to feel, "They are just like a dew-drop, that is exquisitely beautiful, but that I can never draw a bucket of water from." And when I got back to England, I said of the people there, "They are rough, but there is something enduring in them." The French develop the beautiful in the direction of the physical and material, and the English in the direction of the intellectual and the moral. Each is partial in its development of this quality. The ecclesiologist cultivates beauty in church worship. He makes the house of God beautiful; he makes the singing beautiful; he makes the vocalization beautiful; he makes everything belonging to the services of the sanctuary beautiful. And I do not object to that. Right over against him is a Friend Quaker, who says, "Outward beauty is a bait of the devil, to ensnare men withal. I believe in the sweet and sublime stillness of the soul before God. That is beautiful. Give me plainness." Here is one that goes to excess in all external beauty; and here is another that goes to excess of beauty in spiritual things. My doctrine is this: that the element of the beautiful should be developed in everything harmoniously — in dress, in the household, in society, in thoughts, in feelings, in worship, in pleasure, and with the natural restraints and counterbalances that beauty requires to protect it against pride and selfishness. — *H. W. Beecher.*

Esther finds favor with Hegai, the keeper of the women

8—11. (8) **Esther . . house,** her beauty seems to have been reported to Hegai. (9) **maiden . . him,** Hegai, and so had the advantage of special attention. Hegai may have been kind for his own sake, as seeing her prob.

a Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Nehemiah.

b "Her maiden name was Myrtle, her name as queen was Star." — *Bertheau.*

c Acc. to *Josephus* (*Ant.* x. 6, 2) Mordecai was himself her uncle.

"In the true mythology, love is an immortal child, and beauty leads him as a guide; nor can we express a deeper sense than when we say beauty is the pilot of the young soul." — *Emerson.*

"Age cannot wither her nor custom stale her infinite variety; other women cloy the appetites they feed; but she makes hungry where most she satisfies." — *Shakespeare.*

"The maiden was fair and beautiful, it is said, — the expressions mean that she was of graceful form and beautiful countenance — and from what is brought out in the history, the endowments of her mind were in harmony with the graces of her person."

Every child of God is where God has placed him for some purpose: do not ask either to be gatekeeper or queen, but whichever you are serve God therein. Mordecai did well because he acted as Mordecai should. — *C. H. Spurgeon.*

exaltation. such . . her, *R. V.*, "with her portions," *i. e.* her daily allowance of food. **meet,** *i. e.* the most suitable attendants. (10) **Esther . . kindred,** *etc.*, this had been concealed, probably, for Esther's sake. Her name being Persian, no one in authority seems to have suspected her true nationality. When the proper time came Esther made known the fact that she was a Jewess. (11) **Mordecai,** *etc.*, there gathered up such scraps of palace gossip as might relate to his beautiful kinswoman; perh. he occupied some humble position under the king. — *Haley.*

A mother's glory. — A boy, hearing a visitor of his father make use of the familiar saying that "An honest man is the noblest work of God," made this innocent annotation upon it: "No, sir, my mamma is the noblest work of God." Let parents be as lovingly anxious for the welfare of their children as Mordecai was for Esther's; let them by judicious treatment, by wise and loving example, and by constant prayer lead them up into the beauty of holiness, and thus their memories will be blessed, and their names held in affectionate esteem. — *Hom. Com.*

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"Lovely sweetness is the noblest power of women, and is far fitter to prevail by parley than by battle." — *Sir. P. Sidney.*

"Could beauty have better commerce than with honesty?" — *Shakespeare.*

"You have not fulfilled every duty, unless you have fulfilled that of being pleasant" — *Charles Buxton.*

the manner of purification, and going to the king

12–14. after . . months, a long preparation perh. required by state etiquette. (13) **whatsoever . . house,** "on this occasion the maiden was permitted, for at least once in her life, to array herself in the most costly attire and ornaments which the king's treasuries contained." — *Haley.* (14) **came . . more,** there were two and probably three "houses" or departments in Xerxes' harem; (1) the house of the virgins; (2) the second house, or that of the concubines; and probably (3) a house for the queen, *etc.*

The women's apartments in the East. — The apartments of the women are counted sacred and inviolable over all the east; it is even a crime to inquire what passes within the walls of the harem, or house of the women. Hence it is extremely difficult to be informed of the transactions in those sequestered habitations; and a man, says Chardin, may walk a hundred days, one after another, by the house where the women are, and yet know no more what is done there than at the farther end of Tartary. This sufficiently explains the reason of Mordecai's conduct, who "walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her." — *Paxton.*

"Beauty, the fringe of the garment of the Lord." — *Bailey.*

"There is no beautifier of complexion, or form, or behavior like the wish to scatter joy around us." — *Emerson.*

Esther is preferred by the king

15–17. (15) **required . . appointed,** his appointments had been so profuse, or her modesty was so great, or her faith in God was such, that she would not depend on extra aids. (16) **Tebeth,** fr. new moon in Jan. to that in Feb. **seventh . . reign,** ab. B. C. 479-8; during this interval his Grecian expedition had met with disaster. (17) **women,** *i. e.* "above all his former secondary wives, as well as above all the virgins." — *Pulp. Com.* **favour,** kindness. **made . . Vashti,** so the myrtle that bloomed in the Heb. cottage became a star to shine in the Pers. palace.

The elevation of Esther. — I. Note the circumstances that led to the exaltation of Esther. 1. The position of Mordecai and his niece; 2. The appropriation of Esther; 3. Her beauty shows what fleeting things some owe their advancement to. II. The enthroning of Esther furnishes the opportunity for the occurrence of those incidents which advance the Divine plan. 1. The elevation of Mordecai; 2. His discovery of the plot.

"Adorning thee with so much art is but a barbarous skill." — *Cowley.*

True beauty. — A gentleman had two children: one a daughter, who was considered plain in her person; the other a son, who was reckoned handsome. One day the father took them both on his knees, and with much affection gave them the following advice: "I would have you both look in the glass every day; you, my son, that you may be reminded never to dishonor the beauty of your face by the deformity of your actions: and you, my daughter, that you may take care to hide the defect of beauty in your person by the superior lustre of your virtuous and amiable conduct."

The path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers; but they rise behind her steps, not before them. — *Ruskin*

Man's duty. —

I hold it the duty of one who is gifted,
And royally dowered in all men's sight,
To know no rest till his life is lifted
Fully up to the great gift's height.

Great gifts should be worn like a crown befitting,
And not like gems on a beggar's hands;

According to mythology, Medusa was a maiden of such rare beauty as to provoke the goddess Minerva to jealousy; and on this account she was transformed into a frightful monster. Her admired ringlets became hissing serpents, and no living thing could look upon her without being turned into stone.

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And the toil must be constant and unremitting
That lifts up the king to the crown's demands.
— *Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

a feast is made in honor of Esther

a vs. 10

"Seest thou how pale the sated guest rises from supper, where the appetite is puzzled with varieties? The body, too, burdened with yesterday's excess, weighs down the soul, and fixes to the earth this particle of the Divine essence."— *Horace.*

"If you were born to honor, show it now;
If put upon you, make the judgment good
That thought you worthy of it."—
Shakespeare.

18—20. (18) **Esther's feast,** a feast in her honor or one long remembered by this designation. **release,** "Many think it means not merely or chiefly a holiday, but a temporary release from taxation, and perhaps to some extent from military conscription or service." —*Haley.* **state,** *R. V.*, "bounty." (19) **virgins . . time,** proof of the licentiousness of Xerxes. **sat . . gate,** prob. in some official capacity. (20) **Esther . . people,**[a] in the East a person's relations usually rise with him; Esther's silence accounts for Mordecai's low estate; Mordecai's command accounts for Esther's silence. — *Pul. Com.* **did . . him,** did not cast off duty and memory of former days.

Release and gifts. — Esther's marriage was celebrated in a manner intended and fitted to impress the nation with a sense of the favor and honor with which she was regarded by the "great king." There was a great feast at Susa, that the metropolis might have an opportunity of honoring the new queen. And throughout the kingdom there took place, according to the command of Ahasuerus, such celebrations and observances as were in accordance with Oriental customs. Particularly are mentioned the releases or remissions — it may be presumed from taxation or military service; and the gifts — probably of robes, and in some cases of jewels. — *Pul. Com.* *Oriental feasts.* — The description of this feast corresponds to the statements of ancient Persian luxury and magnificence which the Greek authors have sent down to us, and which they state to have been remarkably evinced in their banquets. Their sumptuousness in this respect, indeed, became proverbial. The vast numbers of persons entertained at their great feasts, as well as the long continuance of these feasts, are points noticed by ancient writers. The Persian kings are recorded to have often feasted as many as 5,000 men at once, each time at the expense of 200 talents. On the march to Greece, those who were required to provide for the king, and the companions of his table, were ruined, though they tarried but a night; and this not more from the number to be entertained than from their luxurious and extravagant habits, which gave occasion to the sarcasm of Megacreon of Abdera, who called upon the people to bless the gods that it was not the custom of King Xerxes to take two meals in one day; for had they been called upon to provide dinner as well as supper, they must either have fled at his approach, or have remained to be utterly ruined.

Mordecai discovers a plot against the king's life

a Xerxes was afterwards murdered at night in his bed by two persons, one of whom was a chamberlain, and the other a captain of his guard."—*Ælian V., Hist.* xiii. 3.

b Est. vi. 1.

"The wisest man could ask no more of fate
Than to be simple, modest, manly, true,
Safe from the many, honored by the few;
Nothing to court in church, or world, or state,
But inwardly in secret to be great."— *Lowell.*

21—23. (21) **of . . door,** they were members of the king's body-guard and kept the very entrance to the king's apartments, and thus could hope to destroy the king without much difficulty. **sought . . Ahasuerus,** formed a plot to assassinate the king.[a] (22) **Esther . . name,** she gave her authority, but did not say he was related to her. (23) **inquisition,** searching inquiry. **hanged . . tree,** *i. e.* impaled. "The victim, usually being first put to death, was hung aloft upon the point of a stake or pole." **written . . king,** "Herodotus tells us that the Persian inserted in these records the names of those who should be honored."[b] —*Haley.*

Fabricius. — When the physician of Pyrrhus offered to Fabricius to poison his master, the noble Roman general sent the traitor's letter to Pyrrhus, saying, "Prince, know better for the future, how to choose both your friends and foes." To requite such an act of generosity, Pyrrhus released all the Roman prisoners; but Fabricius would only receive them on condition that he would accept an equal number in exchange; "for," said he, "do not believe, Pyrrhus, that I have discovered this treachery to you out of particular regard to your person, or for the hope of advantage, but because the Romans shun base stratagems, and will not triumph but with open force."—*Percy Anec.* *Duty its own reward.* — On the coast of Wales a vessel was being wrecked, and the life-boat men pushed out to the rescue. Again and again they braved the storm, and drove on through the surging billows, in order to save human life. When the work was completed and the last man brought on shore, they were asked what reward could be given. And their noble reply was, that they wanted no payment, their reward was that they had succeeded in saving the shipwrecked from a watery grave. Mordecai found his reward in the consciousness of having done his duty. An approving conscience is better than the wealth of monarchs.—*Hom. Com.*

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CHAPTER THE THIRD.

the promotion of Haman

1–3. (1) **Haman,** supposed to mean *celebrated.* **Agagite,** ref. prob. to place of birth. (2) **all . . bowed,** this was the Oriental method of doing honor to a superior, but among the Persians the act of prostration before a king was understood to imply worship. **Mordecai,** *etc.*, because it involved religious homage. (3) **Why . . commandment,** to them the word of the king was the supreme law.

Danger of quick success. — In a short time Haman was placed above all the princes. The officials of the court were commanded to give him reverence and worship. There seemed to be nothing which the infatuated king was able to refuse him. A quick rise to power, and one that would be envied by many! In most hearts there is a strong craving for rapid success. But it is a mistake to suppose that sudden or easy success is a benefit. For observe — 1. Prosperity is better borne and enjoyed when it is the result of long and steady effort. It is a sweeter and more honorable possession when it comes as the reward of conscientious toil. 2. The self-denying labor which, as a rule, is necessary to prosperity, is itself an incalculable benefit. It brings into healthy exercise the physical and mental endowments. It develops many manly qualities. — *Pul. Com.*

Fidelity honored. — The Emperor Constantius, father to Constantine the Great, once commanded all his Christian servants to offer sacrifices to the gods of Rome. If they refused to obey his command they were to be dismissed from his service. Many of them obeyed; others did not, and accordingly were dismissed. But in a day or two he turned out all those who complied with his orders, and recalled all those whom he had expelled, saying that those would be most faithful to their prince who were most faithful to their God, and that he would not trust men who were false to their religion. Mordecai was conscientious about trifles, and true to his religion. This he was whether he found the favor with man or not. He looked for the favor of God. — *Hom. Com.*

"But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence." It does seem a very small matter, but when such a man as Mordecai attached importance to it, we must pause and consider whether the matter was really so small as it seemed. For it is an unsafe way of reasoning to say about anything, it is only one little act; why scruple over it? — *Hom. Com.*

Let us have faith that right makes might: and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it. — *Lincoln.*

Haman resolves to destroy all the Jews for the offense of Mordecai.

4 — 6. (4) **Mordecai's matters,** — to see whether his plea of Jewish nationality would be accepted as valid. **for . . Jew,** in wh. fact was the secret of his conduct. (5) **when . . saw,** he had not observed him in the crowd till his attention was directed to him. (6) **And . . alone,** "he felt that the affront would not be sufficiently expiated by the slaughter of the offender alone. A Jew had offered the insult and the Jewish nation must pay the penalty." — *Haley.* **wherefore,** massacres on a large scale are of frequent occurrence in the East. Recall Armenian massacre by the cruel Turk.[a]

Mordecai's consistent conduct. — The king's servants endeavored to persuade him to change his attitude, but he would not. He was a witness-bearer, a martyr, and possessed a martyr's courage. Having professed himself to be a Jew, he would make good his profession by adhering to the right. Profession alone is worse than worthless. It injures the professor himself, and the cause with which he claims connection. To act is admittedly more difficult than to profess. Had Mordecai merely professed himself a Jew, while he behaved like a Gentile, he would probably have experienced no difficulty. There is no grandeur in magnificent words, except when they are backed up by noble deeds. — *Pul. Com.*

Defend good principles as you would your life.

[a] Ps. lxxxiii. 4.

Reward of vanity. — There was one Michael Fenwick that traveled with Wesley as a sort of groom, nurse, and occasional exhorter. The good man was vain enough to complain one day that his name was never inserted in Wesley's published "Journals." In the next number of the "Journals" he found his name in a connection that probably did not serve to increase his vanity. "I left Epworth," wrote Wesley, "with great satisfaction, and about one preached at Clayworth. I think none were unmoved but Michael Fenwick, who fell fast asleep under an adjoining hayrick." — *Haven.*

Jealousy is a secret avowal of inferiority. — *Massillon.*

Revenge. — The Highland chief lay a-dying in his mountain home, and in his dying heart were hard, revengeful thoughts towards an opposing clan. A minister waited at his bedside, and exhorted him to forgive, assuring him of the fac that God will not forgive if we do not. And, said the chief, I will forgive them; but in almost the same breath he said to his son, that he left him a father's curse if he forgave them. Well would it have been for Haman — well both temporally and spiritually — had he really forgiven the supposed slight of Mordecai.

"O vanity, how little is thy force acknowledged, or thy operations discerned! How wantonly dost thou deceive mankind, under different disguises! Sometimes thou dost wear the face of pity; sometimes of generosity: nay, thou hast the assurance to put on those glorious

Trouble in every house. — Talmage says, "I passed down a street of a city with

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ornaments which belong only to heroic virtue."—*Fielding.*

a merchant. He knew all the finest houses on the street. He said, There is something the matter in all these houses. In that one it is conjugal infelicity. In that one, a dissipated son. In that, a dissolute father. In that, an idiot child. In that, the prospect of bankruptcy." In Haman's house there was trouble. Mordecai troubled Haman. The good must ever be troublers to the wicked.— *Hom. Com.*

having cast lots, he seeks and obtains the king's permission

a Est. ix. 24

b Perhaps connected with Lat. *pars.*

c Pr. xvi. 33.

d 2 Ch. xxxvi. 20; Ezr. i. 1-4.

e vs. 13.

"In a vain man the smallest spark may kindle into the greatest flame because the materials are always prepared for it."—*Hume.*

"Whenever you are angry, be assured that it is not only a present evil, but that you have increased a habit."—*Epictetus.*

Feigned equity is double iniquity, both because it is iniquity, and because it is feigning.—*George Downame.*

Let us always remember that holiness does not consist in doing uncommon things, but in doing everything with purity of heart.— *H. E. Manning.*

7–11. (7) **first month,** according to the Babylonian method of reckoning it superseded the old Jewish name Abib. **Nisan,** month of the Passover. **in . . Ahasuerus,** prob. B. C. 474. **Pur,**[a] in Pers. *pâreh.*[b] The superstitious use of lots has always been prevalent in the East. Even the Jews supposed a special Providence to preside over the casting of lots. **from . . day,**[c] this their custom, and Haman seems to have been guided by their report of the lot-casting, in his conduct fr. day to day. (8) **scattered . . kingdom,**[d] it was the policy thus to distribute and separate them for obvious reasons. **keep . . laws,** this charge was false. The Jews were, as a rule, loyal and peaceable subjects. **suffer them,** *i. e.* let them alone. (9) **let . . destroyed,** this was indeed a royal revenge for the offense of one. **pay . . treasuries,** but this was to be paid out of the spoil.[e] Not unacceptable to the king, whose wars, *etc.*, had been expensive. **hands . . business,** *i. e.* the royal treasurers *R. V.*, inserts before "business," "king's." (10) **ring . . enemy,** thus by the delivery of his signet-ring delegating to Haman the power of life and death. (11) **silver is given to thee,** "this may have been merely an Oriental way of seeming to refuse, while actually accepting the bribe offered by Haman," or, more probably, the silver of the Jews was placed in his power.

Casting lots.—It was customary in the East, by casting lots into an urn, to inquire what days would be fortunate, and what not, to undertake any business in. According to this superstitious practice, Haman endeavored to find out what time in the year was most favorable to the Jews, and what most unlucky. First he inquired what month was most unfortunate, and found the month Adar, which was the last month in the year, answerable to our February. Then he inquired the day, and found the thirteenth day was not auspicious to them. Some think there were as many lots as there were days in the year, and for every day he drew a lot; but found none to his mind, till he came to the last month of all, and to the middle of it.— *Patrick. Deciding by lot.*— In nearly all cases where reason cannot decide, or where the right of several claimants to one article has to be settled, recourse is had to the lot, which "causeth contentions to cease." In the East a young man is either so accomplished, or so rich, or so respectable, that many fathers aspire to the honor of calling him son-in-law. Their daughters are said to be beautiful, wealthy and of a good family; what is he to do? The name of each young lady is written on a separate piece of olah, and then all are mixed together. The youth and his friends then go to the front of the temple; and being seated, a person who is passing by at the time is called, and requested to take one of the pieces of olah, on which a lady's name is inscribed and place it near the anxious candidate. This being done, it is opened, and she whose name is written there becomes his wife.— *Oriental Illus.*

preparations made for a general massacre of the Jews

f Est. i. 22; viii. 9.

g Est. viii. 10.

h 1 Sa. xxii. 17; 2 K. x. 25; xi. 6.

i Est. viii. 15; Pr. xxix. 2.

"Better is the perplexity of him that suffereth evil than the jollity of him that doeth evil."—*Trapp.*

"The Persians had good arrangements for interchange of

12–15. (12) **scribes,** *R. V.*, marg. "secretaries." **lieutenants,** *R. V.*, "satraps." **writing . . language,**[f] in a country of such vast extent many dialects and languages were spoken. **and . . ring,** wh. now Haman had, wh. made the edict binding. (13) **posts,**[g] runners.[h] The Persian system of conveying letters and messages was by means of relays of fresh horses kept in readiness at suitable distances along the route. (14) **ready,** for slaughter and spoliation. With weapons, and arrangement of troops. (15) **decree . . palace,** from headquarters, that none might question the authority. **king . . drink,** making merry by anticipation at overthrow of the Jews. **city . . perplexed,**[i] many grieved, many wondering where the slaughter would end: many persons of other nationalities feeling that the precedent now set was a dangerous one.

The edict.— Haman caused the edict against the Jews to be published in the language of every people, that they might all be prepared to bear their part in the destruction of the Jews. But the enemies of Israel had one thing in view, and the God of Israel quite another. Haman intended to make the destruction of Judah as sure as possible, but God intended to make all nations attentive witnesses of His power and wisdom displayed in counteracting the

designs of their enemies, and accomplishing their salvation. The effect of such an edict would be the fixing of all men's attention on the event: and the event was to make it evident that there was no God like the God of Israel, nor any people on the earth so much the care of heaven as that nation which was held in abhorrence by Haman.— *Lawson.*

Sealing of documents in the East.— The Rev. H. B. Tristram, in traveling through Palestine, desiring a number of guards in order to secure to his party a safe passage through parts of the land, it was necessary for a treaty to be drawn up to complete the arrangements. He says: "Then came the momentous business of affixing the seals. The seal was not worn in this case on the finger, but from the depths of some part of the sheikh's under garments an unsavory cotton rag was produced, knotted and twisted, at one end of which was carefully folded the signet ring. A little ink being rubbed over it, it was then impressed upon the documents. As the chieftain could not write, we saw at once the jealous precaution with which the signet was guarded. 'To trust a man with your ring,' is a Bedouin proverb expressive of unbounded confidence, and indeed it would practically amount to entrusting a friend in England with bank signed cheques. The signature written with the pen was no security in the Arab's eye, and we were requested, after we had signed the deeds, to affix our seals, not with wax, but with ink; nor till this ceremony was completed did Sheikh Hamzi's deep-set eye twinkle on the pile of sovereigns on the office table as without doubt his own."

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thought and desires. A nation's civilization may be gauged by its facilities for intercommunication.

"The people of Shushan at this time would be in much the same state of mind as a Persian minister of state in later times, who said that he never left the king's presence without putting his hand to his head, that he might feel whether it was still standing on his shoulders."— *Lawson.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Mordecai's sorrow on hearing of this decree

1—3. (1) **perceived,** *R. V.*, "knew." **rent . . ashes,**[a] com. signs of great sorrow of heart. Orientals are very demonstrative in expressing sorrow. They smite their breasts, tear their hair and their garments, and utter loud and piercing cries. (2) **before,** over against. **none . . sackcloth,** no signs of sorrow permitted in the palace. (3) **mourning . . Jews,**[b] terror and distress pervaded the kingdom wherever Jews were found.

Shushan, "the City of the Lily."— "The City of the Lily," in the garden of the Lord. Here Œbares plotted the fraudulent omen which was to place Darius upon the Parisian throne; here, according to St. Jerome, was the palace or castle of Daniel the Prophet; and by the banks of the stream, if Jewish and Mohammedan tradition may be credited, is the humble tomb where, doubly wrapped in cloth of gold, his body awaits the resurrection of the just. From Shushan's once magnificent pavilions went forth the army of Xerxes to the conquest of Greece, and here the queen received the tidings of their total and ignominious defeat. Here Artaxerxes held his royal banquet of fourscore days' duration; here Haman concerted the destruction of the Jews; and here also the amiable Smerdis fell beneath the blow of an assassin deputed by his brother Cambyses. On this spot Sardanapalus III. (Ashur-banipal), B. C. 700, overthrew the Greco-Syrian Empire, and savagely superintended the execution of its sovereign in the burning ruins of his own citadel. Generation after generation has passed into eternity,—the Caliph Omar and the Emperor Sanjar, Mede and Persian, Turk and Arab, Zend and Mohammedan have successively conquered and successively revelled in the marble colonnades and tapestried chambers of a capital which has perished from its glory for ever.

[a] 2 Sa. i. 11; Josh. vii. 6.

[b] Isa. lviii. 5; Da. ix. 3.

"Save us, O God, Thine ocean is so large, and our little boat so small."

"Sorrow, like a heavy hanging bell, once set on ringing with his own weight goes; then little strength rings out the doleful knell."— *Shakespeare.*

Esther sends Hatach with a gift to comfort

4—6. (4) **exceedingly grieved,** "her grief and alarm were intense, almost convulsive." **sent,** she thought to show that her position had not robbed her of love and sympathy for her kinsman. (5) **Then . . was,** the return of the presents suggested some greater sorrow than she had suspected. (6) **street of the city,** *R. V.*, "broad place of the city," an area in front of the king's gate.

A motive for kindness.— M. Labat, a merchant of Bayonne ill in health, had retired in the beginning of the winter, 1803, to a country house on the banks of the Adour. One morning, when promenading in his *robe-de-chambre*, on a terrace elevated a little above the river, he saw a traveler thrown by a furious horse, from the opposite bank, into the midst of the torrent. M. Labat was a good swimmer. He did not stop a moment to reflect on the danger of the attempt, but threw off his *robe-de-chambre*, leaped into the flood, and caught the drowning stranger at the moment when, having lost all sen-

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sation, he must have otherwise inevitably perished. "O God!" exclaimed M. Labat, clasping him in his arms, and recognizing, with a transport of joy, the individual he had saved — "sacred humanity! what do I not owe thee? I have saved my son!" — *Percy Anec.*

Mordecai tells Hatach, who tells Esther of the decree

"Every man rejoices twice who has a partner in his joy; a friend shares my sorrow and makes it but a moiety, but he swells my joy and makes it double." — *Jeremy Taylor.*

"Do not despise your situation; in it you must act, suffer and conquer. From every point on earth we are equally near to heaven, and to the Infinite." — *Amiel's Journal.*

"Every human feeling is greater and larger than the exciting cause — a proof, I think, that man is designed for a higher state of existence." — *Coleridge.*

7—9. (7) **the sum of money,** "he evidently considered that the money was an important item in the transaction, and had mainly influenced Ahasuerus." — *Pul. Com.* (8) **Also . . decree,** *etc.*, lest so incredible a story should be doubted. **Esther . . people,** by this injunction to Hatach Esther's nationality is disclosed, even if it were previously unknown to him. (9) **Hatach,** the queen's trusted and confidential messenger, selected on account of his well-known integrity.

An intercession. — If Haman's influence with the king of Persia was used for harm, why should not Esther's be used for good? It was a natural and happy thought on the part of Mordecai to use his ward's influence with Ahasuerus for the deliverance and safety of the Jews. And the sequel shows the wisdom of Mordecai's counsel, and the efficacy of Esther's pleading. Christ, our High Priest, is, as such, our Advocate with the Father. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. As a figure of our Redeemer, the Intercessor, consider Esther, as possessing two qualifications for successful advocacy — *Pul. Com.*

Light on the mountain-tops. —

In Alpine valleys, they who watch for dawn
Look never to the east; but fix their eyes
On loftier mountain-peaks of snow, which rise
To west or south. Before the happy morn
Has sent one ray of kindling red, to warn
The sleeping clouds along the eastern skies
That it is near — flushing, in glad surprise,
These royal hills, for royal watchmen born,
Discover that God's great new day begins,
And, shedding from their sacred brows a light
Prophetic, wake the valley from its night.
Such mystic light as this a great soul wins,
Who overlooks earth's walls of griefs and sins,
And steadfast, always, gazing on the white
Great throne of God, can call aloud with deep,
Pure voice of truth, to waken those who sleep.

— *Helen Hunt Jackson.*

Esther reports to Mordecai her relations with the king

10—12. (10) **Again,** *etc.*, she had grown accustomed to seek his advice, and follow his instructions.[a] (11) **come . . called,** she knew no request for a private interview would ever reach the king, and to go without being called was perilous. **but . . days,** she could not tell when the king would summon, so she must risk being put to death.

Duty's price. — To whatever difficult duty we are called, we may lay our account with trials. If thou desirest to serve the Lord, look for temptation. But remember, that "the man is blessed who endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive of the Lord the crown of life which he hath promised to them that love Him." Those who have held on in the path of duty, under sore temptation, shall at last "stand before the throne of God with white robes, and palms in their hands." "But the fearful and unbelieving shall have their portion in the lake of fire burning with brimstone, which is the second death." — *Lawson.*

[a] Est. ii. 20.

Whoever fears God, fears to sit at ease. — *Mrs. Browning.*

Consolation respecting Providence. — Whatever way I turned nothing appeared but danger and difficulty. I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals, and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss irresistibly caught my eye. I mention it to show from what trifling circumstances the mind will sometimes derive consolation; for though the whole plant was not larger than the top of one of my fingers, I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots and leaves without admiration. Can that Being, thought I, who planted, watered, and brought to perfection in this obscure part of the world a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and

May we be content to stand where the dear Lord has put us, and fulfil the office that He needs some one to fulfil.

sufferings of creatures formed after His own image? Surely not! I started up, and, disregarding both hunger and fatigue, traveled forward, assured that relief was at hand; and I was not disappointed. — *Mungo Park.*

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13. 14. (13) **Think . . Jews,** literally, "imagine not in thy mind." She must share the fate of her people. (14) **enlargement,** *lit.* respiration, *R. V.*, "relief." **and . . place,** without naming the name of God, he is confident that the great Power which has so long watched over the Israelitish nation, will rescue them from the snares of the destroyer. **who . . time,** "a very timely and suggestive intimation that Providence had, perhaps, raised Esther to the throne for this very juncture - - to effect through her the salvation of her beloved nation." — *Haley.*

Esther is reminded of her duty

God's purpose and man's opportunity. — I purpose, in humble dependence on Divine help, to draw from the text the following general truths: that running through the Providence of this world there is a gracious Divine purpose for its ultimate salvation; that rich and rare opportunities occur in the progress of things, by which believing men are allowed to come effectually "to the help of the Lord against the mighty;" that the neglect of such providential calls has a tendency to bring destruction; that obedience brings elevation and blessing. Let us then consider — I. The Divine purpose. II. Human opportunity. III. The law of destruction. IV. The law of life. — *Raleigh.*

"No man's body is as strong as his appetites, but heaven has corrected the boundlessness of his voluptuous desires by stinting his strength and contracting his capacities." — *Tillotson.*

A noble answer. — That noble Terentius (general to Valens, the emperor), being bidden to ask what he would, asked nothing but that the church might be freed from Arians; and when the emperor, upon a defeat by the Goths, upbraided him with cowardice and sloth as the causes of the overthrow, he boldly replied: "Yourself have lost the day, by your warring against God, and persecuting his people." — *Hom. Com.*

To God, thy country and thy friend be true. — *Vaughan.* It is thy duty oftentimes to do what thou would'st not; thy duty, too, to leave undone what thou would'st do. — *The Imitation of Christ.*

Failure is no sin; faithlessness is.

15—17. (15) **answer,** an answer that, manifesting Esther's piety, must have greatly comforted him. (16) **gather . . fast,** *etc.*, by fasting and prayer she thought to arm herself with the protection of God. **if . . perish,** the habit of obedience could not have been strong enough to carry her through the terrible ordeal if Mordecai's hard requirement had not been seconded by the voice of her own conscience. — *Exp. B.* (17) **So . . way,** his own influential position and the queen's command were sufficient to induce the Jews to observe the fast.

Esther is commanded to do her duty, and commands a feast

The valorous queen (*vs.* 16). — I. The momentous considerations which led her to make this resolution. 1. Personal considerations; 2. National considerations; 3. Religious considerations. II. The almost insuperable obstacles in the way of her enterprise. 1. The king's indifference to her; 2. The established law; 3. The power of Haman. III. The indomitable courage displayed both in the making of this resolution, and in the prosecution of this enterprise. . . . Her eye is fixed on the goal; she will either reach it or perish in the attempt.

"I was acquainted once with a gallant soldier who assured me that his only measure of courage was this: upon the first fire, in an engagement, he immediately looked upon himself as a dead man. He then fought out the remainder of the day perfectly regardless of all manner of danger, as becomes a dead man to be. So that all the life or limbs he carried back again to his tent he reckoned as clear gains, or, as he himself expressed it, so much out of the fire." — *Sterne.*

Providence the guardian of our weakness. — That image in Lowell's poem of "The changeling" fascinates me. It is so much what I am and ever wish to be.

"I feel as weak as a violet
Alone 'neath the awful sky."

Unable to defend myself and apparently undefended, yet guarded by omnipotent love, I would fain pour out a perfume of praise to the Great Invisible who watches over me, and would feel that under the care of Providence I may claim the sweetness of the poet's next stanza:

"As weak, yet as trustful also;
For the whole year long I see
All the wonders of faithful nature
Still worked for the love of me.
Winds wander and dews drip earthward,
Rains fall, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
A poor little violet." — *Spurgeon.*

He taught us to yield up the love of life,
For the sake of the life of love.

To be brave is not to be boastful. The most beautiful courage is generally a very quiet grace, saying little, but ready to bear a fearful strain without breaking. — *Chas. Cuthbert Hall.*

A young hero. — An American paper chronicles a bit of heroism by a Peoria county boy which deserves recognition. A coal shaft is being sunk just north of Hollis, Illinois, and the other day a workman, by the name of

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We know not of what we are capable till the trial comes; till it comes, perhaps, in a form which makes the strong man quail, and turns the gentler woman into a heroine. — *Mrs. Jameson.*

Harland, lighted a slow match leading to the blast, and then signaled to be drawn up. The depth of the shaft was seventy feet. When he had been raised fourteen feet he struck the bottom of a board partition, and was thrown back to the bottom. Thomas Crandall, a step-son of Harland, was a witness to the accident, and promptly slid down the rope, seventy feet, and tore the match from the fuse in time to prevent an explosion. The act was a brave one, scarcely to be paralleled. The boy's hands were terribly lacerated by the friction of the rope. The step-father was rescued with a broken rib and other severe bruises. The heroic act of this brave boy can be not only "paralleled," but surpassed. Esther exposed herself to equal risk to save a whole people to whom she was bound by the ties of nationality.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

Esther ventures before the king

a Est. iv. 16.

When the hour of death comes—that comes to high and low alike, then it's na what we ha'e dune for ourselves, but what we ha'e dune for others that we think on maist pleasantly —*Sir Walter Scott.*

A man complained to his pastor that he had prayed a whole year for the comforts of religion, but had received no answer. His minister replied. "Go home and pray, 'Father, glorify Thyself.'"

1, 2. (1) **Now . . day,**[a] *i. e.* reckoning from the day when Haman's plot, was made known to the queen. **her . . apparel,** "this marks the change from her garb of fasting, and equally her care that nothing should be neglected that might favor the success of her errand."— *Hasley.* (2) **king . . hand,** the usual sign of favor and welcome. **touched . . sceptre,** in token of her submission.

A bold petitioner. — The Romans had a law that no person should approach the emperor's tent in the night, upon pain of death; but it once happened that a soldier was found in that situation, with a petition in his hand, waiting for an opportunity of presenting it. He was apprehended, and going to be immediately executed; but the emperor having overheard the matter in his pavilion, cried aloud, saying, "If the petition be for himself, let him die; if for another, spare his life." Upon inquiry, it was found that the generous soldier prayed for the lives of his two comrades who had been taken asleep on the watch. The emperor nobly forgave them all. *Dr. Livingstone's tonic.* — This certainly served the great traveler well in the long contest with obstacles of every kind. His work was consecrated to God, and the consciousness that he was faithfully serving Him gave strength in the midst of weakness, and saved him from despair. One month before his death he wrote: "Nothing earthly will make me give up my work in despair. I encourage myself in the Lord my God, and go forward." It was this spirit that sustained him from the first. He might be prostrated again and again by bodily illness, but nothing could make him an invalid Christian, even for a day. — *Hom. Com.*

Esther's invitation to a banquet

"I had rather do and not promise, than promise and not do. — *Arthur Warwick.*

"An acre of performance is worth the whole world of promise." — *Howell.*

"Discretion of speech is more than eloquence."

"Ah, the key of our life that passes all wards, opens all locks, is not, I *will*, but *I must, I must, I must*, and I do it." — *A. H. Clough.*

3—5. (3) **given . . kingdom,** an expression denoting great liberality, but not to be understood too literally. (4) **let . . prepared,** the king understood that this invitation to a banquet was simply preliminary to some petition of greater importance. (5) **Cause . . haste,** such an invitation as this was very unusual. Ordinarily the king and queen dined separately, each in their own apartments. But for the queen to invite not only the king, but also another male guest, not a relation, was a remarkable innovation, and seemed a high act of favor. — *Pul. Com.* Esther invited Haman as the king's favorite.

A small request. — For the present Esther simply contented herself with the small request, "If it seems good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him." Our requests should be shaped with a view to the character and ability of the promiser. Esther was wise. She had a woman's sharp wit, and a woman's keen, penetrating power. She saw for the present this was all which she could likely secure from the hand of Ahasuerus. She must wait for the perfecting of the good work already begun in Ahasuerus. God's ability and willingness to give are large. But we too may have to wait. His purpose for us may not be ripe. At first he may give small blessings, the harbinger of yet greater blessings. His best things he gives last. — *Hom. Com. Ingratitude to God.* — The English proverb says, "The river past and God forgotten," to express with how mournful a frequency, He whose assistance was invoked — it may have been earnestly in the moment of peril — is remembered no more so soon as by His help the danger has been surmounted. And the Italian form of it sounds a still sadder depth of ingratitude: "The peril passed, the saint mocked," the vows made to him in peril remaining unperformed in safety, and he treated somewhat as in Greek story Juno was treated by Mandrabulus, the Samian, who, under her auspices and through her direction, discovered a gold mine, in

his instant gratitude vowed to her a golden ram, which he presently exchanged in intention for a silver one, and again this for a very small brass one, and this for nothing at all. — *Trench.*

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6—8. (6) **king . . wine,** reminding her of his promise seeks to discover the real cause of such a unique banquet. (7) **My . . request,** the thought of the immense issues that were depending on her words may well have caused hesitancy and confusion. She saw that her best hope was in delay.— *Lowell Heb. Club.* (8) **king . . them,** though kings ate alone, his guests were allowed to take wine with him afterwards.

at the banquet Esther proposes another banquet

Value of prayer. — He that would be little in temptation, let him be much in prayer. Praying only for carnal things shows a carnal heart, and leaves it carnal. Prayer is a key in the hand of faith to unlock God's treasures. A family without prayer is like a house without a roof — exposed to every wind that blows, and every storm that rages. Prayer will compel a man to leave off sinning, or sinning will make him leave off praying. The greatest and hardest preparation for heaven is within; but the spirit of prayer can effect this. Do you profess to love any one for whom you have never prayed? Rhetoric cannot pray, with all his words; but Faith can pray, even when she has no words. In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart. Pray, not only in the name of Christ, but in the faith of Christ. The gift of prayer may have praise from men, but the grace of prayer has power with God. — *American Churchman's Almanac.*

Let prayer be the key of the morning, and the bolt of the evening. Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness — *Phillips Brooks.*

"We should act with as much energy as those who expect everything from themselves; and we should pray with as much earnestness as those who expect everything from God."—*Fuller.*

> More things are wrought by prayer
> Than the world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
> Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
> For what are men better than sheep or goats,
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If knowing God, they lift no hands of prayer
> Both for themselves and those who call them friends!
> For so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God. — *Tennyson.*

9—11. (9) **Then . . heart,** forth fr. the king's presence puffed up by vanity. **but . . Mordecai,**[a] Mordecai had declined to prostrate himself before Haman on religious grounds. Now he would not acknowledge his presence. There is nothing more galling than such utter contempt shown openly in the presence of others. (10) **refrained,**[b] he could afford to do so since the day of his revenge was at hand. **Zeresh,** he sent for her, that he might consult about his future course. (11) **multitude of his children,** *lit.* "of his sons," of these he had ten. "To be the father of many sons was accounted highly honorable by the Persians."

Haman relates his greatness to friends

a Est. iii. 5.

b 2 Sa. xiii. 22.

True nature of pride. — Pride has marred the work of God, given birth to infidelity, apostasy, impiety, blasphemy, and persecution; it is the mother of heresy, and has fomented strife and contention, and wrath, and swellings, and tumults, within the sacred enclosures of the house of God. O beware of giving place to this monster! The man that harbors pride in his heart, harbors a murderer, a fratricide, a parricide, a suicide, a *deicide;* — for it crucified the Lord of glory, and still crucifies Him afresh in His doctrine and in His members." — *McCrie.*

"Peace does not dwell in outward things, but within the soul." — *Fenelon.*

Life. —

> We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
> In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
> We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
> Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.
> Life's but a means unto an end, that end
> Beginning, mean, and end of all things, God. — *Bailey.*

"'Tis thus that pride triumphant rears her head, — a little while, and all her power is fled."— *Goldsmith.*

12—14. (12) **moreover,** *etc.*,[c] reserving this crowning honor as a final surprise. **come . . myself,** in this respect treated with equal honor to the king. (13) **Yet,** no satisfaction in all his honors. A single ingredient of bitterness has poisoned the whole. The misery of the situation consumes him. (14) **gallows,**[d] *Heb.* tree.[e] **fifty . . high,** or ab. 75 ft. the structure probably consisted of a stake fixed in a movable base, and this set upon some roof or other elevation would meet all the demands of the text. **speak thou unto the**

the advice of Haman's wife

c Est. ix. 7.

d Est. .....

e The Vulg. has *crux*; in Josephus

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(*Ant.* ix. 6, 10), and in the LXX. it is *xúlon*, the word used for cross: Ac. v. 30; x. 39; xiii. 29; 1 Pet ii. 24.

a Est. vii. 10.

Just because there's fallen
A snow-flake on his forehead,
He must go and fancy
'Tis winter all the year.— *T. B. Aldrich.*

the king's sleepless night

b The Heb. verb descr. the fluttering undulatory movements of a bird's wings. Is. x. 14; Pr. xxvii. 8; Je. iv. 25.

c Est. ii. 23.

Truly there is a "could not" in the history of all human power.—*Peop Bib.*

"When one asked Alexander how he could sleep so soundly and securely in the midst of danger, he told them that Parmenio watched; he might well sleep when Parmenio watched. Oh, how securely may they sleep over whom He watches that never slumbers nor sleeps! 'I will,' said David, 'lay me down and sleep, for Thou Lord makest me to dwell in safety.'"—*Venning.*

God's finger touched him and he slept.—*Tennyson.*

king, the execution of one Jew would be readily granted by the king to please his chief minister. Then he could enjoy to the full Esther's banquet. **he . . made,**[a] in anticipation of the king's approval.

Haman's thorn.— Is there not a gnawing worm in the heart of every joy? Is there not a Mordecai in the way of every ambitious man? We cannot have all things exactly our own way; there is one nail we cannot extract, one lock we cannot undo, one gate we cannot open, one claim we cannot pacify. In every path there would seem to be a deep, gaping grave which even mountains cannot fill up; we throw great hills into that grave, and behold the hills sink into the abyss, and the grave remains wide open still. How near are some men to perfect bliss! If but one thorn could be extracted, then the men themselves would be safe in heaven; but that one thorn abides to remind them of their limitations, and to sting them with a useful sense of disappointment.—*Peop. Bib*

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1—3. (1) **On . . sleep,** *lit.* the king's sleep fled away;[b] an unusual thing. **he . . chronicles,**[c] to pass the time, to lull him to sleep. "Historiographers were attached to the Persian court, and attended the monarch wherever he went."—*Haley.* **they . . king,** a providential selection. (2) **written,** *etc.*, ch. ii. 21. It is evident that the substance of the information he gave was recorded. (3) **What . . this?** the king felt that some fit acknowledgment of such an act of fidelity was due to his own interests.

Providence of God in withholding sleep.—The late Sir Evan Nepean, when under-secretary of state, related to a friend of his that one night he had the most unaccountable wakefulness that could be imagined. He was in perfect health, had dined early and moderately, had no care—nothing to brood over—and was perfectly self-possessed. Still he could not sleep, and from eleven till two in the morning had never closed an eye. It was summer, and twilight had far advanced; and to dissipate the *ennui* of his wakefulness, he resolved to rise and breathe the morning air in the park. There he saw nothing but sleepy sentinels, whom he rather envied. He passed the Home Office several times, and at last, without any particular object, resolved to let himself in with his pass key. The book of entries of the day before lay open on the table, and in sheer listlessness he began to read. The first thing appalled him! "A reprieve to be sent to York for the coiners ordered for execution the next day." It struck him that he had no return to his order to send the reprieve, and he searched the minutes, but could not find it. In alarm, he went to the house of the chief clerk, who lived in Downing street, knocking him up (it was then long past three), and asked him if he knew anything of the reprieve being sent. In greater alarm, the chief clerk could not remember. "You are scarcely awake," said Sir Evan; "collect yourself; it must have been sent." The chief clerk said he did now recollect he had sent it to the clerk of the crown, whose business it was to forward it. "Good!" said Sir Evan; "but have you his receipt and certificate that it is gone?" "No!" "Then come with me to his house. We must find him, though it is so early!" It was now four, and the clerk of the crown lived in Chancery Lane. There was no hackney coach, and they almost ran. The clerk of the crown had a country house, and meaning to have a long holiday, he was at that moment stepping into his gig, to go to his villa. Astonished at the visit of the under-secretary at such an hour, he was still more so at his business. With an exclamation of horror, cried the clerk of the crown, "The reprieve is locked up in my desk!" It was brought. Sir Evan sent to the post-office for the trustiest and fleetest express, and the reprieve reached York at the moment the unhappy people were ascending the cart. Surely this was the finger of God.—*Leisure Hour.*

the king seeks the advice of Haman.

d Est. v. 14.

"Pride discovers itself in dwelling upon the thoughts of our gifts, with a secret kind of

4—6. (4) **Who . . court,** "probably some high officer of state was required to be always in attendance upon the monarch, to take his orders at any moment."—*Pulp. Com.* **Haman,** *etc.*, anxious to prefer his request.[d] (5) **Haman . . court,** *etc.*, who so fit to decide on the mode of honoring a man as one who had been himself greatly honored? (6) **Haman . . heart,** *etc.*, the king's question was in accord with his vanity. The king's manner, too, may have led him to suppose that *he* was meant.

Who is in the court?—The morning light may have begun to fill his chamber when the king nervously addressed this question to his attendants.

He had spent a sleepless night; and might it not be because another conspiracy was being matured against him? Might it not be something of this kind which was troubling the queen? Did he not deserve that it should be concealed from him, since he had done nothing to reward his former preserver? There might be cause for haste — at least he was impatient of delay; and who was this, at early morn, pacing the outer court of the king's palace, as though also in haste about some great work? Haman. His night's rest had not pacified his thirst for revenge. There was to be the queen's banquet in an after part of the day; and if he was to go in merrily to it he must first have obtained authority for the execution, and had Mordecai hanged on the gallows prepared for him. How fortunate! thought Haman; the king is early astir, and calleth for me. How fortunate! thought the king; my favorite courtier and counselor is early in the way this morning, and is the best man to whom I can submit this business. Behind the back of each of them there was the providence of God, secretly working out His own purposes of mercy and judgment. "And the king said, Let Haman come in."— *McEwan.*

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content to see our own face, till at last we fall in love with it. A proud heart is full of himself; his own abilities cast their shadow before him; they are in his eye wherever he goes; the great subject and theme of his thoughts is what he is, and what he hath above all others. Run from such thoughts as from a bear."—*A Divine of the Seventeenth Century.*

7—9. (7) **Haman answered,** promptly, joyously. (8) **Let . . wear,** the spur of personal ambition quickened his ingenuity. **horse . . upon,** of a special breed called Nisecen. (9) **hand . . princes,** thinking of himself, he would be served like a king.

The fearful blow to conceit. — We can easily suppose that the command now given by the king to Haman was more galling than the rope placed around his neck when he was hung on the gallows. How galling to have the honors I had intended for myself given to another, and that other the man I most hate, the man whose destruction I have most earnestly plotted! The king told Haman to make haste. What a hard command! To make haste is a hard task when I have to carry on my journey a broken heart, a disappointed nature, blasted hopes, blighted prospects; to make haste when in myself I must carry the hideous ruins of that fair castle which I have just been building with so much skill and labor. Make haste to honor the man I have most hated! Love your enemies is the gospel precept. Where is the Christian that makes haste to heap honors on his enemy? Have pity then on wretched Haman if his heart-strings crack and break as he strives to do the king's bidding. Oh! to be emptied of self-seeking, to lie low at the foot of the cross! it will save us from many a hard knock. Stoop low if thou wouldst not be hurt. Think not too much of thyself. — *Hom. Com.*

Haman gives his advice

"Do you never look at yourself when you abuse another?" — *Clautus.*

"Pride, in boasting of family antiquity, makes duration stand for merit."— *Zimmerman.*

10, 11. (10) **Make haste,**[a] a good example of what *Shakespeare* styles: "hoist with his own petar." **do . . gate,** no time to say a word about the gallows. **let nothing fail,** no one so well able to observe every particular of honor as the originator thereof. (11) **Then . . Mordecai,** with what an ill grace he must have played his part! **and . . city,** Haman walking like a servant at the bridle-rein. **Thus . . honour,** using words that he himself had recommended. How little did the king know what torture he was inflicting!

Royal presents to an official. — The presentation as a gift from a royal personage of that which had been worn on his own person was a special mark of favor and condescension. Morier, in his narrative of *A Second Journey through Persia*, thus illustrates this custom: — "When a treaty between Russia and Persia was concluded, some years since, in the commencement, according to the usual form, the ranks of the two principal persons who were deputed to arrange it had to be specified. The Russian general was found to have more titles than the Persian plenipotentiary, who was therefore at a loss how to make himself appear of equal importance with the other negotiator; but at length, recollecting that, previous to his departure for the place of conference, his sovereign had honored him by a present of one of his own swords, and of a dagger set with precious stones, to wear which is a peculiar distinction in Persia, and besides had clothed him with one of his own shawl robes, a distinction of still greater value, he therefore designated himself as 'endowed with the special gifts of the monarch, lord of the dagger set in jewels, of the sword adorned with gems, and of the shawl coat already-worn.'"

the discomfiture of Haman

[a] "The king knew the Jewish origin of his benefactor Mordecai, and was thus better prepared to receive Esther's petition on behalf of herself and her people."— *Wordsworth.*

"Our life is always deeper than we know, is always more divine than it seems, and hence we are able to survive degredations and despairs which otherwise must engulf us." — *H James.*

12 — 14. (12) **Mordecai . . gate,** after this one display of the king's favor Mor. returned to his humble duties. **Haman . . covered,**[b] when he had escaped

the prediction of Haman's friends

[b] 2 Ch. xxvi. 20.

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from public gaze, he could command himself no longer. He felt he must seek the sympathy of his home and hide himself fr. public gaze. (13) **wise men,** diviners, those who had cast lots before him. **If . . Jew,** *etc.*, they prob. thought the decree had excited Mordecai and Esther, and that this humiliation of Haman was the first fruit of their influence. (14) **while . . him,** *etc.*, customary for the host to send an escort to attend the guests to the place of entertainment.— *Pul. Com.*

It was agony. It was madness. Every syllable left a poisoned arrow rankling in his heart. But he heard and obeyed without a murmur: wonderful illustration of the self-command which a man of such passions could assume, as well as of the abject submission by which he had won the favor of his master.— *Hom. Com.*

Haman's disgrace.— I. The world's councils are pernicious and unfaithful. II. No worldly advantage will avail one whom God has forsaken. III. The special immunities enjoyed by the Hebrews are transferred to the Christians. IV. God takes particular cognizance of His people in relation to men's dealings with them. V. All the enemies of God and His people are a doomed race.

A sleepless night.— "Because God wouldn't let him," was the answer given by a little boy in one of our Sunday schools of a large city in the west of England to a question asked by the teacher in reference to the Persian monarch not being able to enjoy his accustomed slumbers. It was a simple but sound reply, for God's providence was watching over His ancient people, and when they appeared to be in imminent danger of falling by the hand of the sword He again proved faithful to His promises, and made transpiring events and circumstances to be subservient to His purpose. "On that night the king could not sleep," because —

If ought of care this morn oppress thee,
To Him address thee,
Who, like the sun, is good to all.
—*Von Caunitz.*

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will. — *Bibl. Treas.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

Esther's second banquet

1—4. (1) **to banquet,** *lit.* to drink. In Persian feasts the solid dishes were few, and time was mainly passed in drinking and eating dessert. — *Herod.* i. 133. (2) **said . . day,**[a] all is propitious, the fickle king is as gracious as yesterday. (3) **my life . . request,** a large request in the face of an unalterable decree. (4) **sold,** for 10,000 talents by the king to Haman. **countervail,** *R. V.*, "have compensated for," *i. e.* the man so selling us could not compensate the king for the loss his exchequer would suffer.

[a] Est. v. 6.

A prayer which in many respects is a sublime type of the soul's prayer to God. — Within the four corners of Esther's prayer there are some amazing analogies with the prayer of man to God, of the sinner trembling between fear and hope to the Saviour, of the helpless creature stricken with the sense of unparalleled need to the Possessor and Spirit of life. Esther's prayer is indeed horror to our ears to hear, and grates on every highest sensibility of our nature, when (though no fault to her) we think of it as addressed to a fellow-creature. But we may now put this out of sight. The postulates of prayer are here — 1. In the praying disposition of the suppliant. Here are the deep feeling, the just estimate of the critical character of the occasion, the overwhelming sense of the prize of life. There are also to be noticed the natural selection of simplest language, the choice of briefest arguments, and all these held in hand with a self-command almost inconceivable — another touch of a true analogy. All these are the things which characterize heavenward prayer where intense spiritual importunity exists. 2. In the absolute ownership, the omnipotent power, the sovereign sceptre of the being addressed. These do belong to Him whom man addresses in prayer when he prays heavenward. And when these two postulates of prayer meet, rare indeed are the exceptions to that result which is one blessed word we call mercy. — *Pulp. Com.*

"Prayer is like opening a sluice between the great ocean and our little channels, when the great sea gathers itself together and flows in at full tide." —*Tennyson.*

Mental prayer, when our spirits wander, is like a watch standing still, because the spring is down; wind it up again, and it goes on regularly. But in vocal prayer, if the words run on and the spirit wanders, the clock strikes false, the hand points not the right hour, because something is in disorder, and the striking is nothing but noise. — *Jeremy Taylor.*

Kindness to God's people. — A lady was making great preparations for the coming of several young guests to her house. Their home was far distant, and she had never seen them. But she spared no pains to provide for them a welcome. "Why do you take so much trouble for persons whom you never saw?" said an intimate associate to the lady. "I do it," was the reply, "though I never saw them, for their mother's sake; she was the playmate of my childhood, the loved and trusted companion of my riper years, and now, in our maturity, though widely separated in body, we are closer than ever in heart. For her sake, if for no other, the coming guests are welcome to the best I have." — *S. S. World.*

5, 6. (5) **durst . . so,** the king is greatly aroused at Esther's petition. (6) **Haman . . queen,** "Esther adds a second term of reproach — 'enemy' — stronger than the one which she had used before to stir up the king to anger." *Pul Com.*

Unburdened desire. — The queen knew that the time had come for her to speak. She could no longer delay without injuring her cause. If it is well to know when to be silent: it is also well to know when to speak. It is folly to expose a great matter to a heart that may be cold or hostile. Esther's matter was exceedingly great, and she could not subject it to any needless risk by a premature disclosure. But now the king was so favorable to herself, and so interested in her secret, as to make it plain that she must tell all. So she laid before the king the weighty burden she had been silently carrying. What a relief to open a secret sorrow to those who can feel for us and give us an effective solace! We can at all times speak to God. Whatever barriers of fear and distrust stand between us and him are of our own making. The Redeemer of men is ready to share our every burden and to exceed our largest desires. — *Pul. Com.* *Haman.* — Lord Arthur Hervey, in his article on the Book of Esther, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, remarks: "This book is read through by the Jews in their synagogues at the feast of Purim, when it was, and is still in some synagogues, the custom at the mention of Haman's name to hiss and stamp, and clench the fist and cry, 'let his name be blotted out; may the name of the wicked rot.' It is said also that the names of Haman's ten sons are read in one breath, to signify, that they all expired at the same instant of time. Even in writing the names of Haman's sons in the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses of Esth. ix., the Jewish scribes have contrived to express their abhorrence of the race of Haman; for these ten names are written in three perpendicular columns of 3, 3, 4, as if they were hanging upon three parallel cords three upon each cord, one above another, to represent the hanging of Haman's sons." — *Stehelin.*

7—10. (7) **king . . garden,** to consider what he should do. **Haman . . queen,** he who had doomed the queen herself. **saw . . king,** evil that Esther might avert. (8) **Haman . . was,** in his agony of fear he had fallen on her divan,[a] or couch. **Will . . house?** he thinks this man capable of any evil. **they . . face,**[b] they saw that his death was determined upon; and covered his face as one who might not see the king's face again. (9) **Harbonah,**[c] Haman had made himself enemies; here is one who is ready to help on the fall of the great man. **Behold . . Mordecai,**[d] the king, not having ordered the death of Mordecai, would see how Haman was taking the law into his own hands. **who . . king,** ref. to the detection and announcement of the conspiracy against the king. **Hang . . thereon,** the Persians saw in this another illustration of the fickleness of fortune; the Jews saw a gracious answer to prayer. (10) **Then . . appeased,**[e] when, so far, justice had been done.

Case of retribution. — Tamerlane the Great, having made war on Bajazet, Emperor of the Turks, overthrew him in battle, and took him prisoner. The victor gave the captive monarch at first a very civil reception; and, entering into familiar conversation with him, said, "Now, king, tell me freely and truly what thou wouldst have done with me had I fallen into thy power?" Bajazet, who was of a fierce and haughty spirit, is said to have thus replied: "Had the gods given unto me the victory, I would have enclosed thee in an iron cage, and carried thee about with me as a spectacle of derision to the world." Tamerlane, wrathfully replied, "Then, proud man, as thou wouldst have done to me, even so I shall do unto thee." A strong iron cage was made, into which the fallen emperor was thrust: and thus exposed like a wild beast, he was carried along in the train of his conqueror. Nearly three years were passed by the once mighty Bajazet in this cruel state of durance; and at last, being told that he must be carried into Tartary, despairing of then obtaining his freedom, he struck his head with such violence against the bars of his cage, as to put an end to his wretched life. — *Cheever.*

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Esther charges Haman

When Severus, emperor of Rome, found his end approaching, he cried out, "I have been everything; and everything is nothing." Then ordering the urn to be brought to him in which his ashes were to be enclosed on his body being burned, he said, "Little urn, thou shalt contain one for whom the world was too little."

The moving Finger writes, and having writ,
Moves on; nor all your piety nor wit
Can lure it back to cancel half a line
Nor all your tears wipe out a word of it.
— *Omar Khayyam*

the death of Haman

a Est. i. 6.
b Job ix. 24.
c Est. i. 10.
d Est. v. 14; Ps. vii. 16; Pr. xi. 5, 6.
e Ps. xxxvii 35, 36; Da. vi. 24.

The king's retirement is like passing solemn judgment. The custom has descended to our times, and the Shah of Persia, or, if not he, certainly some of his immediate predecessors, have condemned men to death in this way. — *Raleigh.*

If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him, whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun!

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CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

Mordecai exalted

1, 2. (1) **Mordecai . . king,**[a] *etc.*, honored as the saviour of his life before, and now as the relative of his queen he becomes one of the king's privy councillors. (2) **ring,**[b] his signet ring, badge of office. With this seal Mordecai can now save his nation fr. destruction. **Esther . . Haman,** so he was rewarded for his care of the poor orphan.

The lowly exalted. — In the east, where monarchs are absolute, and where king's favorites are ministers of state, changes of fortune are familiar and proverbial. When one of our statesmen quits office he usually does so in an honorable way, and loses little of consideration by the change. But a vizier when deposed is disgraced, his property is often forfeited, and he himself is often put to a violent death. So was it with Haman. When the king's wrath turned against him he was slain, and his palace and establishment given to the queen, and his office and authority to Mordecai. — *Hom. Com.* *Signet rings.* — On the little finger of the right hand is worn a seal-ring, which is generally of silver, with a cornelian, or other stone, upon which is engraved the wearer's name; the name is accompanied by the words, "His servant" (signifying, the servant, or worshipper of God), and often by other words expressive of the person's trust in God, *etc.* The seal-ring is used for signing letters and other writings, and its impression is considered more valid than the sign-manual. (Therefore, giving the ring to another person is the utmost sign of confidence.) A little ink is dabbed upon it with one of the fingers, and it is pressed upon the paper; the person who uses it having first touched his tongue with another finger and moistened the place in the paper which is to be stamped. Almost every person who can afford it has a seal-ring, even though he be a servant. — *Lane.*

a Est. ii. 7.

b Est. iii. 10.

"The giving riches and honors to a wicked man, is like giving strong wine to him that hath a fever." — *Plutarch.*

Real merit of any kind *will* be discovered, and nothing depreciate it but a man's exhibiting it himself. — *Chesterfield.*

Esther prays for the life of her people

3—6. **spake . . king,** *etc.*, *lit.* "Esther continued and spoke before the king, and fell at his feet and wept, and besought him," *etc.* The five verbs express the queen's intense earnestness on behalf of her own people. (4) **king . . Esther,**[c] a sign that she and her request were accepted. (5) **If,** *etc.*, note her various pleas. **reverse,** *lit.* "bring back." (6) **For . . see,**[d] *etc.*, she pleads for mercy on the ground of her love for her people; her strength as a suppliant lies in the king's love for her.

A queen interceding for her people. — When Edward III. took Calais, he consented to spare the place on condition that six of the principal citizens should surrender themselves for execution; and would have forgot his humanity but for his queen, who threw herself at his feet, implored him, and obtained the lives of the noble victims who had offered themselves to save the lives of their fellow-citizens, their friends, their relatives, their wives, their children.

c Est. iv. 11; v. 2.

d Est. vii. 4; Ne. ii. 3.

O God, I pray for our country; that our laws may be just, protecting the good and punishing wrong-doers. Bless all our people with happiness and peace. Teach all men everywhere to worship Thee, and to live in Thy fear. —*G. W. Hinsdale.*

Dignity of labor. —

What are we set on earth for? Say to toil!
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,
And Death's wild curfew shall from work assoil.
God did anoint thee with His odorous oil
To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns
All thy tears over like pure crystallines,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labor, to their heart and hand,
From thy heart and thy hand and thy brave cheer;
And God's grace fructify to thee through all.
The least flower with a brimming cup may stand
And share its dewdrop with another near. — *E. B. Browning*

Are you in earnest? seize this very minute
What you can do or think you can — begin it.
—*Goethe.*

the king orders letters to be written

7, 8. (7) **him . . Jews,**[e] hence the great difficulty was removed, and the king's will made apparent. (8) **for . . reverse,**[f] the Persian kings claimed to be divine; they could never revoke an order once given. "To maintain the quasi-divine character it was necessary that the king should seem infallible, immutable and wholly free from the weakness of repentance." — *Rawlinson.* Hence an antidote must be provided.

e Pr. xiii. 32.

f Est. i. 19; Da. vi. 8.

The stability of God's Word. — I. The Bible addresses itself to men in the name of the Sovereign of all worlds, and claims to be written in the King's name. II. The Bible appears to us bearing certain attestations of its veracity and genuineness, sealed with the King's ring. III. In all ages there have been those who would have been glad to reverse its sacred teachings; but though for a time its foes may seem to have succeeded, the King's writing outlives all their attempts. IV. It is not enough to give it the consent of our minds; it demands the subjection of our lives. V. It will be found to have been a dreadful crime, fatal in its consequences, to deny, despise, or neglect this gracious, sacred, life-giving Word.

Ask and receive. — Sir Walter Raleigh one day asking a favor from Queen Elizabeth, the latter said to him, "Raleigh, when will you leave off begging?" To which he answered, "When your Majesty leaves off giving." Ask great things of God; expect great things from God; let his past goodness make us "instant in prayer." Esther kept on begging till she had secured a position of security for her countrymen. So great was her earnestness that she besought even in tears. Not for herself, but for her country she now prayed to the king. She was an earnest and powerful intercessor. Not so powerful, however, as the great Intercessor; he is a more powerful Pleader, and he approaches a more powerful and more liberal King, even the King of heaven. — *Hom. Com*

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As rowers in a boat turn their backs to the shore, and trust to the man at the helm, whose eye is fixed upon it; so should we all to God, who guides the helm."—*Bowes*

"To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved." — *Mac-Donald.*

"What is honor? 'Tis the finest sense of justice the human mind can frame." — *Wordsworth.*

9—11. (9) **scribes,**[a] secretaries. A position of great importance. **lieutenants,** satraps. **deputies,** viceroys, governors. (10) **posts,** messengers, couriers. **mules,** or prob. fleet horses. **young dromedaries,** rather thoroughbred horses; or mules, the sons of mares, a superior breed, famous for speed. (11) **Wherein . . life,** the Jews have sometimes been spoken of as the aggressors on the actual 13th of Adar, but there is no evidence to support this view. The edict clearly only allowed them to stand on the defensive. — *Pul. Com.*

by royal letters the Jews are permitted to stand for their defense

[a] Est. iii. 12.

Unchanging laws. — It is said that something like the principle of the unchangeableness of the purposes of the kings of Persia has been preserved in that country even till recent times. And a circumstance may be here alluded to in illustration of this, which although somewhat strange and almost ludicrous, yet does bear some resemblance to the difficulty in which Artaxerxes felt himself placed between the unalterable law, and the willingness which he displayed at the same time to get quit of the obligation to observe it literally. A Persian king, who reigned not very many years ago (Aga Mahmed Khan), having set out upon a military expedition, and encamped in a place convenient for his purpose, gave forth his edict that the encampment should not be removed until the snow had disappeared from the neighboring mountains. The season was severe. The snow clung to the mountains longer than usual, and in the meantime the army became straitened for supplies. Here was an unexpected difficulty. The king's appointment must stand, but the result was likely to be ruinous. To avert the difficulty, then, a vast multitude of laborers were despatched to clear away as far as they could the snow that was visible from the camp; and with their aid, and the help of a few days of sunshine, the snow disappeared, and then immediately the army was put in motion. — *Davidson.*

"Trust in the Lord, and keep your powder dry." — *Cromwell.*

"The curious, questioning eye, that plucks the heart of every mystery." — *Mellen.*

Through doubt, through faith,
through bliss, through stark dismay;
Through sunshine, wind, or snow, or fog, or shower,
Draw me to Thee, who art my only day. — *Geo. Mac-Donald.*

12—14. (12) **Upon one day,** the day when the first decree would take effect.[b] The slaughter was to continue but one day, any attempt upon their lives after that would be unlawful. (13) **that . . enemies,** hence the expedition used that the Jews might have time to prepare. (14) **mules and camels,** *R. V.*, "swift steeds . . . in the king's service." **decree . . palace,** that its authority might be unquestioned.

the letters are despatched with all haste

[b] Est. iii. 13.

God a refuge. — During the Irish rebellion of 1798, the "Welsh Horse" were the most dreaded by the inhabitants of the island of any in the whole force of British invaders. One day, a company of these troops, riding through the town of Shorey, suddenly surrounded a church where a congregation had assembled. One frightened cry, "The Welsh Horse!" "The Welsh Horse!" ran from lip to lip, and started every one to his feet; but there was no possibility of escape. The captain dismounted, and marched into the midst of the unarmed assembly. As he strode up the aisle, an old man, one of the few who retained proper presence of mind, called on the minister to pray. The minister, Mr. Thomas Campbell, standing in his pulpit, repeated in a strong clear voice the forty-sixth Psalm: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present

His pine trees whisper "Trust and wait!"
His flowers are prophesying,
That all we dread of change or fall,
His love is underlying. — *Whittier.*

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help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed. . . . The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Struck with a strong awe, the trooper captain stopped in the aisle. He stood still and listened to the end. Then, to the astonishment of all, he bowed, and turning abruptly about, walked out of the door. The next instant, the whole company were galloping away as rapidly as they had come." — *S. S. World.*

the joy of the Jews

a Est. iii. 15; Pr. xxix. 2.

b Ps xcvii. 11.

c Ps. xviii. 43.

d Gen. xxxv. 5; Ex. xv. 16.

15—17. (15) **apparel,** inner robe. **garment,** mantle. The Persian monarch himself wore a purple robe and an inner vest of purple striped with white. The one given to Mordecai seems to have been blue with white stripes. These were the colors of the royal diadem. — *Pul. Com.* **city . . glad,**[a] a hint of the popular respect for Mordecai. (16) **Jews,**[b] *etc.*, content to be permitted to defend their lives. (17) **many Jews,**[c] it was seen that the strength of royal authority and power were to be with the Jews on the day of conflict. **for . . them,**[d] they saw their numbers, their preparations, their holy confidence: and Esther and Mordecai high in royal favor.

God's opportunity. — After a dark and stormy night, when the clouds have hidden every star, and the fierce winds have been howling over hill and dale, what gladness fills all animated nature as the sun arises in the East. He floods the valleys with his cheerful light, and kindles a blaze of glory upon the mountain-tops. Then the thief and assassin, with every unclean and loathsome creature, seek their hiding-place; then the honest artisan goes forth to his task until the evening; and then sweet concerts are heard in every grove. So after the days of national gloom came the morning of gladness to the Jews. Man's extremity once again proved to be God's opportunity. — *Hom. Com.*

"There are joys which long to be ours. God sends ten thousand truths which come about us like birds seeking inlet; but we are shut up to them, so they sit awhile upon the roof and then fly away." — *Beecher.*

Good tidings. —

Beginnings of the Golden Times we tell!
Now is the new law opened! Mary's Son
Hath opened it, and full years are run,
Peace shall be, and good-will, and mercy shed
Over all flesh and spirit, quick and dead!
The consummation comes, the purposed bliss;
Earth was for now; her glad days spring from this.
— *Edwin Arnold.*

Joy is the vital air of the soul.
And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But westward look — the land is bright.
— *A. H. Clough.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

the Jews prepare for their defense

e Est. viii. 12.

f Est. viii. 11; Ps. lxxi. 13, 24.

1, 2. (1) **in the twelfth month,**[e] "in the first month the decree went forth for the destruction of all the Jews; in the third month, the decree permitting the Jews to stand in self-defense was sent forth; in the twelfth month, came the dreadful work of slaughter."— *Haley.* **power,** *R. V.*, "rule." (2) **Jews . . together,** *etc.*,[f] acting on the defensive, they were everywhere victorious.

Are you ready? — The Rev. Dr. Kidd was a Scotch minister of some prominence, and very eccentric, and one who had his own way of doing things. One of his parishioners says: "I was busy in my shop, when in the midst of my work in stepped the doctor. 'Did you expect me?' was his abrupt inquiry, without even waiting for a salutation. 'No,' was my reply. 'What if it had been death?' asked he, when at once he stepped out as abruptly as he came, and was gone almost before I knew it." What a question! What a thought for every one of us! Does not death come to most, if not all, as unexpectedly as this? And does not the inquiry impress the lesson from our Saviour's lips, "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."— *S. S. World.* *Anxiety.*— Foresight and foreboding are two very different things. It is not that the one is the exaggeration of the other, but the one is opposed to the other. The more a man looks forward in the exercise of foresight, the less he does so in the exercise of foreboding; and the more he is tortured by anxious thoughts about a *possible* future, the less clear vision has he of a *likely* future, and the less power to influence it. — *Hom. Com.*

God gives us power to bear all the sorrows of His making; but he does not give us power to bear the sorrows of our own making, which the anticipation of sorrow most assuredly is.

the Jews smite their enemies

g 2 Sa. iii. 1.

3—5. (3) **rulers,** *etc.*, ch. viii. 9. **helped . . them,** not physical help, prob. but moral aid and support. (4) **for . . greater,**[g] *lit.* "marching and great." His influence was progressive. (5) **did . . would,** *lit.* "according to their will."

Like the bird be thou,
That for a moment rests
Upon the topmost bough;
He feels the branch to bend
And yet as sweetly sings,
Knowing that he has wings. — *Victor Hugo.*

Faith. —

When over dizzy heights we go,
One soft hand blinds our eyes,
The other leads us safe and slow,
Oh, love of God most wise!
Nothing before, nothing behind;
The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find,
The rock beneath.

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1 would not, if I could, arrange the how,
The what, the wherefore of to-morrow's plan.
— *M. J. Preston.*

"True liberty consists in the privilege of enjoying our own rights, not in the destruction of the rights of others." — *Pinckard.*

6—11. (6) **And . . palace,** that is in the royal quarter of the city: the number killed was large, showing how furiously their enemies attacked them, and their own prob. fate had there been no concerted defense permitted. (10) **The . . Haman,**[a] who to avenge their father were prob. foremost of the attacking party. **but . . hand,** though permitted by the decree to do so.[b] (11) **number . . king,** who seems surprised at the result of the conflict.

Faith of parents. — An aged minister of Christ had several sons, all of whom became preachers of the gospel, but one. This one lived a life of dissipation for many years. But the good father's faith failed not. He trusted God that his wicked son, trained up in the way he should go, in old age should not depart from it. In this sublime faith the aged father passed away. Five years after, this son of many prayers sat at the feet of Jesus. — *Hom. Com.*

the slaughter in Shushan

a Est. v. 11; Job xviii. 19.

b Est. viii. 11.

"God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold." — *May Riley Smith.*

12—14. (12) **men,** *see* also *vs.* 15. We have no evidence that the Jews had any desire to destroy the women and children. Neither did they pillage. It was not plunder that they sought, but self-protection. **now what,**[c] *etc.*, note the confidence of the king in Esther's judgment. (13) **granted . . decree,**[d] *i. e.* to defend themselves if again attacked; this she saw was likely to result fr. exasperation of the Jews' enemies. **let . . gallows,**[e] as a warning to unrighteous plotters, and to avoid further bloodshed by this sight of their slain leaders. (14) **hanged . . sons,** exposure on a cross was regarded as a deep disgrace, and was a punishment often inflicted by the Persians on persons killed in some other way. — *Pul. Com.*

the Jews in Shushan to defend themselves a second day

c Est. v. 6; vii. 2.

d Est. viii. 11.

e 2 Sa. xxi. 6-9.

Life. —

We are born; we laugh; we weep;
We love; we droop; we die!
Ah! wherefore do we laugh or weep?
Why do we live or die?
Who knows that secret deep?
Alas! not I.

Why doth the violet spring
Unseen by human eye?
Why do the radiant seasons bring
Sweet thoughts that quickly fly!
Why do our fond hearts cling
To things that die?

We toil through pain and wrong;
We fight — and fly;
We love; we lose; and then, ere long,
Stone-dead we lie.
A life! is all thy song:
"Endure and — die!" — *B. W. Proctor.*

"The word liberty has been falsely used by persons who, being degenerately profligate in private life and mischievous in public, had no hope left but in fomenting discord." — *Tacitus.*

"I would be quiet, Lord, nor tease, nor fret,
Not one small need of mine wilt Thou forget.
Choose Thou for me." — *Julia C. R. Dorr.*

"Our best rule is to give God the same place in our hearts that He holds in the universe." — *Payson.*

15, 16. (15) **For,** *etc.*, so Esther's anticipation were verified; the Jews were again attacked by those who thought their liberty of defense was but for a day. (16) **seventy and five thousand,** the Septuagint has the number

the slaughter in the provinces

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"We may not do evil that good may come; we have no right to break God's law even for God's glory."

"To do what we will is natural liberty; to do what we will consistently with the interests of the community to which we belong is civil liberty—that is to says the only liberty to be desired in a state of civil society."—*Paley.*

fifteen thousand. **laid . . prey,** thus showing their forbearance, and that though they were captives and poor, they only sought to defend their lives.

Spiritual foes. — The diligence that Esther used in rooting out her temporal enemies should quicken us to do the like to our spiritual, viz., those evil affections, motions, and passions, that war against the soul. These be our Medes and Persians, with whom we must make no truce, but maintain a constant deadly feud, till we have mastered and mortified them all, for till that be done effectually we must never look to have true peace, either within ourselves or with others. — *Trapp.*

Ready for life. — Before the battle of Hatcher's Run, a Christian soldier said to his comrade, "You are detailed to go to the front, while I am to remain with the baggage. Let us change places. I'll go front: you remain in camp." "What for?" said the comrade. "Because I am prepared to die, I think; but, you are not." The exchange was made. The thought of the self-sacrifice of his friend, and his readiness for the exposures of life or the realities of death, led the unsaved soldier to repentance and a like preparation for life.

the Jews hold a day of feasting

a vs. 22; Ne. viii. 10, 12.

"What is our life without joy? Without joy we can do nothing. We are like an instrument out of tune. An instrument out of tune, it yields but harsh music. Without joy we are a member out of joint. We can do nothing well without joy, and a good conscience, which is the ground of joy."—*Sibbes.*

"Far beneath a soul immortal is a mortal joy."—*Young.*

17—19. (17) **fourteenth . . gladness,** while their countrymen in Shushan were still fighting for their lives. **rested,** literally to take breath. They needed now to recall the way in which they had been delivered. (18) **fifteenth . . gladness,** their enemies not daring to renew the attack. (19) **sending . . another,**[a] the festival of Purim wh. became one of the regular feastdays of the Jews.

Bright moments. — Once when I crossed the sea, for four or five days we were unable to get a glimpse of the stars, and were without an observation. We were running straight for the Newfoundland Banks, and were extremely anxious to learn our whereabouts. One evening just enough of the clouds lifted to show through the rift a few stars. Our captain, who seemed to be on the alert, was instantly on the spot to take his observation; and he had hardly time to take it before the clouds shut. But he had got it, and the stars could not get it back. It was enough! That glimpse of heaven told him where he was on the earth? The clouds shut down again, but it could not rub out his calculations. There is many a time, while making your voyage on the ocean of life, that a star shines out. It is visible only a moment; but if you make haste you can catch an observation, and then you will know just were you are, and you can sail on with trust in God, and with the guidance of that silent monitor that points the invisible way. Then take these hours of vision, thank God for them, and use them." — *H. W. Beecher.*

Mordecai appoints a commemorative festival

b Ps. xxx. 11; Ne. viii. 11

"Most of our comforts grow up between crosses. Even in your deepest griefs, rejoice in God. As waves phosphoresce, let joys flash from the swing of the sorrows of your souls."—*Beecher.*

20—22. (20) **And . . things,** Mordecai wrote to the provincial Jews, suggested to them the observance of two days of Purim instead of one, without venturing to issue any order. When he found his proposition well received he sent out a second letter, "with all authority" enjoining the observance. — *Pul. Com.* (22) **gifts . . poor,**[b] whose defenseless state exposed them to especial danger; the prime minister did all in his power to soften the hard lot of the poor, and prevent class jealousies.

The suddenness of joy. —

A thought of joy that rises in the mind,
Where sadness hath been sitting many an hour!
A thought of joy, that comes with sudden power,
When least the welcome guest we look to find!
Who sends that thought? Whence springs it?
Like the wind,
Its passage is invisible! The shower
That falls is seen; the lightning o'er the bower
Passes with fiery wing, and leaves behind
Bent boughs and wither'd buds! But air and thought
Come and depart we know not how! Be sure
From heaven the solace is! — *Calder Campbell.*

the Jews obey Mordecai

c Est. iii. 6, 7.
d vss. 13, 14.

23—25. (23) **Jews . . begun,** *i. e.*, in the keeping of the feast they had instituted. (24) **Because,** *etc.*,[c] the reason, a deliverance never to be forgotten. Pur, iii. 7. (25) **when Esther came,**[d] *R. V.*, "when the matter came." **letters,** as before related, ref. to second decree, *etc.*

Observance of the feast.—They always, at the feast, read the whole story over in the synagogue each day, and put up three prayers to God: in the first of which they praise God for counting them worthy to attend this Divine service; in the second they thank Him for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors; in the third they praise Him that they have lived to observe another festival in memory of it.—*Hom. Com.*

B. C. *cir.* 472.

"If you do not keep pride out of your souls, and your souls out of pride, God will keep your souls out of heaven."—*Dyer.*

the feast called the feast of Purim

26—28. (26) **Purim,** they took the Persian word, that is, and gave it a Hebrew plural, either because the Persian method of casting involved the use several lots, or because Haman cast "Pur" several times.—*Pul. Com.* (27) **ordained,** *etc.*, incorporated this with the other national feasts. **acc. to their writing,** *R. V.*, "acc. to the writing thereof," *i. e.* Mordecai's letter, *vs.* 20. (28) **days . . generation,** as they are, in all lands, to this day.

The feast of Purim.—What was here enjoined, which was very good, that they should make it—1. A day of cheerfulness, a day of feasting and joy. When God gives us cause to rejoice, why should we not express our joy? 2. A day of generosity, sending portions one to another, in token of their mutual respect, and their being knit by this and other public common dangers and deliverances so much the closer to each other in love. 3. A day of charity, sending gifts to the poor. It is not to our kinsmen and rich neighbors only that we are to send tokens, but to the poor and the maimed.

"Gratitude is a fruit of great cultivation; you do not find it among gross people."—*Samuel Johnson.*

Humanity craves God.—M. Thiers gives this singular passage in his history: "Napoleon said, 'For my part, I never hear the sound of the church bell in the neighboring village without emotion.'" He knew that the hearts of the people were stirred by the same deep yearnings after God which filled his own, and so he proposed to restore the worship of God to infidel France. Later, and with deeper meaning, Perrier, successor to Lafayette as prime minister to Louis Phillippe, said on his death-bed, "France must have religion." So we may say, the nations, if they are to live, must have religion. —*Hom. Com.*

"Do not try to minimize your trials; try to magnify God's goodness." — *Endeavorer's Daily Companion.*

the feast of Purim confirmed by Esther

29—32. (29) **Esther . . Purim,**[a] a "second letter of Purim" was now issued, "confirming" and establishing the observance. It went forth not as an edict, or in the king's name, but as a letter, and in the names of Esther and Mordecai. —*Pul. Com.* (30) **words . . truth,** congratulations. (31) **matters . . cry,** not only was the deliverance to be remembered, but also those religious acts by wh. it was preceded, ch. iv. (32) **decree,** *vs.* 29. **written . . book,** the chronicles of the kings of Persia.

[a] Est. viii. 10.

A pacific minister.—George Wishart, one of the first Scottish martyrs at the time of the Reformation, being desired to preach on the Lord's day in the church of Mauchline, went thither with that design; but the sheriff of Ayr had, in the night-time, put a garrison of soldiers into the church to keep him out. Hugh Campbell, of Kinzeancleugh, with others in the parish, were exceedingly offended at this impiety, and would have entered the church by force; but Wishart would not suffer it, saying, "Brethren, it is the word of peace which I preach unto you; the blood of no man shall be shed for it this day. Jesus Christ is as mighty in the fields as in the church, and He Himself while He lived in the flesh, preached oftener in the desert and on the sea-side, than in the temple of Jerusalem." Upon this the people were appeased, and went with him to the edge of a moor, on the south-west of Mauchline, where, having placed himself upon a mound of earth, he preached to a great multitude. He continued speaking for more than three hours, God working wonderously by him, insomuch that Laurence Ranken, the Laird of Shield, a very profane person, was converted by his discourse. The tears ran from his eyes, to the astonishment of all present; and the whole of his afterlife witnessed that his profession was without hypocrisy. — *Cheever.*

"Leave all, and you shall find all, for everything is to be found in God by him who, for the sake of God, despises everything."—*St. Augustine.*

"The surest course I have still found in all earthy pleasures, is to rise with an appetite, and to be satisfied with a little."—*Bishop Hall.*

"How soon a smile of God can change the world,
How we are made for happiness!"
—*Browning.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

B. C. 472–465.

the advancement and policy of Mordecai

1—3. (1) **tribute,** to replenish his exchequer, made necessary by the exhaustive drain of the Grecian expedition. **land . . sea,** either all his dominions, or those especially threatened. (3) **next,**[b] as grand vizier, or prime minister. **accepted,** favorably regarded, as their leading or representative man. **seeking . . people,**[c] by his influence making their property secure, and their trading safe. **and . . seed,** we must understand those of

[b] Ge. xli. 40; 2 Ch. xxviii. 7.

[c] Ne. ii. 10; Ps. cxxii. 8, 9.

B. C. 472–465.

"This is a great fault in a chronologer, to turn parasite; an absolute historian should be in fear of none; neither should he write anything more than truth, for friendship, or else for hate; but keep himself equal and constant in all his discourses."—*Lingua.*

"The serene silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world next to the might of the Spirit of God."—*Spurgeon.*

"It was a good thing for Mordecai that he took Esther home and brought her up. Whilst *giving* he received. 'There is that scattereth and yet increaseth.' This Mordecai experienced."

"Jehovah Shalom,"
"The Lord send peace."

the same stock with himself — "the seed of Israel." "Speaking peace," means "promoting their peace and safety" — insuring them, so long as he lived and ruled, a quiet and peaceful existence. — *Pul. Com.*

Moral work.— Integrity must prosper sooner or later. Were it not so, we should lose faith in eternal righteousness. Appearances may be unfavorable for a time; wrong, sorrow, suffering may precede, but either here or hereafter a distinction will most assuredly be made between the true and the false. Joseph, though consigned to prison, was subsequently raised to power; Daniel, though cast into the lions' den, eventually sat with princes; Mordecai, though threatened with death, finally became "next unto King Ahasuerus." — *Pul. Com. Greatness.* — Thus Mordecai was truly great, considering, first, how to gain the approbation of God; and, secondly, that of his own conscience. He rises above others by virtue of his wider intelligence, his nobler thoughts, his loftier character, and his more manly daring.

The Patriot. —

He serves his country best
  Who lives pure life, and doeth rightous deed,
    And walks straight paths, however others stray;
And leaves his sons an uttermost bequest,
  A stainless record which all men may read;
    This is the better way.

Victory.—

"Rejoice, O grieving heart!
    The hours fly fast;
With each some sorrow dies,
With each some shadow flies,
    Until at last
The red dawn in the east
Bids weary night depart,
    And grief is past!
Rejoice, then, sorrowing heart,
    The hours fly fast!"

W. W. D.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

Introduction.

The foundation of the book of Job is no doubt historical. Job, an Arab Sheik of great wealth and eminent virtue (Ezek. xiv. 14, 20; James v. 11), lived in the time of the early patriarchs, in the land of Uz (Jer. xxv. 20; Lam. 4, 21), east of Palestine. He probably passed through unusual afflictions which severely tested his faith in God's righteous administration. His story was handed down by tradition from generation to generation, until, centuries after his lifetime, some highly gifted and divinely guided poet "threw the tradition into the splendid dramatic form in which we now possess it." The author of the book is entirely unknown. Even the age in which he wrote cannot be closely determined. But many modern scholars are inclined to ascribe it to the 7th or 8th century B. C. The subject of the book is stated very concisely by Rev. Mr. Cary in the title of his recent Rhythmical Version of Job, as "The Man who Feared God for Nought." Professor Genung in "The Epic of the Inner Life," sums up the book as follows: "There is a service of God which is not work for reward; it is a heart-felt loyalty, a hunger after God's presence, which survives loss and chastisement; which in spite of contradictory seeming cleaves to what is Godlike as the needle seeks the pole; and which reaches up out of the darkness and hardness of this life to the light and love beyond."

Job, in his terrible affliction, is perplexed and driven almost to despair with the question: How can God be just and still lay these heavy sorrows upon me, who am not conscious of any great sin. His friends reply: God always rewards righteousness and punishes wickedness. Suffering proves sin. You must be guilty of some concealed iniquity. Job is not at first disposed to dissent from the general principles which his friends maintained, but he still defends his own integrity and justly complains of the unsympathizing hardness of the friends. As the discussion goes on, there dawns upon Job's mind the conviction that the methods of the Divine government which his friends maintain cannot be true. There must be some better explanation of God's dealings with men. He longs to come near to God and understand His ways. He has uttered before and now repeats in another form (xvi. 19-21, Rev. Ver.) that remarkable cry for a "Daysman that might lay his hand upon us both" (ix. 33). And he comes at length to the thought, which he seems to grasp like a new discovery, that there must be a later scene of things beyond the grave, when he shall stand face to face with God and the distressing problems of life shall be solved (xix. 25-27). After the three friends have exhausted their arguments a new interlocutor appears, Elihu, a young man, self-confident and enthusiastic. But he has little that is new to offer. Then the Lord speaks out of the whirlwind, reproving the three friends, on the whole defending Job, though chiding his impatience and reminding him that he is not to demand a full explanation of the Divine administration. He is to rest quietly in the Supreme Wisdom and Might and to go on his way in a humble, reverent and trustful spirit.

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2. *Second series.*
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   - (*b*) Answer of Job.....xvi., xvii.
   - (*c*) Speech of Bildad.....xviii.
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(*According to Horne.*)

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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) **Uz,**[a] Comp. Lam. iv. 21, location was near Edom, on the east of Palestine. The man was therefore a non-Israelite, but noted for his piety.[b] **Job,** "in Ezek. xiv. 14 Job is alluded to in terms that imply that he was a real person whose piety was well known to Ezekiel's contemporaries by tradition."—*Driver.* **perfect,** his moral character was proportionate and complete in all its parts. (2) **seven sons,** *etc.* "The round numbers 7, 3, 5, by which Job's children and his flocks are described, express their perfection and complete sufficiency. They teach that what we have before us here is history idealized by the poet and teacher, that he may convey by it moral lessons."—*Cam. Bib.* (3) **was . . sheep,** large flocks com. in E. **five . . oxen,** sug. that Job tilled the soil. **five . . asses,** esp. useful for their supply of milk. **household,** following, retainers, tribe. **greatest,** in wealth, influence, honor.

Wealth and piety.—I. Their common characteristics. 1. God's gifts to be received with thankfulness. 2. Man's ornaments to be borne humbly. 3. A Christian's talents to be used with fidelity. II. Their reciprocal relations. Wealth and piety are not necessarily incompatible. 2. May prove reciprocally helpful. III. Their comparative excellences. 1. Piety may be obtained by all; wealth only by a few. 2. Piety is useful to all; wealth is injurious to some. 3. Piety will abide with all; wealth with none. Lessons: 1. They that have piety can do without wealth. 2. They that have wealth cannot do without piety.—*T. Whitelaw.*

The Book of Job.—I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism, or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book! all men's book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem, man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free-flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody, and repose of reconcilement. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So true every way: true eyesight and vision for all things; material things no less than spiritual: the horse—"hast Thou clothed his neck with thunder?"—"he laughs at the shaking of the spear!" Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody, as of the heart of mankind; so soft and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.—*Carlyle.*

4—5. (4) **feasted,** banqueted. **every . . day,** *i. e.* on his birthday, ea. in his turn, entertained the rest. **sent . . sisters,** who had no separate house of their own. **to . . them,** the presence of their sisters, and for this purpose, shows that these feasts were not riotous revelries. (5) **when . . about,** whenever a birthday had thus been celebrated. **sent . . them,** sent for them. We have a glimpse of the patriarchal age when the father was priest of the family; also an illustration of the perfectness of Job, solicitous for his children, and mindful of their temptations. **cursed,**[c] *R. V.*, "renounced," *i. e.* in their pleasure they may have forgotten God, or become defiled through neglect of religious duties. **Thus . . continually,** seeking pardon for possible as well as known sin, as often as the feasting was completed.

Job's anxiety for his children.—Notice—I. His conduct in relation to his family. Consider his act as—1. One of magisterial authority; 2. Of paternal love. The peculiarity of his conduct naturally leads us to inquire into—II. The grounds and reasons of it. It was founded on Job's views—1. Of the extreme depravity of our nature; 2. The corrupt tendency of carnal mirth; 3. The universal need of an atonement. Let us learn from hence—(1) To exercise a jealousy over ourselves; (2) To seek above all things the eternal welfare of our children.—*Simeon.*

Parental anxiety.—The anxiety of George III. for the welfare and health of his children was once exemplified in the following interesting manner: Soon after the young princes went abroad, he was talking jocosely with a Scottish lady about her native country. On a sudden, she observed that he became absorbed in thought; and, supposing him reflecting on something that

Job's prosperity

[a] "The mention of his name and place where he lived shows that the writer meant to affirm that there was in fact such a man."—*Barnes.*

[b] The LXX. has Ausitis in place of Uz, and *Ptolemy* (v. 19) speaks of a tribe Æsitæ in N. part of desert of Arabia, near the Euphrates.

"Man is glorious and happy not by what he has, but what he is"—*Channing.*

"I do not know any way so sure of making others happy as by being so."

Job's piety

[c] The same word is used for *bless*, as here for *curse*. Dr. Good thinks it should always be trans. *bless*. But this would be dif. in such pass. as 1 Ki. xxi. 10.

"I have been thinking of many expressions of Rutherford's this morning, before I was up. I feel one, the burden of the song: 'I lay my head to rest on the bosom of Omnipotence.' While I can keep hold of this, it shall be a fine day, whether it rains, hails, or shines."—*Cecil.*

"... is astonishing how soon the whole conscience

begins to unravel if a single stitch drops; one little sin indulged makes a hole you could put your head through." — *Chas. Buxt n.*

had been said in conversation, remarked, "Your majesty, I presume, is thinking of my country." He paused for a few moments, and, dropping a tear, said, "I was entreating God to protect and bless my dear boys." *Little, unheeded sins.* — A vessel will sink whether filled with heavy stones or with sand. Fine grains of sand will bury travelers in the desert. Fine flakes of snow, so light that they seem to hang in the air, and scarce to fall, will, if they gather over the sleepy wayfarer, extinguish life; if they drift they will bury whole houses and their dwellers. Fine, delicate sins, as people think them, will chill the soul and take away its life. — *Pusey.*

the sons of God appear before Him

6, 7. (6) **when . . God,** angels.[a] **came . . Lord,** to give acc. of their ministry.[b] **Satan,** the adversary,[c] who also is dependent upon God, and not able to harass men without Divine consent. Notice that the writer's idea of Satan is not that of later days, when he is represented as the head of a kingdom of evil spirits. **came . . them,** forced to come as one in subjection. (7) **Lord . . thou?** a similar question may have been asked of the sons of God. "He, too, has to give an account. There is no hint here of a being out of place, who has forced himself into the audience chamber. He also is a vassal of the Almighty."—*Watson.* **going . . walking,** "what is suggested is the swiftness and ubiquity of his survey of men."—*Davidson.*

a Job xxxviii. 7; 1 Ki. xxii. 19.

b He. i. 14.

c 1 Chron., xxi. 1; Zec. iii. 1; Re. xii. 9, 10.

Satan among the angels. — I. Can we in any way realize the scene? II. Here, then, we have next the Scriptural idea of Satan. The response of the Evil One to his Almighty questioner distinctly expresses — I. Indifference; 2. Unbelief; 3. Cruelty; 4. Limitation.— *E. P. Hood. The evil one.*—I. Has a personal existence. 1. This existence is suggested by reason; 2. It is confirmed by human history; 3. It is declared in the Bible. II. That he is an intruder in the sacred presence. III. That he is amenable to the Eternal. This — 1. Although he is so great; 2. Although so wicked. IV. That he is a vagrant in the universe. The language implies — 1. Homelessness; 2. Zealousness. V. That he is a slanderer of the good.— *Thomas.*

"Satan knows what orders thou keepest in thy house and closet; and though he hath not a key to thy heart, yet he can stand in the next room to it and lightly hear what is whispered there. He hunts the Christian by the scent of his own feet, and if once he doth smell which way thy heart inclines, he knows how to take the hint."

Satan among the saints.— As soon as the sower goes forth to sow his seed the fowls of the air go forth also. The more good is being done in any place, the more surely will Satan oppose it. Unusual provocations will be given to lukewarm professors by those whose zeal is aroused, and so there will be bickerings. Ready offense will be taken by cross-grained brethren during a revival; for things are apt to be a little out of the regular order, and here is another root of bitterness. Unusual numbers of hypocrites will come forward, just as snails and slugs come creeping forth on a rainy day. Unusual bitterness will be felt by worldlings, and as a consequence, unusual slanders will be current against the more active assailants of the enemy's kingdom. You cannot destroy a wasp's nest without being attacked in return. Yet this is better than stagnation. In a slumbering church it is the adversary's chief business to rock the cradle, hush all noise, and drive away even a fly which might light upon the sleeper's face; Satan's great dread is lest the church should be aroused from her dreamy slumbers. — *Spurgeon.* *The angels.*— Was anything like unto angels ever conceived by the minds of any race of men, their poets, or their sages? No; their imaginations have not even come near them. People at all times have taken pleasure in painting those invisible beings, inhabitants of celestial regions, adorned with all those superior qualities that charm the heart of man. But how low, puerile, and vulgar are all their conceptions! Study the angels of the Scriptures; not only is everything there grand, holy; and worthy of God; not only is their character at once ardent and sublime, compassionate and majestic, constantly brought before us there by their names, their attributes, their employments, their habitations, their songs, their contemplation of the depths of redemption, and the joys of their love; but what must strike us more than all is the perfect harmony of the whole, that all these features agree, and are maintained in their justest proportions. They are exhibited to us in every situation, in heaven and upon earth, before God and before men, ministers of mercy, and sometimes executors of vengeance; standing before God, adoring Him day and night; but also employed in the service of the humblest believer. We are defiled, they are perfect; we are selfish, they melt with charity; we are haughty, they are gentle; we are vain and proud in bodies that worms will consume, they are humble in glory and immortality; we are disturbed by passions, they are fervent in spirit, — neither can they die. This uniformity, this purity, comes not from man — it is from God. — *R. Hall.*

"More servants wait on man
Than he will take notice of. In every path
He treads down that which doth befriend him
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
O mighty love! Man is one world and hath
Another to attend him."
—*George Herrert.*

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth unseen, both when we sleep and when we wake."—*Milton.*

8. Hast thou considered my servant Job? *etc.*, the source of the whole movement, is a defiance of unbelief by the Divine Friend of men and Lord of all. There is such a thing as human virtue, and it is the glory of God to be served by it, to have His power and divinity reflected in man's spiritual vigor and holiness. — *Watson.*

God's inquiry of Satan concerning Job

Job's character estimated by God. — I. God regarded the character of Job. II. God estimated Job as perfect. III. God estimated Job as upright. IV. Job recognized carefully his domestic responsibilities. V. This perfection is alleged of human nature — an upright man. Learn the blessedness of this character. 1. Domestic protection; 2. Business prosperity. — *J. S. Exell.* "*My servant Job.*" —I. God is never ashamed to own His faithful servants. II. He is an interested spectator of a good man's ways and actions. III. "A servant of God" is the most honorable title. IV. God's people are proved by acting as His servants, not as their own masters. V. A true servant of God is Satan's eyesore. — *Hom. Com.*

"The place of a man before the pure, all witnessing Spirit of God, and in the estimation of God, and in the estimation of those who are heavenly-minded, determines his place in the world." — *P. Z. Mozoomdar.*

Your adversary the devil. — The devil is the most diligent preacher of all others; he is never out of his diocese; you shall never find him unoccupied; he is ever in his parish. He keeps residence at all times; you shall never find him out of the way; call for him when you will, he is ever at home. He is ready as can be wished for to set forth his plough, to devise as many ways as can be to deface and obscure God's glory. — *Hugh Latimer.* *God's omniscience.* — God sees you always. It is told of Linnæus, the famous naturalist, that he was greatly impressed with this thought, and that it told upon his conversation, his writings, and his conduct. He felt the importance of this so much that he wrote over the door of his study the Latin words, *Innocui vivite, Numen adest.* "Live innocently, God is here." — *Barlow.*

"Roberts tells us that in India it is said of a man who cannot be injured, 'Why attempt to hurt him? Is there not a hedge about him?' 'You cannot get at the fellow; he has a strong hedge about him.'"

9—12. (9) **Doth . . nought,** this "Adversary" is the typical pessimist. "Of course," he says, "Job is pious because it pays." This is the personification of this spirit which is always ready to undervalue and explain away the seeming righteousness of any man, and declares for every act some selfish motive. (10) **Hast . . him,**[a] raised up protections. "Why," he says, "should not Job be grateful? But (11) **put forth thy hand,** let trouble come upon him and see how quickly he will rebel." (12) **Behold . . power,**[b] had not been till now. Was now, only by permission and for a purpose. Neither here nor elsewhere in the book does Satan attempt to mislead by evil suggestion, or temptation. He can only affect outward events and try the faith of his victim.[c] The Adversary is challenged to do his worst; and man as God's champion, will have to do his best, — the world and angels looking on." — *Watson.*

Job is placed under the power of Satan

[a] Ps xxxiv. 7.

[b] 2 Co. xii. 7.

[c] Isa. xxvii. 8; Ps. lxxvi. 10; 1 Co. x. 13.

Uncharitable judgment reproved. — We shall consider these words — I. As a base accusation, indignantly to be repelled. 1. How false the accusation in reference to Job, the event proved; 2. Why should the motives of the people of God be called in question? If multitudes of God's people were upright in former ages, why should all who profess themselves His people be counted hypocrites now? II. As an unanswerable truth most gladly to be conceded. 1. They desire above all things the salvation of their souls; 2. They actually obtain from God many present benefits; 3. They look forward to the infinitely richer benefits in the world that is to come. Learn: — (1) Regard not the uncharitable censures of ungodly men; (2) Endeavor in all things to approve yourselves to God. — *Simeon.* *Job's character estimated by Satan.* — I. This Satanic test of character must be viewed in a twofold aspect. 1. As a subtle scheme suggested by the devil to cause Job's ruin: 2. As a merciful messenger permitted by God to enhance the worth of Job's life. II. This test was severe. III. Satan was defeated and deceived. — *J. S. Exell.*

"Thou art not the more holy for being praised, nor the more worthless for for being dispraised. What thou art, that thou art; neither by words canst thou be made greater than what thou art in the sight of God. If thou consider what thou art in thyself thou wilt not care what men say of thee." — *T. à Kempis.*

The devil's tactics. — So long as the devil hath peaceable possession of a man's heart, so long he never molesteth him; he willingly obeyeth the devil, and delighteth in his service; and, therefore, what need the devil impugn him? A king never lifteth up his sword against his own loyal subjects; but if once they begin to rebel, then he raiseth a power to subdue them to his obedience. In like manner, so long as men are sworn subjects to the devil he never stirreth against them: but if once, by the grace of God, they begin to rebel against him, and shake off his yoke, then he rageth and laboreth by all means to reduce them to obedience. A dog, though never so fierce, doth not bark at those of the household. So the dogs of hell will never bark at men, so long as they are of the devil's household; but when they are made "citizens

"The raven croaks and flaps his wings above corruption, and riots in luxury on the carcasses

of the dead; so Satan feeds his infernal appetite upon the corrupt and dead souls of mankind."—*Guthrie.*

with the saints, and of the household of God," then they begin to take on. — *C. Richardson. God's purpose for us.* — The aim which God assigned to us for our highest is indeed the direct reverse of that which we propose to ourselves. He would have us in perpetual conflict; we crave an unbroken peace. He keeps us ever on the march; we pace the green sod by the way with many a sigh for rest. He throws us on a rugged universe; our first care is to make it smooth. Every way He urges our reluctant will. He grows the thistle and the sedge, but expects us to raise the olive and the corn, having given us strength and skill for such an end. And after all, in spite of the inertia of their will, men are, in their inmost hearts, on the side of God, rather than their own, in this matter. — *Martineau. Knowledge without love.* — "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." Man is like the candle lighted by the Spirit of God, radiating the glory of God's nature, and itself glorified by the divine fire. — But some men are unlighted candles. What shall we make of some man rich in attainments, well educated, well-behaved, and who, now that his training is complete, stands in the midst of his fellow-men completely dark and helpless? There are plenty of such men. They build themselves for influence, but no one feels them. No light comes. They die, and the world is no darker for their absence. What does it mean? They are unlighted candles. They are the spirit of man elaborated, cultivated, finished to the priest, but lacking the last touch of God, — silver lamps wrought with wondrous skill, all filled with rarest oil, but untouched with fire. Others are like a candle lighted from the pit. A nature furnished richly to the very brim, a man of knowledge, of art, of skill, of thought, with the very graces of the body perfect, and yet profane, impure, worldly, scattering scepticism of all good and truth about him wherever he may go. His is no unlighted candle, but lighted at the yellow flames that burn out of the dreadful brimstone of the pit." — *Phillips Brooks.*

"Down thither prone in flight he speeds and through the vast ethereal sky sails between world and world with steady wings, now on the polar winds, when quick with fan winnows the buxom air." — *Milton.*

"Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell." — *Shakespeare.*

Job's trials

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the cattle destroyed

13—15. (13) **day . . house,** the birth day of the first-born. The most joyous festival of all the round. (14) **oxen,** *etc.*,[a] the work proceeding as usual. (15) **Sabeans,** one or more wandering tribes of predatory Arabs. **fell,** *i. e.* suddenly. **I . . thee,** a dramatic form of speech put in the mouth of ea. of the messengers.

Satan, as a servant of the Infinite, malevolently dealing with Job's circumstances. — Observe — I. The enthusiasm of his malignity. II. The variety of his agents. He employed — 1. Wicked men; 2. Material nature. III. The celerity of his movements. IV. The folly of his calculations. Job worshiped, here we discover — 1. His profound sensibility; 2. His exalted philosophy; 3. His religious magnanimity. — *Thomas.*

[a] The Chaldee reads:—"The oxen were ploughing, and Lilith, queen of Zamargad, suddenly rushed upon them, and carried them away."

The land of Hamath. — After wandering for a time among the ruins I discovered a poor gipsy crouching in terror, beneath a shattered wall. He was the only living being in Arethusa, and his tale was sad enough. The day before he was rich and happy, the head of a numerous family, and of an attached tribe. Now he was alone and a beggar. The tents of his people had been pitched on the banks of the Orontes, their camels and goats were feeding on the plain. A troop of Anezeh came suddenly upon them and swept them all away — camels, goats, tents, women, children. He with his two sons escaped by plunging into the river and swimming across. His sons were on the track of the plunderers, and he was lurking here in the hope of being able during the night to effect the release of his family, and perhaps also to recover his flocks, or a sufficient equivalent. Property is as insecure still on the borders of the Arabian desert as it was in the days of Job. —*L. J. Porter.*

"Nothing can work me damage except myself; the harm that I sustain I carry about with me; and am never a real sufferer but by my own fault." — *St. Bernard.*

God's tenderness. —

More than our feeble hearts can ever pine
For holiness,
The Father in his tenderness divine
Yearneth to bless.
He never sends a joy not meant in love;
Still less a pain;
Our gratitude the sunlight falls to prove;
Our faith the rain. — *Francis Power Cobbe.*

the sheep destroyed

16. While . . speaking, Satan "would overwhelm Job with the suddenness and greatness of his calamities." **The . . God,**[b] poet. for great destructive fire. Prob. the lightning is meant. Comp. 1 Kings xviii. 38; 2 Kings i. 12. The adversary is able to employ not only men as his agencies, but also

[b] Ep. ii. 2.

the forces of nature. This emphasizes the fact that what he is doing is also in accord with the will of God.

Thankfulness in trouble. — A Christian sailor, who lost one of his legs at the battle of Trafalgar, said that he could very often measure the faith of the people who conversed with him, by the way in which they alluded to his misfortune. Nine out of ten would exclaim, "What a pity that you lost your leg!" and only one in ten, "What a blessing that the other was preserved!" When God comes into the family and takes away one child, instead of complaining because He has taken one it would be wiser to thank Him that He has left the rest. Or He may crush a man's business, and strip him of all his worldly wealth, and yet leave untouched and uninvaded what is dearer than all — the cradle of his only child. Would it not be nobler for such a man to be thankful for what God left than to murmur for what He took away? "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away," but He always gives more than He takes away. If God robs a man of his riches He leaves him his health, which is better than riches. If He takes health He leaves wealth. If He takes both He leaves friends. And if He takes all these — house, and home, and worldly goods, God's providence is not yet exhausted, and He can make blessings out of other things which remain. He never strips a man entirely bare. A man may be left a beggar upon the highway, and yet be able to give increasing testimony to God's goodness and grace." — *H. W. Beecher.*

"The Lord often provideth for His own glory, in bringing light out of darkness, and by the humiliation of His children, bringing their greatest exaltation. — *S. Smith.*"

"There is but one way for the soul to escape from the ills of life; it is to escape from its pleasures, and to seek enjoyment higher up." — *Joubert.*

17. Chaldeans, in time of Job a wandering people fr. the N. and E., as the Sabeans were fr. the S. **made . . bands,** and so attacked simultaneously fr. three points; common oriental tactics. Comp. Jud. vii. 16; ix. 43; 1 Sa. xi. 11. **fell,**[a] *lit.* rushed. They prob. came as a cloud of horsemen, "spreading out" to surround their prey. **camels,** the most valuable of Job's possessions.

the camels taken

[a] The word here used is spoken of hostile troops; of locusts; of a marauding army.

Homiletic notes. — I. Draw a distinction between trial and chastisement. II. The uncertain character of earthly things. III. One thing abides forever — God's presence. IV. Job recognized all his trial as coming from God. V. Children have little idea of the deep solicitude of pious parents. VI. Sin always exposes to danger.

A chain of calamities. — A Christian whom God had prospered in his outward estate, and who lived in ease and piety on his farm, suffered the world to encroach so much upon his affections as sensibly to diminish the ardor of his piety. The disease was dangerous, and the Lord adopted severe measures for its cure. First, his wife was removed by death; but he still remained worldly-minded. Then a beloved son: but, although the remedy operated favorably, it did not effect a cure. Then his crops failed and his cattle died; still his grasp on the world was not unloosed. Then God touched his person, and brought on him a lingering, fatal disease: the world, however, occupied still too much of his thoughts. His house finally took fire; and as he was carried out of the burning building he exclaimed, "Blessed be God, I am cured at last." He shortly after died, happy in the anticipation of a heavenly inheritance. — *Cheever. Extent of calamity.* — Like as lightnings do smite whatsoever they find in the earth except the laurel tree, as Pliny affirmeth, even so great calamity is able to take away and to overthrow whatsoever is in man, or that he hath, save only constant virtue; for constant virtue is a goodly laurel tree, ever flourishing and green, and will not be consumed, burned up, nor destroyed with any fire that breaketh out of the clouds, be it never so fierce, nor with any violence of torments and troubles whatsoever. — *Cawdray.*

"Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go."
— *Browning.*

"A weak mind sinks under prosperity, as well as under adversity. A strong and deep one has two full tides when the moon is at the full, and when there is no moon."—*Hare.*

"Times of general calamity and confusion have ever been productive of the greatest minds."

18—19. (18) **sons,** *etc.*, *see vss.* 4, 13. (19) **came . . wind,** tornado. This alternating series of blows, from Sabæans and lightning, Chaldæans and whirlwind would seem most likely to denote that heaven and earth, God and man are in conspiracy against Job. **from . . wilderness,** sweeping across the desert. **smote . . house,** like a hurricane, or whirlwind.

Job's children killed

Lessons from Job's afflictions. — We may learn — I. That true piety will bear the removal of property and friends without murmuring. II. That when we are afflicted we should not vent our wrath on winds and waves, on the fraud and perfidy of our fellow-men, *etc.* III. That God has the right to take away as well as to give. IV. That we see the nature of true resignation. V. That we may see the true source of comfort in trial. VI. That we may see the power of religion in sustaining in the time of trial. — *A. Barnes.*

"It is, to a Christian consideration, one of God's greatest mercies, that this world is full of troubles; for, if we so much court her now she is foul, what would we do if she were beautiful? If we take such pains to gather thorns and thistles, what would we do for

Whirlwinds in the East. — On the 25th at four o'clock in the afternoon, we set out from the village of the Nuba, intending to arrive at Basbock, where is

figs and grapes?" —*Lord Capel.*

"Every roof is agreeable to the eye until it is lifted; and then we find tragedy, and moaning women, and hard-eyed husbands, and deluges of Lethe."—*Emerson.*

the ferry over the Nile; but we had scarcely advanced two miles into the plain, when we were enclosed in a violent whirlwind, or what is called at sea the waterspout. The plain was red earth, which had been plentifully moistened by a shower in the night-time. The unfortunate camel that had been taken by Cohala seemed to be nearly in the center of its vortex; it was lifted and thrown down at a considerable distance, and several of his ribs broken. Although, as far as I could guess, I was not near the center, it whirled me off my feet and threw me down upon my face, so as to make my nose gush out with blood; two of the servants, likewise, had the same fate. It plastered us all over with mud, almost as smoothly as could have been done with a trowel. It took away my sense and breathing for an instant; and my mouth and nose were full of mud when I recovered. I guess the sphere of its action to be about two hundred feet. It demolished one-half of a small hut, as if it had been cut through with a knife; and dispersed the materials all over the plain, leaving the other half standing. — *Bruce.*

Job's submission

a 1 Pet. v. 6.

b Ec. v. 15; 1 Ti. vi. 7; Ps. xlix. 17; Ec. xii. 7.

c Ja. i. 17; La. iii. 38; Am. iii. 6; Isa. xlv. 7.

d 1 Sa. iii. 18; 2 Ki. xx. 19; Ps. lxxxix. 52.

20—22. **arose,** as one stunned by these rapidly accumulating disasters. **rent . . mantle,** com. outward sign of great sorrow. **shaved his head,** "renouncing in his grief even the natural ornament of the hair," that his sense of loss may be shown. It was not absence of feeling which explains his resignation. **fell . . ground,** mark of grief, humility, homage. **worshipped,**[a] resigning himself to God's will. (21) **Naked,** *etc.*,[b] he had nothing at first; he would have nothing at the last. The earth — the universal mother — is here ref. to. **gave,** *etc.*,[c] what I had was the Lord's gift; what I have lost is not by mere accident, but by God's will. **blessed,**[d] he did not curse as Satan sug. (22) **foolishly,** *R. V.*, "with foolishness." In his profound grief was no sin, nor was there in his heart any bitterness against God. "So far he is master of his soul, unbroken though desolate. The first great round of trial has left thy man a believer still."—*Watson.*

The triumph of faith. — The victory of faith. I. Has its foundation in a recognition of God's supremacy. II. Is promoted by reverential devotion. III. Is consistent with great sorrow. IV. Is the tribute of the human heart to the supremacy, the wisdom, and the goodness of God. V. Insures the utmost Divine approval. — *Pul. Com.* *The mourner's song.* — Atheism in sorrow is night without a star. I. Man cannot have any property apart from God. II. Death is the assertion of God's proprietorship. III. Submission to Divine arrangements is the highest test of obedience. IV. Submission is most honorable to man, and most acceptable to God, when it rises into thankfulness. In sorrow the soul finds its surest refuge in fundamental principles. 1. There is a God: 2. That God is careful of me; 3. By impoverishing me of other possessions, He is seeking to enrich me with Himself; 4. He will ultimately take as well my family and property; 5. If I can bless His name in the very sanctuary of affliction and death, what rapture shall I feel in the heaven of unclouded and undying love; 6. Out of this filial submission comes a doubling of the very possessions which were taken away. — *Parker.*

Patience under trial. — During the absence of Rabbi Meir from his house his two sons died, both of them of uncommon beauty, and enlightened in the law. His wife bore them to her bed-chamber, laid them upon the bed, and spread a white covering over their bodies. When Rabbi Meir returned, his first inquiry was for his sons. His wife reached to him a goblet, he praised the Lord at the going out of the Sabbath, drank, and again asked, "'Where are my sons, that they too may drink of the cup of blessing?' 'They will not be far off,' she replied, and placed food before him that he might eat. He was in a gladsome and genial mood; and when he had said grace after the meal, she thus addressed him: "Rabbi, with thy permission I would fain propose to thee one question." "Ask it then, my love," he replied. "A few days ago a person entrusted some jewels to my custody, and now he demands them again; should I give them back to him?" "This is a question," said Rabbi Meir, "which my wife should not have thought it necessary to ask. What! wouldst thou hesitate or be reluctant to restore to every one his own?" "No," she replied: "but yet I thought it best not to restore them without acquainting thee therewith." She then led him to the chamber, and stepping to the bed took the white covering from the dead bodies. "Ah, my sons! my sons!" thus loudly lamented the father; "my sons! the light of mine understanding. I was your father, but ye were my teachers in the law." The mother turned away and wept bitterly. At length she took her husband by the hand, and

"It was a shrewd remark of Andrew Fuller, that a man has only as much religion as he can command in trial."

"Be like the bird that halting in her flight
Awhile on boughs too slight,
Feels them give way beneath her, and yet sings,
Knowing that she hath wings."
— *Victor Hugo.*

"Outward attacks and troubles rather fix than unsettled the Christian, as tempests from without only serve to root the oak faster; whilst an inward canker will gradually rot and decay it." —*H. Moore.*

"If the sun of God's countenance shine upon me, I may well be content to be wet with some rain in affliction. How oft have I seen the heaven overcast with clouds and tempest; no sun appearing to comfort me; yet even these gloomy seasons have I rid patiently, only with the help of the common light of the day.

said, "Rabbi, didst thou not teach me that we must not be reluctant to restore that which was entrusted to our keeping? See, the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord!" "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" echoed the holy man; "and blessed be His glorious name forever."

At last, those beams have broken forth happily, and cheered my soul."—*Bp. Hall.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—3. Jewish interpreters say there was a year bet. the first trial and the second. The situation certainly demands an interval for the first series of evils to do their work before the second test is made. (1) **Again . . day,**[a] as if such events were periodical. (3) **still . . integrity,** intense interest in human affairs implied in this commendation of Job. Comp. Dan. xii. 5, 6; 1 Pet. i. 12. **cause,** these words are ironical. "You incited me against Job by false accusations.[b] Have I proven to you that there is such a thing as disinterested righteousness?"

Satan among the saints. — Since Satan will enter our assemblies, it behooves us to see (1) That no one of us brings him in our company; (2) That no one gives place to him when he enters the congregation; (3) That like Abram with the ravenous birds, we drive him away; or (4) That we pray with all the more earnestness, "Deliver us from the evil one."—*Spurgeon.*

The source of true beauty. — A German professor has lately made experiments with chalcedony, and other quartzose minerals, and he has demonstrated that when such stones are ground on large and rapidly revolving wheels, they exhibit a brilliant phosphorescent glow throughout their entire mass. So is it with the resolute worker. The more he is ground under the strong wheel of suffering and persecution, the more intensely will his character glow.—*G. Barlow.*

Satan again before God

a Job i. 6.

b Job i. 9–11.

"I am a mighty spirit, and yet I am but to God what lightning is to light; lightning slays one thing—light makes all things live.—*Bailey.*

"I am the imperfection of the whole; the great negation of the universe; the pitch profoundest of the fallible. Myself the all of evil which exists; the ocean heaped into a single surge."—*Bailey.*

4—6. (4) **Skin,** *etc.*,[c] a proverbial expression, implying that Job might endure even the loss of his children, but if touched in person this piety would disappear. (5) **touch . . flesh,** afflict his person. (6) **he . . hand,** in your power. **but . . life,** God, who permits this trial, and intends by it to show to the world how faith can endure through utmost suffering, knows what Job can endure, and sets a limit to Satan's endeavors.

The value of life. — I. We shall endeavor to establish the importance of life. 1. In proof of this let us appeal to authority; 2. Let us contemplate human life as the work of God; 3. It has an intimate, unavoidable, inseparable connection with another world, and affords us the only opportunity of acquiring good; 4. Consider it in relation to our fellow-creatures, and as affording us the only opportunities of doing good. II. Explain how the belief of its importance should be applied. 1 We should deplore the destruction of it: 2. We should not expose it to injury and hazard; 3. We should be thankful for the continuance of it; 4. However assured of heaven, we should not be impatient for death; 5. Congratulate the pious youth who is beginning to use it; 6. Let it not be a price in the hand of fools. Learn to improve it. Do not live an animal, a worldly, or an idle life. Live the life of God, and begin to live this life now.—*W. Jay. Satan, as a servant of the Infinite, malevolently dealing with Job's personality.* — I. Satan's low estimate of human nature. 1. He states that goodness is not so dear to a man as his life; 2. That great personal suffering will turn even a good man away from God, and against Him. II. Satan's great power over human nature. 1. His power moves within fixed limits; 2. It is used to torture the body and corrupt the soul. III. Satan's grand purpose with human nature, but it is frustratable. Job, in frustrating Satan—1. Reproves his wife; 2. Vindicates God; 3; Is commended by inspiration.—*Thomas.*

The love of life. — "And what thinkest thou," said Socrates to Aristodemus, "of this continual love of life, this dread of dissolution, which takes possession of us the moment we are conscious of existence?" "I think of it," was the beautiful reply, "as the means employed by the same great and wise Artist, deliberately determined to preserve what He has made." *Skin for skin.* — Dr. Mason Good thus explains this proverb: "The skins or spoils of beasts, in the rude and early ages of man, were the most valuable property he could acquire, and that for which he most frequently combated. Skins hence became the chief representation of property, and in many parts of the world continue so to the present hour." *The true end of life.* — If your life were but a fever-

Satan permitted to try Job with personal affliction

c Ma. vi. 25.

"As the musician straineth his strings, and yet he breaketh none of them, but maketh thereby a sweeter melody and better concord; so God, through affliction, makes His own better unto the fruition and enjoying of the life to come."—*Cawdray.*

"If you tell your troubles to God, you put them into the grave; they will never rise again when you have committed them to Him. If you roll your burden anywhere else, it will roll back again, like the stone of Sisyphus."—*Spurgeon.*

"Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt;
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled.
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness.
If this fail,

fit — the madness of a night, whose follies were all to be forgotten in the dawn, it might matter little how you fretted away the sickly hours,— what toys you snatched at, or let fall,— what visions you followed wistfully with the deceived eyes of sleepless frenzy. Is the earth only a hospital? Play, if you care to play, on the floor of the hospital dens. Knit its straw into what crowns please you; gather the dust of it for treasure, and die rich in that, clutching at the black motes in the air with your dying hands — and yet it may be well with you. But if this life be no dream, and the world be no hospital — if all the power and peace and joy you can ever win must be won now, and all fruit of victory gathered here, or never — will you still, throughout the puny totality of your life, weary yourselves in the fire for vanity? If there is no rest which remaineth for you, is there none you might presently take? Was this grass of the earth made green for your shroud only, not for your bed, and can you never lie down upon it, but only under it? The heathen, to whose creed you have returned, thought not so. They knew that life brought its contest, but they expected from it also the crown of all contest. No proud one; no jeweled circlet flaming through heaven above the height of the unmerited throne; only some few leaves of wild olive, cool to the tired brow, through a few years of peace. "It should have been of gold, they thought, but Jupiter was poor." This was the best the god could give them. Seeking a greater than this, they had known it a mockery. Not in war, not in wealth, not in tyranny was there any happiness to be found for them — only in kindly peace, fruitful, and free. The wreath was to be of wild olive, mark you — the tree that grows carelessly, tufting the rocks with no vivid bloom, no verdure of branch, only with soft snow of blossom, and scarcely full-filled fruit, mixed with gray leaf and thorn-set stem; no fastening of diadem for you, but with such sharp embroidery! But this, such as it is, you may win while yet you live — type of gray honor and sweet rest. Free-heartedness, and graciousness, and undisturbed trust, and requited love, and the sight of the peace of others, and the ministry to their pain — these, and the blue sky above you, and the sweet waters and flowers of the earth beneath, and mysteries and presences innumerable of living things — these may yet be here your riches, untormenting and divine, serviceable for the life that now is; nor, it may be, without promise of that which is to come. — *Ruskin.*

"The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble." — *Milton.*

"How loosely do honors sit on men, when every disease shakes them off and lays them in the dust. How miserable is the condition of the glory of this world, which hardly holds out a life, but often dies before us, ravished away by a frown or forfeited by a fault. Or, if it do last as long as its owners, with the staff of office cracked and thrown into the grave, is there buried with the corpses." — *King.*

"Do not insult calamity; it is a barb'rous grossness to lay on the weight of scorn where heavy misery too much already weighs men's fortunes down." — *Daniel.*

Job smitten with boils

7, 8. (7) **boils,** "he is stricken with elephantiasis, one of the most terrible forms of leprosy, a tedious malady attended with intolerable irritation and loathsome ulcers. The disfigured face, the blackened body, soon reveal the nature of the infection." — *Watson.* (8) **potsherd,**[a] piece of broken vessel. **to . . withal,** perh. bec. of intolerable itching; perh. to remove the matter exuding fr. the sores. **sat . . ashes,** some think this outside the village, the place where refuse was burned and rubbish thrown, where lepers, excluded from their homes, would sit and beg their living.

[a] The LXX says, a shell.

Complaint. —

I think we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Be comforted
And like a cheerful traveler, take the road
Singing beside the hedge! What if the bread
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
To meet the flints? At least it may be said,
"Because the way is short, I thank thee, God."
— *Mrs. Browning.*

"God is commanding us off, every hour of our lives, towards things eternal, there to find our good and build our rest. Sometimes he does it by taking us out of the world, and sometimes by taking the world out of us." — *Bushnell.*

Unjust complaints. — I have read of Cæsar, that, having prepared a great feast for his nobles and friends, it so fell out that the day appointed was so extremely foul that nothing could be done to the honor of the meeting; whereupon he was so displeased and enraged, that he commanded all them that had bows to shoot up their arrows at Jupiter (their chief god), as in defiance of him for that rainy weather; which, when they did, their arrows fell short of heaven, and fell upon their own heads, so that many of them were very sorely wounded. So all our murmurings, which are so many arrows shot at God Himself, they will return upon our own pates — hearts; they reach not Him, but they will wound us; therefore it is better to be mute than to murmur; it is dangerous to provoke "a consuming fire." (Heb. xii. 29.) — *Brooks.*

"We should love God's gifts and denials; love what he wishes and what he does not wish." — *Joubert.*

9, 10. (9) **said him,**[a] there can be no doubt that she appears as the temptress of her husband, putting into speech the atheistic doubt which the adversary could not directly suggest.[b] Brave and true life appears to her to profit nothing if it has to be spent in pain and desolation. As a figure in the drama she has her place, helping to complete the round of trial.—*Watson.* (10) **said,** *etc.*, your words are thoughtless. Shall I believe in God only when He pleases me? He gave riches and has taken them again. He has given health, shall I rebel when He gives sickness? **with his lips,** *i. e.* thus far no murmur escaped him.

Good and evil from God.—I. An apparently strange doctrine that good and evil come from God. II. Yet are we not taught that evil as well as good comes from God? III. If evil come upon us we have merited it. IV. The good far more than counterbalances the evil. V. The evil sent upon us by God is the means of working out good for us.—*Eadie.* *Good and evil both from God.*—I. Job believed everything to be ordained of God. II. Job considered it an unavoidable consequence of our present state that the life of man should be checkered with good and evil. 1. Let us submit with thankfulness to this form of the Divine administration, in which everything works together for wise purposes; 2. Let us not dare to blame Providence if we see not the tendency of the evils of life; 3. Let us look forward to, and prepare for, that world in which we shall receive only good at the hands of God. III. Job was resolved to receive each state with an equal mind. IV. Explain the nature of resignation. V. Some of those considerations which should lead to the practice of resignation. 1. All affliction cometh from the Lord; 2. It is the consequence of sin; 3. We often mistake the nature of those things we call evils: 4. How many blessings are mingled with them; 5. Affliction produces good results, if we do not by obstinacy oppose its tendency.—*Adamson.*

A wife's mode of comforting.—At one time I was sorely vexed and tried by my own sinfulness, by the wickedness of the world, and by the dangers that beset the church. One morning I saw my wife dressed in mourning. Surprised, I asked her who had died. "Do you not know?" she replied; "God in heaven is dead." "How can you talk such nonsense, Katie?" I said; "how can God die? Why, He is immortal, and will live through all eternity." "Is that really true?" she asked. "Of course," I said, still not perceiving what she was aiming at; "how can you doubt it? As surely as there is a God in heaven, so sure is it that He can never die." "And yet," she said, "though you do not doubt that, you are so hopeless and discouraged." Then I observed what a wise woman my wife was, and mastered my sadness.—*Luther.*

the advice of Job's wife

[a] Acc. to Chaldee, "Dinah, his wife, said to him."

[b] "And yet thou dost hold fast thine integrity, blessing God and dying."—*Good.*

"Renounce God, and die."—*Noyes.*

"Bid farewell to God and die."—*Rosenmüller.*

"Give thanks to God and die."—*Castellio.*

"Nothing before, nothing behind,
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void and find
The rock beneath."
—*Whittier.*

"Some very excellent people tell you they dare not hope. To me it seems much more impious to despair."—*Sydney Smith.*

11–13. Here begins Job's third and severest trial in the visit of his friends, who with the desire to comfort, succeeed only in misunderstanding him, adding to his perplexity of soul and leaving him more utterly alone. (11) **when . . friends,** his three chief friends. **heard . . him,** the ruin of so great and rich a man would soon be known. **they . . place,** ea. fr. his own district; ea. moved by his own sympathy. **Eliphaz,** (*God is strength*), "is an old Idumæan name, and **Teman,** the place of his abode, was famed for the wisdom of its inhabitants (Am. i. 12; Obad. 8; Jer. xlix. 7; Ezek. xxv. 13)."—*Cam. Bib.* **Shuhite,** prob. of fam. of Shua.[c] **Zophar,** *sparrow;* he was a mere twitterer; he had the least to say, but his speeches were rough and cutting, **Naamathite,** locality uncertain. **for they,** *etc.*, if they met at Teman, it was some two hundred miles they were to journey, over dangerous deserts. (12) **up . . off,** at such a reasonable distance that they might know him. **and . . not,** the disease had had time enough before their arrival to disfigure him beyond recognition. **they . . voice,**[d] com. expression to denote grief. (13) **seven . . nights,** usual time of mourning.[e] "Real is their sympathy, deep, too, as their character and sentiments admit. Let those mock at Job's comforters as wanting, who have traveled two hundred miles over the burning sand to visit a man sunk in disaster, and sat with him seven days and nights in generous silence."—*Watson.*

Human impotence in the presence of great sorrow.—I. Its causes. 1. Our inability to descend to the depth of another's grief. 2. The powerlessness of any words to relieve the mourner. II. The pain this impotence causes to a true friend. III. The true and only effectual sympathizer, the God-man.—*Pul. Com.*

Friendship tried in the time of affliction.—It is reported of Herodias, wife

Job is visited by his three friends

[c] Son of Abraham by Keturah. Acc. to Rawlinson the Shuhites were the *Tsukhi*, a people on the Euphrates above Hit.

[d] Ge. xxvii. 38; xxix. 11; Jud. ii. 4; Ru. i. 9; 1 Sa. xxiv. 16.

[e] Ge. l. 10; 1 Sa. xxxi. 13; Eccles. vii. 2.

"It is by sympathy we enter into the concerns of others, that we are moved as they are moved, and are never suffered to be indifferent spectators of almost anything which men can do or suffer. For sympathy may be

considered as a sort of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected."—*Burke.*

"The true test of friendship is to be able to sit or walk with a friend for an hour in perfect silence without wearying of one's company"—*Dinah M. Mulock.*

"He will have learned the lesson of life who is skilful in the ethics of friendship."—*Emerson.*

"First on thy friend deliberate with thyself; pause, ponder, sift; not eager in the choice, nor jealous of the chosen; fixing, fix—judge before friendship, then confide till death."—*Young.*

of Herod the Tetrarch, when the emperor had deprived her husband of the tetrarchy, and banished him into France, understanding that Herodias was Agrippa's sister, gave her all her husband's estate, supposing that she would not go along with him; but she answered the emperor, saying, "There is a cause that hinders me from partaking of your bounty, the affection I bear my husband, because I have shared with him in his felicity." Whereupon the emperor, being displeased with her answer, banished her likewise. And thus it is that true friendship is best tried in times of affliction and distress. A brother, a friend, a wife, is for the time of adversity. Away then with those summer birds, those false-hearted friends, who, like ditches, are full in the winter season, but dry in the heat of summer, when we have most need of them.—*J. Spencer. The power of sympathy.*—A young lady once visited a lunatic asylum, and was led into a room where there was but one patient, a young girl of the same age as herself. She was standing in the corner of the room, her face almost touching the wall. In stony hopelessness she stood. She neither looked nor spoke. She might have been dead but that she still stood on. It was a pathetic sight. "Will you speak to her?" asked the doctor; "we can do nothing with her. She has been thus for days; but one like yourself might move her." The young lady stepped forward, and, with an upward cry for Divine help, laid her hand gently on the shoulder of the listless form, and with tears in her eyes spoke one sentence of yearning sympathy and compassion. The spell was broken. The poor patient turned, gazed for a moment on the face of the weeping visitor, and then burst into tears. The doctor exclaimed, "Thank God, she may now be saved!" The visitor could never recall the words she had used; but, with the voice softened with tears, they had done their work. The still and cold indifference of the patient gave way before the warmth of a pitying heart and the magic touch of a hand stretched out to help. The eloquence of tears is irresistible.—*Hom. Com.*

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

Job curses the day of his birth

1—3. "In the presence of the companions of his former prosperity, self-control deserts Job, and he breaks out into a passionate cry that he might die. This cry of misery is thrice repeated in the chapter: 1—10, Would God I had never been conceived or born. 11—19. Would God I had died from my birth. 20—26. Why does God continue life to the wretched, who long for death?"—*Cam. Bib.* (1) **After this,** *i. e.* the long silence of his friends. **opened . . mouth,** formula, expressing deliberation and gravity. **cursed,** not the word used before,[a] but the proper word for cursing. **his day,** *i. e.* his birth day, Comp. i. 4. (2) **spake,** answered. (3) **Let . . born,**[b] *etc.*, if there had been no such day, then he had not been. **night . . said,** *R. V.*, "the night which said," the night is personified as if an agent in this birth.

Job's words of impatience.—Job's language is not to be vindicated, yet in judging of it we are to remember.—I. The extremity of his suffering. II. That the time of his suffering was also a time of spiritual darkness. III. The period at which he lived. IV. The usually depressing nature of his disease. V. That the holiest saint is nothing, except as upheld by Divine Grace. VI. That even in his complaint no reproach is uttered against the Author of his trouble.—*Hom. Com.*

The maddening force of suffering.—This chapter is the language of a man overwhelmed with suffering, and we must explain it accordingly. We must not apply to it the same canons of interpretation as we would to the language of a man in calmness, in health, in prosperity, in exultation; a man's language must be construed according to the mood of his soul.—*Affliction a normal state.*—Whatsoever is under the moone is subject to corruption, alterations; and so long as thou livest upon earth looke not for other. Thou shalt not here find peaceable and cheerful dayes, quiet times, but rather cloudes, stormes, calumnies, such is our fate. . . . Yea, but thou thinkest thou art more miserable than the rest, other men are happy in respect of thee, their miseries are but flea-bitings to thine, thou alone art unhappy, none so bad as thyself. Yet if, as Socrates said, "All the men in the world should come and bring their grievances together, of body, mind, fortune, sores, ulcers, madness, epilepsies, agues, and all those common calamities of beggary, want, servitude, imprisonment, and lay them on a heap to be equally divided, wouldst thou share alike, and take thy portion, or be as thou art? Without question

a Job i. 11; ii. 9.

b Jer. xx. 14.

"Spots show most on clean white garments. Imperfections seem worst in the best people."—*Peloubet.*

"It is impossible for that man to despair who remembers that His helper is omnipotent."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"I compare the troubles which we have to undergo in the course of the year to a great bundle of fagots, far too large for us to lift. But God

thou wouldst be as thou art. If some Jupiter should say, to give us all content—

> "Well, be't so then: you, master souldier,
> Shall be a merchant; you, sir lawyer,
> A country gentleman; go you to this,
> That side you: why stand yee? It's as well as 'tis."

Every man knows his own but not others' defects and miseries. Be silent then, rest satisfied; comfort thyself with other men's misfortunes, and as the moldiwarpe in Æsope told the fox complaining for want of a tail, and the rest of his companions, "You complain of toies, but I am blinde, be quiet." I say to thee, be thou satisfied. It is recorded of the hares that with a generall consent they went to drown themselves, out of a feeling of their misery; but when they saw a company of frogs more fearful than they were, they began to take courage and comfort again. Confer thine estate with others. Be content, and rest satisfied; for thou art well in the respect of others; be thankful for that thou hast, that God hath done for thee; He hath not made thee a monster, a beast, a base creature, as He might, but a man, a Christian, such a man; consider aright of it, thou art full well as thou art. No man can have what he will; he may choose whether he will desire that which he hath not. Thy lot is falne, make the best of it. If we should all sleep at all times (as Endymion is said to have done), who then were happier than his fellow! Our life is but short, a very dream, and while we look about, eternity is at hand. Our life is a pilgrimage on earth, which wise men pass with great alacrity. If thou be in woe, sorrow, want, distresse, in paine, or sicknesse, think of that of our Apostle, "God chastiseth them whom He loveth," "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps. cxxvi. 6). "As the furnace proveth the potter's vessel, so doth temptation try men's thoughts" (Eccles. xxv. 5). 'Tis for thy good. Hadst thou not been so visited thou hadst been utterly undone; as gold in the fire, so men are tried in adversity; and, which Camerarius hath well shadowed in an embleme of a thresher and corn:—

> "A threshing separates from straw the corn,
> By crosses from the world's chaffe are we born."—*Burton.*

does not requireus to carry the whole at once: He mercifully unties the bundle, and gives us first one stick, which we are to carry to-day, and then another, which we are to carry to-morrow; and so on. This we might easily manage, if we would only take the burden appointed for us each day, but we choose to increase our troubles by carrying yesterday's stick over again to-day, and adding to-morrow's burden to our load, before we are required to bear it."—*John Newton.*

4, 5. (4) **Let . . darkness,** *etc.*,[a] "Let the day of my birth be got rid of, so that no other come into being on such a day; let God pass from it – then He will not give life on that day. Mingled in this is the old world notions of days having meanings and powers of their own. This day had proved malign, terribly bad. It was already a chaotic day, not fit for a man's birth." — *Watson.* (5) **the . . death,** = the deepest darkness.[b] **stain,** *R. V.*, "claim it for their own." Darkness and black death are nearest of kin to that miserable day. Let them claim it for their own." — *Cox.* **cloud . . it,** let cloud piled on cloud utterly hide and bury it. **blackness . . it,** *R. V.*, "let all that maketh black the day terrify it," *i. e.*, eclipses and all kinds of unnatural obscurations.

wishes it may be blotted out

a "Let not God seek it."—*Noyes.*

—"Let not God inquire after it."—*Herder.*

b Phrase of frequent recurrence, Job x. 21, 22; Ps. xxiii. 4; Am. v. 8; Je. ii. 6, *etc.*

The maddening force of suffering. — Here is suffering urging a man to the use of extravagant language. Howbeit, it is natural, three facts will show this. 1. Great sufferings generate great passions in the soul; 2. Great passions often become irrepressible; 3. When great passions become irrepressible, they express themselves extravagantly. — *Thomas.*

Calamity. — A great calamity is as old as the trilobites an hour after it has happened. It stains backward through all the leaves we have turned over in the book of life, before its blot of tears or of blood is dry on the page we are turning. For this we seem to have lived; it was foreshadowed in dreams; in the "dissolving views" of dark day visions; all omens pointed to it; all paths led to it. After the tossing half-forgetfulness of the first sleep that followed such an event, it comes upon us afresh, as a surprise, at waking; in a few moments it is old again — old as eternity. — *Holmes.*

"To be silent, to suffer, to pray when we cannot act, is acceptable to God. A disappointment, a contradiction, a harsh word received and endured as in His presence, is worth more than a long prayer."—*Fenelon.*

The fruits of affliction. — Maistres Alyce, in my most hartywise, I commend me to you. And whereas I am enfourmed by my son Heron of the losse of my barnes and our neighbours' also, with all the corn that was therein; albeit (saving God's pleasure) it is a gret pitie of so much good corne lost; yet sith it hath liked Hym to sende us such a chaunce, we must and are bounden, not only to be content, but also to be glad of His visitacion. He sente us all that we have loste, and sith He hath by such a chaunce taken it away

"Graces multiply by affections, as the saints did by persecutions. 'The more they were afflicted the more they multiplied.' These terrors may

affront us: they shall not affright us. Crosses be rough and smarting; but we look to the unction of comfort, that makes them portable and easy. In all conditions we bless His providence, who according to His own wisdom, not ours, disposeth things; which, if they be harsh to a state that must suffer, are good for an estate that shall be blessed forever." — *T. Adams.*

"Instead of cursing the sin in which he was born, Job cursed the day in which he was born."—*Moody.*

"No human condition should inspire men with absolute despair." —*Fielding.*

that it may not be numbered with other days

"God is the brave man's hope, and not the coward's excuse." *Plutarch.*

"When man deals with God, he must never remember what he is before others."

"Before an affliction is digested, consolation ever comes too soon; and after it is digested it comes too late; but there is a mark between these two, as fine almost as a hair, for a comforter to take aim at." — *Sterne*

"Life takes its coloring from the mind in which it is reflected." —*Harris.*

[a] The practice of cursing the day or the sun is said to have prevailed among an African tribe called the Atlantes.

"Suffering is a wonderful fertilizer to the roots of

againe, His pleasure be fulfilled! Le us never grudge thereat, but take it in good worth and hartely thank Him as well for adversitie as for prosperitie. And peradventure we have more cause to thank Him for our losse than for our winning, for His wisdome better seeth what is good for vs than we do our selves. Therefore, I pray you be of good cheere, and take all the household with you to church, and there thanke God, both for that He hath given us, and for that He hath taken from us, and for that He hath left us; which if it please Hym, He can encrease when He will, and if it please Hym to leave us yet lesse, at His pleasure be it! I pray you to make some good ensearche what my poore neighbours have loste, and bid them take no thought therfore; for if I shold not leave myself a spone, there shal no poore neighbour of mine bere losse by any chaunce happened in my house. I pray you be, with my children and your household, merry in God; and devise somewhat with your frendes what way wer best to take for provisions to be made for corne for our household and for sede thys yere comming, if ye thinke it good that we kepe the ground still on our handes. And whether ye think it good we shall do so or not, yet I think it were not best sodenlye thus to leave it all up, and to put away our folk of our farme, till we have somewhat advised us thereon. Howbeit if we have more nowe then ye shall nede, and which can get them other maisters, ye may then discharge us of them. But I would not that any man were sodenly sent away, he wote nere wether. At my coming hither I perceived none other but that I shold tarry still with the kinge's grace. But now I shal, I thinke, because of this chaunce, get leave this next weke to come home and se you, and then shall we further devyse together uppon all thinges what order shal be best to take. And thus hartely fare you well, with all our children as ye can wishe. At Woodestok, the thirde day of Septembre, by the hand of Thomas More, knight. Your louing husbande.

6, 7. (6) **night,** *vs.* 3. **let darkness,** *R. V.*, "thick darkness," like a robber carry the night away as his booty. **joined unto,** *R. V.*, "rejoice among," glad in its share of the joyous days; the idea is, that all the days rejoice, but this shall be silent. (7) **solitary,** *R. V.*, "barren," as Is. xlix. 21. "Let it not experience a parent's joy, and let nought that lives date its birth from it. — *Camb. Bib.*

The maddening force of suffering. — Here is suffering urging a man to deplore the fact of his existence. In this passage he deplores — 1. The fact that he existed at all; 2. That having existed, he did not die at the very dawn of his being. The fact that suffering can thus make existence intolerable suggests the following truths. 1. Annihilation is not the worst of evils; 2. Desire for death is no proof of genuine religion; 3. Hell must be an overwhelmingly terrible condition of existence. — *Thomas.*

Hidden sorrows. — Many a heart and countenance wears a semblance of gladness, only to conceal its deep sorrow. We cannot always judge of a man by what he seems. Looking at the sea of life, we see it studded over with white sails and gay pennons, and sparkling waves; we forget its eddying whirlpools and treacherous reefs and brooding storms. How little do God's ministers know, in looking down from their pulpits on apparently bright faces, gay attire, and undimmed eyes, how many breaking hearts there are; sorrows too deep for utterance, with which a stranger dare not intermeddle! No, we cannot let all that looks happy pass for unmingled joy. It is often the reverse; like the wretched singer on the streets, who, passing from door to door, struggles to warble her gleeful songs. Singing! It is a poor counterfeit of crushing sorrow. Singing! The tones are joyous; but little does the passer-by know of the long tale of woe — the widow's agony, the orphan's tears, the desolate hearth, which is muffled and dissembled under that apparent "glee." — *Macduff.*

8—10. (8) **Let . . day,**[a] let hired diviners, who are supposed to render a day one of evil omen, invoke maledictions on this day. **ready . . mourning,** *R. V.*, "ready to rouse up leviathan," the mythical beast who by enfolding and swallowing sun or moon caused eclipses and darkness. (9) **twilight,** *lit.* the breathing, *i. e.* the hour when the cool breezes blow. **neither . . day,** *R. V.*, "neither let it behold the eyelids of the morning," *i. e.* the long streaming rays of morning light. Arab poets "use the word *eye* as a synonym of *sun*, and describe the flashing of the sun's rays as 'the twinkling of the eye.'" — *Cox.* (10) **nor . . eyes,** by preventing conception and birth.

Afflictions. — Stars shine brightest in the darkest night; torches give the best light when beaten; grapes yield most wine when most pressed; spices smell sweetest when pounded; vines are the better for bleeding; gold looks the brighter for scouring; juniper smells sweetest in the fire; camomile the more you tread it, the more you spread it. The Jews were best when most afflicted. Afflictions are the saint's best benefactors to heavenly affections. Where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest. And grace, that is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose-leaves, is then most fragrant when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out. — *T. Brookes.*

character. The great object of this life is character. This is the only thing we can carry with us into eternity. To gain the most of it and the best of it is the object of probation." —*Phelps.*

Selfish grief. —

Let him walk in the gloom whoso will. Peace be with him! But whence is his right
To assert that the world is in darkness because he has turned from the light?
Or seek to o'ershadow my day with the pall of his self-chosen night?
— *Solomon Solis Cohen.*

11, 12. (11) **Why,** *etc.*, a question that leads to a descr. of what he then would have been. (12) **prevent,**[a] *R. V.*, "receive," why did my father, on whose knees I was laid at birth, not disown me? **why . . suck?** or why did my mother nourish me and keep me alive?

he wishes he had died in infancy

a Is. lxvi. 12.

The knees preventing. — This is not to be understood of the mother; but of the father, as it was usual for him to take the child upon his knees as soon as it was born (Gen. i. 23). This custom obtained among the Greeks and Romans. Hence the goddess Levana had her name, causing the father in this way to own the child.

"Sanctified afflictions are healing medicines."

"Afflictions clarify the soul."—*Quarles.*

13—16. (13) **now,** instead of this suffering, I should be in the grave **slept,** the sleep of death. (14) **With . '. earth,** "the speaker wishes to indicate that instead of lying in squalor and being the contempt of the low-born race of men as he now is (ch. xxx.), if he had died he would have been in company of the great dead who played famous parts in life." — *Camb. Bib.* (16) **untimely,** premature. **infants . . light,** as one still-born.

in which case he had been in the grave

The grave a rest. — As the worn laborer longs for the rest of the eventide, so does the over-wrought spirit of the sad long for the rest of the grave. Let us think of the grave — I. As longed for by the weary. II. As the only rest known to the ignorant. III. The grave brings no rest to the unfaithful. IV. The rest of the grave is a true reward to the faithful. But not as a mere cessation of activity. 1. It ends for them the time of exposure to temptation. 2. It marks the limits of probation. 3. It exchanges warfare for triumph; hard toil for honorable repose; danger for safety; the cross for the crown. 4. It brings the perfectness of all blessing in the everlasting life and the fulness of joy which are promised to the obedient and the pure. — *Pul. Com.* *Two standpoints.* — John Bacon was an eminent English sculptor. Hundreds of thousands of visitors to Westminster Abbey have gazed upon the fruits of his skill in the monument of Lord Chatham, and his name and fame are transmitted to succeeding generations by the poet Cowper, who says of him, that he —

"Gives more than female beauty to a stone,
And Chatham's eloquence to marble lips."

He lived and died in the faith of a Christian, and desiring to bear his testimony to the Gospel after his death, he ordered by his will a plain tablet, with the following inscription, to be placed near his grave: "What I was as an artist seemed to be of some importance while I lived; but what I really was as a believer in Christ Jesus is the only thing of importance to me now."

"As surely as the sepulchre of Christ became an empty sepulchre, so surely the sepulchres of His people shall become empty sepulchres also; as surely as He got up and sang a jubilee of life and immortality, so surely shall His people come out of the grave."—*Beaumont.*

17. There, in the grave. **wicked . . troubling,**[b] *i. e.* "cease from their state of continual perturbation and unrest, Isa. lvii. 20. This is their condition so long as they live; nothing satisfies them; they are always in trouble themselves, and always causing trouble to others."—*Rawlinson.* **rest,** this is the central thought in Job's longing for death. His body is worn out. And the grave is to him a place of rest for all classes or men. It is the O. T. idea of the future state as a place in which is no power or energy. Comp. Ps. xciv. 17; cxv. 17.

where there is rest and peace

b 2 Pet. ii. 8.

"Within every healing shadow is God Himself." — *Collyer.*

"The world proposes rest by the removal of a burden. The Redeemer gives rest by giving us the spirit and power to bear the burden."

Rest.—

Through burden and heat of the day
How weary the hands and the feet,
The labor with scarcely a stay
Through burden and heat!
Tired toiler, whose sleep shall be sweet,
Kneel down — it will rest thee to pray;
Then forward, for daylight is fleet.
Cool shadows grow lengthened and gray,
Cool twilight will soon be complete.
What matter the wearisome way
Through burden and heat? — *Christina Rossetti.*

where the prisoners rest, and servants are free

18, 19. (18) **prisoners,** *i. e.* captives, who were always employed in hard labor, in mines, on buildings, *etc.* **hear . . oppressor,** *i. e.* their slave-master, who was notoriously cruel. (19) **small . . there,** for death levels all. "In no part of the O. T. is a difference in the lot of those in the realm of death distinctly spoken of. Only in Isa. xiv. 15; Ezek. xxxii. 23, where the fallen conquerors are relegated to the lowest depths, can we find any indication of different grades in the realm of the dead. Elsewhere only a division into peoples and races, and not a division of the just and unjust is spoken of." — *Oehler.*

"The earth opens impartially her bosom to receive the beggar and the prince." — *Horace.*

"The grave is, I suspect, the sole commonwealth which attains that dead flat of social equality that life in its every principle so heartily abhors." — *Bulwer Lytton.*

The resurrection. — Is it so, that these bodies of yours shall rise and be in glory with Jesus Christ? Then, O all you, the elect of God, fear not death, because death is a fitting your bodies for that estate wherein you shall live with Christ in glory forever. Did death annihilate you and frustrate you of glory, you might fear Death; but death doth to you as a husbandman with his corn. Should he keep his corn always in his house, he would grow a beggar quickly; but he casts his corn in the ground, and there it lies and rots, that so a fivefold reward may come to him of it. So God makes you lie in the grave — not forever, but that He might show His power in raising you up at the last day. — *Chris. Love.*

he asks why the sad should live

20—23. (20) **light,** probably we should render, "wherefore gives He light?" the Author of light and life being alluded to obliquely and not named. **the bitter,** is plur., those that are bitter in soul. Job's eye looks over mankind and sees many in the same condition of misery as himself. Comp. ch. vii. 1 *seq.*"[a] — *Cam. Bib.* (21) **long . . not,** regarding death as a privilege. (22) **Which . . exceedingly,** *Heb.* "who rejoice upon joy or exultation." (23) **light . . hid,**[b] light to him only reveals the nature and extent of his woe; but shows no way of escape. The reference is especially to his own mental and spiritual perplexity; comp. xix. 8.

A bitter question (*vs.* 20). — Life is wisely and graciously continued even to sufferers. I. If the sufferer be unprepared for death, it is continued for such preparation. II. If he be prepared it is continued. 1. For proof and trial of his state. 2. For further sanctification. 3. For enhancement of future glory and happiness. 4. For the edification of others. 5. For the glory of Him who is both the Author and Finisher of Faith. — *Hom. Com.*

Hidden treasures. — We are constantly hearing of treasures which have been or are about to be discovered. Sometimes you may see a large space of ground, which has been completely turned up, or an old foundation, or ruin, entirely demolished, in hopes of finding the hidden gold. A man has found a small coin, has heard a tradition, or has had a dream, and off he goes to his toil. Perhaps he has been seen on the spot, or he has consulted a soothsayer; the report gets out; and then come the needy, the old, and the young, a motley group, all full of anxiety, to join in the spoil. Some have iron instruments, others have sticks, and some their fingers to cratch up the ground. At last some of them begin to look at each other with considerable suspicion, as if all were not right, and each seems to wish he had not come on so foolish an errand, and then steal off as quietly as they can. I once knew a deep tank, made completely dry (by immense labor), in the hope of finding great treasures, which were said to have been cast in during the ancient wars. Passing near, one day, when they had nearly finished their work, and their hopes had considerably moderated, I went up to the sanguine owner (whose face immediately began to show its chagrin), and inquired, "Why are you taking so much trouble to empty that tank?" He replied as calmly as he could, "We are merely cleaning it out." Poor man! I believe he found

[a] "To desire to die so as to be free fr. sin is a mark of grace; to desire to die so as to escape troubles is a mark of corruption. He was ill fitted to die, who was so unwilling to live."—*Fassett.*

[b] Job xix. 8-9; La. iii. 7.

"Tears and sorrows and losses are a part of what must be experienced in this present state of life; some for our manifest good; and all, therefore, it is trusted, for our good concealed,—for our final and greatest good."—*Leigh Hunt.*

nothing but stones and bones, and a few copper coins. "Dig for it more than for hid treasures," finds a practical illustration in the East, and is a figure of common use in the language. — *Roberts.*

24—26. (24) **sighing . . eat,**[a] my sorrow prevents my eating. (25) **thing . . me,** "gloomy and terrifying apprehensions are one of the most painful symptoms of *elephantiasis.* And Job here asserts that whatever presentiment of evil it bred in time, was straightway realized."— *Cox.* (26) **I . . safety,** *R. V.*, "I am not at ease." One trouble follows another without pause. The writer of this book has to show how far faith may be pressed down and bent by the sore burdens of life without breaking. — *Watson.*

Lessons taught by the sufferings of Job. — We are taught — I. The utmost power that the devil is capable of exerting on man. 1. He did not destroy life; 2. He did not destroy piety. II. We also learn the strength of genuine religion. Here we have two things to help us which Job had not. 1. The example of Christ; 2. The assurance of a future life. — *Thomas.*

"*The thing which I greatly feared.*" — A tender conscience fears reverses in the height of prosperity, and in consequence of it. Paulus Emilius, a Roman general, on the death of his two sons immediately after an unusually splendid triumph, said, "I have always had a dread of Fortune, and because in the course of this war she prospered every measure of mine, the more did I expect that some tempest would follow so favorable a gale."— *Hom. Com.*

Ministry of affliction. — An invalid of twenty years, whose sufferings were extreme, was one night thinking of the reason of this long-continued infliction. Suddenly the room filled with light, and a beautiful form bent over her, saying, "Daughter of sorrow, art thou impatient?" "No; but I am full of pain and disease, and I see no end, nor can I see why I must suffer thus. I know that I am a sinner; but I hoped that Christ's sufferings, and not mine, would save me. Oh! why does God deal thus with me?" "Come with me, daughter, and I will show thee." "But I cannot walk." "True, true! There, gently, gently!" He tenderly took her up in his arms, and carried her over land and water, till he set her down in a far-off city, and in the midst of a large workshop. The room was full of windows, and the workmen seemed to be near the light, and each with his own tools; and all seemed to be so intent upon their work that they neither noticed the new-comers nor spoke to one another. They seemed to have small, brown pebbles, which they were grinding and shaping and polishing. Her guide pointed her to one who seemed to be most earnestly at work. He had a half-polished pebble, which was now seen to be a diamond, in a pair of strong iron pincers. He seemed to grasp the little thing as if he would crush it, and to hold it on to the rough stone without mercy. The stone whirled, and the dust flew, and the jewel grew smaller and lighter. Ever and anon he would stop, hold it up to the light, and examine it carefully. "Workman," said the sufferer, "will you please to tell me why you bear on, and grind the jewel so hard?" "I want to grind off every flaw and crack in it." "But don't you waste it?" "Yes; but what is left is worth so much the more. The fact is, this diamond, if it will bear the wheel long enough, is to occupy a very important place in the crown we are making up for our king. We take much more pains with such. We have to grind and polish them a great while; but when they are done they are very beautiful. The king was here yesterday, and was much pleased with our work, but wanted this jewel, in particular, to be ground and polished a great deal. So you see how hard I hold it down on this stone. And, see! there is not a crack nor a flaw in it! What a beauty it will be!" Gently the guide lifted up the poor sufferer and again laid her down on her own bed of pain. "Daughter of sorrow, dost thou understand the vision?" "Oh, yes! but may I ask you one question?" "Certainly." "Were you sent to me to show me all this?" "Assuredly." "Oh! may I take to myself the consolation that I am a diamond, and am now in the hands of the strong man, who is polishing it for the crown of the Great King?" "Daughter of sorrow, thou mayest have that consolation; and every pang of suffering shall be like a flash of lightning in a dark night, revealing eternity to thee; and hereafter thou shalt 'run without weariness, and walk without faintness,' and sing with those who have 'come out of great tribulation.'"— *Todd.*

and deplores his own sad condition

[a] Ps. xlii. 3.

"The holding on to God, the trusting God in the dark, shows more faith, cultivates faith more, than to merely know half the truths in the universe."—*Peloubet.*

"God washes the eyes with tears until they can behold the invisible land where tears shall come no more. O love! O affliction! ye are the guides that show us the way through the great airy space where our loved ones walked; and as hounds easily follow the scent before the dew be risen, so God teaches us, while yet our sorrow is wet, to follow on and find our dear ones in heaven."—*Beecher.*

"Hard words will vex; unkindness will pierce; neglect will wound; threatened evils will make the soul quiver; sharp pain or weariness will rack the body or make it restless. But what says the psalmist, 'When my heart is vexed I will complain.' To whom? Not of God, but to God."—*Pusey.*

"Human misery is to Divine mercy as a black soil to a sparkling diamond; or as a sable cloud to the sunbeams."—*William Secker.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

Eliphaz replies

his courteous commencement

"A man can never be a true gentleman in manner until he is a true gentleman at heart." — *Dickens.*

"We write our blessings on the water, but our afflictions on the rock." — *Guthrie.*

"Afflictions clarify the soul, and, like hard masters, give more hard directions, tutoring the nonage of uncurbed affections." — *Quarles.*

"What we call zeal for principle is often only a desire to have our own way." — *Lookout.*

1, 2. (1) **Eliphaz,** *see* ii. 11. Here begin the controversies of Job's aged friends, who represent "the dogged defenders of the traditional popular belief."—*Dean Stanley.* The great debate is divided into three circles of speeches: (1) ch. iv.–xiv.; (2) ch. xv.–xxi.; (3) ch. xxii.–xxxi. Each of these three circles contains six speeches, one by each of the three friends in succession, with a reply from Job. In the last round, however, the third speaker, Zophar, fails to come forward.—*Davidson.* (2) **If . . grieved?** will you take it ill, if we venture to speak? **but . . speaking,** we must speak whether you will or no.

Grounds of the harsh judgment of Job by his three friends.— The three friends come to the contemplation of Job's suffering, and to the discussion of the meaning of them, with a principle which they all agreed in holding. Like all Shemitic thinkers they have no idea of what we call second causes. In their view God is in immediate relation to the world and the lives of men, and does all directly that happens. Evil and good come immediately from His hand; and being a righteous ruler every event of His providence must be either a reward of good or a retribution on evil. But God is far from being an impersonal moral balance, weighing out happiness and adversity according to the deserts of men, with no interest in their fate. On the contrary, His eyes are on the righteous, and though He chastens them for their sin, His chastisement is not in order that they may perish (iv. 7); it is correction, meant to wean them from their evil and turn them again in humility and repentance unto righteousness. Therefore "happy is the man whom God correcteth" (ch. v. 17); such correction is an arrest laid upon him in his way of evil. Calamity therefore is not in itself decisive of the character of a man, though it is decisive of the fact that he has sinned. The issue of calamity only can show what a man really is. If he is a righteous man, he accepts it as the warning of God and turns from his evil, and his future life is filled with blessings from God, and he shall enjoy length of days and all prosperity (v. 19–27). If he is evil he murmurs and rejects the Divine correction, and brings wrath upon himself and perishes (v. 2). These principles explain the course pursued by the three friends towards Job. However strange it might seem to them they had on their principles no help but to conclude that Job, though a righteous man as they had always thought him, and continued to think him, had been guilty of acts of sin very displeasing unto God.—*Camb. B.*

he who had comforted others, now suffered himself

a Is. xxxv. 3.

b He. xii. 12.

c He. ii. 14, 17, 18; iv. 15, 16.

"This is that which we call character, —a reserved force which acts directly by presence, and without means."—*Emerson.*

3—5. (3) **thou . . many,** how to bear their trials. A tribute to Job's character. **thou . . hands,**[a] Job had been a helper of the weak. (4) **Thy . . falling,** as words of seasonable encouragement. **thou . . knees,**[b] he had assisted those who were bowing under the burden of life. (5) **it is come,** *i. e.*, trouble, which is the common lot of man. **faintest,**[c] he who had comforted others can find none for himself.

Job. — As for Job he agreed w. his three friends in believing th. all events occurred thro. the immed. agency of God. Further he agreed w. them th. evil or suffering was inflicted by God on those whom He held guilty of having sinned. But Job's consciousness of his own innocence forbade his drawing the conclusion w. his friends th. he had been guilty of great and specific offenses. He was driven therefore to the conclusion that, though he was not guilty, God had resolved to hold him guilty (ix. 29 and often), and treat him as if he were so. Hence he is led to charge God with injustice.— *Camb. B.*

did not this suffering come from sin?

d Ga. vi. 7, 8; Pr. xxii. 8; Hos. viii. 7.

"He that planteth thorns shall not gather roses."—*Persian Prov.*

6—8. (6) **Is . . ways,** *R. V.*, "Is not thy fear of God thy confidence, and thy hope the integrity of thy ways?" *i. e.* just as he reminded others of their integrity and their fear of God, that he might comfort them, so let him now cherish a like grounded hope and confidence. (7) **Remember,** *etc.*, the argument thus far is: "The pious and upright are never cut off. You are pious and upright. Why so downcast and despairing? There is solid ground for hope in the uprightness of your life."—*Cox.* (8) **Even . . seen,** appeal to observation. **they . . same,** a proverb.[d]

The life of a sinner is a foolish agriculture. — I. All human life is a sowing and a reaping. II. Life's reaping is determined by its sowing. III. The reaping of the sinner is a terrible destiny. From this subject learn — 1. The great

solemnity of life; 2. The conscious rectitude of the sinner's doom; 3. The necessity for a godly heart.— *Thomas.*

The three friends. — The friends have each a well-marked individuality, and represent distinct aspects of religious conviction among mankind. Eliphaz, who on each occasion opens the debate, is the most dignified, the calmest and most considerate, and perhaps the oldest of Job's friends. He is a man almost of prophetic rank, who speaks with the composure and authority and clear eye of a seer, as one to whom revelations by vision have been granted from Heaven (iv. 12 *seq*). Bildad, a man of less consideration, is a representative of the class of the wise (Jerem. xviii. 18: Prov. i. 6): an observer of life, one who generalizes on the ways of God to man, whose mind is stored with the priceless moral precedents of past ages, and who reposes upon the conclusions of thoughtful men of all times (ch. viii.), while Zophar is the private religious man of strong personal conviction, who doubtless lives by the truth he believes, and cannot imagine how any one should question it; who gets irritated and indulges in unworthy imputations against any one who disputes the truth of his principles. All three were sincere men, though their sincerity had never perhaps been put to the proof as Job's had been.— *Camb. B.*

"The field of wrong brings forth death as its fruit." —*Æschylus.*

"When tried and afflicted, be persuaded that your punishment is far beneath your sin; and this will make you patient and thankful." — *Greenham.*

9—11. (9) **blast,** *etc.*,[a] anger of God, ill. by fierce, hot winds of the East (10) **The . . lion,** *etc.*, the fiercest men, here comp. to lions, cannot withstand the wrath of God. (11) **stout lion's whelps,** *R. V.*, "whelps of the lioness." It is a den that is broken up.

sinners perish before the anger of God

a Ac. ix. 1; 2 Sa. xxii. 16; Ps. xviii. 15.

Breath of the nostrils (*vs.* 9). — When people are angry they distend their nostrils and blow with great force: the action may be taken from some animals, which, when angry, blow violently through their noses. Of a man who is much given to anger, it is said, "That fellow is always blowing through his nose." "You may blow through your nose for a thousand years, it will never injure me." "Go not near the breath of his nostrils, he will injure you." — *Roberts.*

"God has been pleased to prescribe limits to His own power, and to work his ends within those limits." — *Paley.*

12—14. (12) **a little,** *R. V.*, "a whisper," Eliphaz has received a revelation, and this is the second point he wishes to impress on his friend. He has learned that God only is holy.[b] (13) **thoughts . . visions,**[c] com. mode of Divine communication in the old time. He had slept and dreamed. Then he awakened and thought upon his dreams. **came . . me,** while he was thinking he was seized with fear and trembling.[d]

Eliphaz's vision

b "Mine ear received a whisper along with it." — *Good.* "Mine ear caught a whisper thereof." — *Noyes.*

c Is. i. 1; Ge. ii. 21; xv. 12.

d So *Virgil*, — "A cold tremor ran through all their bones." — *Æn.* ii. 120.

Fellowship with the unseen. — Whatever the nature of this vision, the three following propositions which it suggests would be true: I. That man has a capacity to hold intercourse with the spiritual world. The existence of such a world is one of the fundamental faiths of humanity. II. That man's character places him in a humble position in the spiritual world. The address of the spirit significantly expresses man's moral inferiority. III. That man's earthly state is but a temporary separation from a conscious existence in the spiritual world. This body is spoken of as a house. It is not me, it is only my dwelling. Several things are suggested about this departure into the conscious existence in the spiritual world. 1. It is inevitable; 2. It is constantly progressing; 3. It is frequently disregarded; 4. This departure terminates earthly glory. — *Thomas. The mysterious visitant.* — Eliphaz gives an account of — I. What he felt. II. What he saw. Concerning this spirit the following particulars are stated. 1. Its proximity; 2. Its stationary position; 3. Its indistinctness; 4. The terror was increased by the silence. III. What he heard. A vindication of the Divine character. 1. His justice; 2. His holiness; 3. His independence and self-sufficiency; 4. His wisdom.

"The slender capacity of man's heart cannot comprehend, much less utter, that unsearchable depth and burning zeal of God's love towards us." — *Luther.*

15—17. (15) **spirit,** a breath swept over his face, as if caused by some passing presence. "Spirit" does not mean apparition in *O. T.* **hair . . up,** a well-known effect of profound fear.[e] (16) **but . . thereof,** it was shadowy, indistinct. **voice,** LXX. gentle breeze, whisper. (17) Camb. B. translates:

he saw a spirit pass before him

e Virgil, Æn. ii. 774; iii. 48; iv. 289; xii. 868: see also the ghost's speech to Hamlet.

> "Can man be righteous before God?
> Can a man be pure before his Maker?"

i. e., all men are imperfect in the sight of God.

Eliphaz reproves Job. — In the course of his reproof, Eliphaz mentions a revelation which he had received from heaven. This revelation we shall now

"What must He be, great Master Workman, seeing that all the unselfish-

ness, compassion and love that are continually shining out in our humanity are but faint reflections of Him." — *Kate W. Hamilton.*

consider. I. The truths intended to be made known were these — That no man is pure before God ; 2. That no man can claim anything at the hands of God ; 3. That no man under any circumstances can have reason to complain of God. II. As tending to decide the controversy between Job and his friends. Consider it — 1. As it was applied by Eliphaz ; 2. As it ought to have been applied. — *Simeon. The shadowy voice.* — I. The sinfulness of man demonstrated. 1. A question (*vs.* 17) asked, which is (1) searching, (2) elevating. (3) discriminating, (4) challenging. 2. A premise (*vs.* 18) stated. 3. A deduction (*vs.* 19) made. II. An affecting representation of human frailty. Contrasted with the angelic race, man is depicted as a creature (1) whose origin is mean, (2) whose duration is short, (3) whose importance is small, (4) whose glory is evanescent (5) whose failure is conspicuous. Learn : 1. That heaven is never far removed from the pious. 2. That those who think most about God obtain most communications from God. 3. That Divine voices seldom speak in tempests and hurricanes, but mostly in still, small voices. 4. That God, being higher than the highest, should be regarded by all His creatures with reverence and fear. 5. That, in the judgment of Heaven, no life is successful that terminates without having attained to wisdom. — *Pul. Com.*

" Friendship is the shadow of the evening, which strengthens with the setting sun of life."— *La Fontaine.*

the greatness of God

18—19. (18) **servants,** *i. e.* the angels. **and . . folly,**[a] in the eye of absolute wisdom even the angels are not without flaw. (19) **how much less,** *R. V.*, "how much more."[b] **of clay,** *i. e.* earthy in contrast with the spirit nature of the angels. An enlargement on *vs.* 17. **which . . moth,** "like the moth," *i. e.* crushed as easily as a moth; *LXX.*

Man's inferiority to angels. — I. The habitation they occupy is mean and obscure. II. They are exposed to all kinds of destructive influences. III. Their departure is felt but little by society at large. IV. While their end is but little heeded by others, they are destitute of what is of most importance to themselves, — wisdom. — *Hom. Com. A message from the unseen* (*vss.* 17–21). — I. The obvious facts. In the three regions man's littleness is compared to God's greatness. 1. Moral. 2. Intellectual. 3. Vital. II. Their just effects. They should work in us — 1. Humility. 2. Contrition. 3. Patience. 4. Trust. 5. Obedience. — *Adeney.*

a 2 Pe. ii. 4.

b Ps. viii. 4.

" Man is but a little thing in the midst of the objects of nature, yet by the moral quality radiating from his countenance, he may abolish all considerations of magnitude, and, in his manners equal the majesty of the world."—*Emerson.*

The moth (*vs.* 19). — It is probable that this means a moth-worm, which is one state of the creature alluded to. It is first enclosed in an egg, from whence it issues a worm, and after a time becomes a complete insect, or moth. The following extracts from Niebuhr may throw light on the passage, that man is crushed by so feeble a thing as a worm :— " A disease very common in Yemen is the attack of the Guiney-worm, or the *Vena-Medinensis* it is called by the physicians of Europe. The disease is supposed to be occasioned by the use of putrid waters, which people are obliged to drink in several parts of Yemen ; and for this reason the Arabians always pass water with the nature of which they are unacquainted, through a linen cloth, before drinking it. When one unfortunately swallows any of the eggs of this insect, no immediate consequence follows ; but after a considerable time, the worm begins to show itself through the skin. Our physician, Mr. Cramer, was, within a few days of his death, attacked by five of these worms at once, although this was more than five months after we had left Arabia. In the isle of Karek I saw a French officer named Le Page, who, after a long and difficult journey performed on foot, and in an Indian dress, between Pondicherry and Surat, through the heart of India, was busy extracting a worm out of his body. He supposed that he had got it by drinking bad water in the country of the Mahrattas. This disorder is not dangerous if the person affected can extract the worm without breaking it. With this view it is rolled on a small bit of wood as it comes out of the skin. It is slender as a thread, and two or three feet long. It gives no pain as it makes its way out of the body, unless what may be occasioned by the care which must be taken of it for some weeks. If unluckily it be broken, it then returns into the body, and the most disagreeable consequences ensue, palsy, a gangrene, and sometimes death. — *Burder.*

" Man, if he compare himself with all that he can see, is at the zenith of his power ; but if he compare himself with all he can conceive, he is at the nadir of weakness."— *Colton.*

the weakness of man

20, 21. (20) **from morning to,** *R. V.*, "Betwixt morning and," in the course of a single day. Is. xxxviii. 12. Man's life is a short day, during which the work of decay is proceeding. **they . . it,**[c] of so little importance is any man that the living are unaffected by the work of death around them. (21) **Doth . . away,** *R. V.*, " Is not their tent cord plucked up within them ? "

c Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4.

Pluck up the tent cord and the tent falls. **wisdom,**[a] they pass away before they know much.

Morning and evening. — Morning and evening are as two great iron plates — gone is a man when they close upon him! He steps upon no eternities, he does not live from generation to generation, in his little personality, — proud, mighty, royal, rich: he will die somewhere betwixt "morning and evening." — *Parker.*

[a] Is. ii. 22.

I know Thee who hast kept my path and made Light for me in the darkness, tempering sorrow so that it reach me like a solemn joy. — *Browning.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1, 2. (1) **Call . . thee,** *R.V.*, "call now; is there any," *etc.* Since this is so, and angels as well as men are erring before God, is there any one who will support you in your complaint? The question implies a negative answer. **saints,**[b] *R. V.*, "holy ones," angels. (2) **wrath,** the wrath of man with heaven only brings down destruction upon him, and envy of God's dealings brings punishment. "Resentment slayeth the foolish man, passion killeth the silly." — *Watson.*

who will answer prayer if God does not?

[b] Job xv. 15; Zec. xiv. 5; Ps. lxxxix. 5, 7; Da. iv. 13.

The folly and effects of fretting against God. — I. It is the part only of fools to fret against God and His procedure. II. Fretting against God's dealings brings its own punishment. 1. It robs of peace, which is the spirit's life; 2. Affects the health and hastens death; 3. Injures the life and property of the soul; 4. Brings greater chastening and punishment from God. Note — Passion and impatience in trouble are more hurtful and crushing than the trouble itself. — *Hom. Com.*

Envy, like a corroding plaster, lies gnawing at the heart, and indeed is founded in grief, that being the object of it, either in himself or others, through all the conditions that are. Either he grieves in himself when another is happy, or else, if ever he does rejoice, it is certainly because another does suffer; so calamity seems the center that he points into. — *Feltham.*

Envy. — There once sailed from the city of New Orleans, in America, a large and noble steam-vessel, freighted with cotton, and having many passengers on board. While the cargo was being embarked, a portion of it became slightly moistened by a shower of rain then falling. This circumstance, however, was not noticed, — the cotton being closely packed, and the hatchways fastened down. During the first part of the voyage all went well, but in the middle of the Atlantic the ship's crew were suddenly alarmed by a fearful cry of fire, and in a few moments the noble vessel was enveloped in flames. The damp and closely packed cotton had become heated, daily smoldering and getting in a more dangerous state until, at last it burst out into a broad sheet of flame, solely from the effects of spontaneous combustion. The passengers and crew were soon compelled to take to the boats; some were consumed or suffocated in the flames, and many more drowned in the sea. The heated cotton smoldering in the hold of this vessel aptly illustrates the condition of that man who harbors resentment and envy in his breast; it gradually stifles all the better feelings of his nature: obtains the complete mastery over his spirit, — then bursts forth into acts of violence, and leads him to the commission of deeds the very thought of which, at another time, would compel him to shudder and start with horror. — *Clement.*

Cyrus, the Persian king, was accustomed to say, that did men but know the cares he had to sustain, he thought no man would wish to wear his crown.

3—5. (3) **the foolish,** *i. e.* a foolish man, a case under his own observation. **taking root,** outwardly prospering. **but . . habitation,**[c] when it was seen that his prosperity was not founded on right and truth. (4) **His . . safety,**[d] they are involved in their father's ruin. **crushed,** broken in pieces. **gate,**[e] in court of justice there held. Their quarrelsome, litigious spirit here suggested. **neither . . them,** they are not pitied nor aided. (5) **harvest,** substance. **taketh . . thorns,** the hedge being broken through. **robber swalloweth,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "the snare gapeth for," "all the wealth of the fool and his family would suddenly disappear as through some huge trap, which had long gaped for it, had swallowed it in an instant." — *Cox.*

the end of the wicked is misery

[c] Ps. lxix. 25; lxxiii. 3, 17, 18.

[d] Ex. xx. 5.

[e] Job xxix. 7; xxxi. 21.

The prosperity of the ungodly. — The ungodly frequently prosper in this life. God may have wise reasons for permitting them to prosper. 1. It exercises the faith and patience of the godly; 2. Teaches the great inferiority of earthly to heavenly blessings; 3. Confirms the truth of a judgment to come. Note: — The godly are too much loved to receive their portion in this life. The good things of this life are only the bones cast to dogs. — *Rutherford.*

Poverty wants some, luxury many, and avarice all things. — *Cowley.*

Misery in apparent prosperity. — The greatest wealth does not shield its possessor from misery and unhappiness. "The legends of the East describe Solomon as tormented, indeed, yet not without hope. In the romance of Vathek he is described as listening earnestly to the roar of a cataract, because when it ceases to roar his anguish will be at an end. The king so renowned for his wisdom was on the loftiest elevation, and placed immediately beneath

"It is one of the worst effects of prosperity to make a man a vortex instead of a fountain so that, instead of throwing out, he learns only to draw in." — *Beecher.*

The more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles; the heavier the cross is, the heavier is the saint's crown.

the dome, "The thunder," said he, "precipitated me hither, where, however, I do not remain totally destitute of hope; for an angel of light hath revealed that in consideration of the piety of my early youth, my woes shall come to an end. Till then I am in torments, ineffable torments; an unrelenting fire preys on my heart." The caliph was ready to sink with terror when he heard the groans of Solomon. Having uttered this exclamation, Solomon raised his hands towards heaven, in token of supplication, and the caliph discerned through his bosom, which was transparent as crystal, his heart enveloped in flames. — *Farrar.*

man is born to trouble

6, 7, (6) **affliction,** *etc.*,[a] "Affliction is not accidental, nor a spontaneous growth of the earth, but men acting after the impulses of their evil nature bring it on themselves." — *Camb. B.* (7) **sparks,** *lit.* children of flame, or sons of the coal.

a Ge. iii. 17–19.

"Eliphaz leaves Job to make the application of this, and other sayings of his, to himself." — *Wordsworth.*

Trouble. — I. Its origin. 1. It is from a necessity and law imposed on our existence in this world; 2. From sin, which is the ground of that necessity. In the government of a good and righteous God suffering could exist only — 1. As a legal necessity in consequence of disobedience to His laws; or, 2. As a moral necessity for the discipline of His erring children. II. Its universality. Tears moisten the pillow of down as well as the pallet of straw. This ought to render us — 1. Patient under our own trouble; 2. Sympathizing with that of others. III. Its certainty. 1. The hand that made us has, since the entrance of sin, made us sufferers; 2. Only through the incarnation and suffering of the Son of Man, our sufferings are not external, — *Hom. Com.*

Affliction is like the wind that blows one vessel into port, another to destruction. — *Spurgeon.*

Music from storms. — "A nobleman undertook to form an Æolian harp between the two great towers of his castle. He stretched the wires, but the wind gave no sound, and he deemed his work a failure. One night there came a mighty storm, and then the silent harp awoke and poured forth its music. It needed the force of the tempest to call forth its tones." So often it needs the storm of trouble to bring the music of heaven from our souls. — *Peloubet.*

the greatness and goodness of God

8—11. (8) **I,** *R. V.*, "but as for me, I," *etc.*, emphatic statement. **seek,**[b] in humble prayer, not sinfully complain. (9) **unsearchable,**[c] whose purpose in affliction needs searching out, and must be beneficent. **marvellous,**[d] and dif. in relation to results fr. what might be expected. (10) **rain,**[e] "the chief of blessings, and type of all other blessings, to an oriental mind." — *Cox.* **set . . low,**[f] not only does He perform such wonders in nature, but on man also He shows His power; He lifts up the lowly, and those who mourn because of calamities He puts in a safe place.

b Ps. xxxvii. 5; 2 Ch. xxxiii. 12.

c Ps. cxxxvi. 4; Ex. xv. 11.

d Ro. xi. 33.

e Je. v. 24; Ac xiv. 17; Ps. lxv. 9, 10.

f Ps. cxiii. 7; Lu. i. 52; Ja. iv. 6, 10.

Seeking unto God (*vs.* 8). — I. What it presupposes. 1. Belief in the existence of God. 2. Consciousness of need. 3. Desire for Divine assistance. II. What it implies. 1. A realization of God's nearness to the soul. 2. A solicitation of God's help for the soul. 3. An acceptation of God's provisions for the soul. III. What it produces. 1. Inward composure. 2. Hopeful expectation. 3. Ultimate salvation. Learn: 1. The grace of God in permitting men to seek Him. 2. The wisdom of men in availing themselves of this permission. — *Pul. Com.*

Purification of affliction. —

He that from dross would win the precious ore,
Bends o'er the crucible an earnest eye,
The subtle searching process to explore,
Lest the one brilliant moment should pass by
When, in the molten silver's virgin mass,
He meets his pictured face as in a glass.

Thus in God's furnace are His people tried;
Thrice happy they who to the end endure.
But who the fiery trial may abide?
Who from the crucible come forth so pure
That He whose eyes of flame look through the whole,
May see His image perfect in the soul?

Nor with an evanescent glimpse alone,
As in that mirror the refiner's face;

And well it is for us our God should feel
Alone our secret throbbings; so our prayer
May readier spring to heaven, nor spend its zeal
On cloud-born idols of this lower air." — *Keble.*

From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. *Emerson.*

But, stampt with heaven's broad signet, there be shown
Immanuel's features, full of truth and grace :
And round that seal of love this motto be,
" Not for a moment, but — eternity ! " — *Montgomery.*

12—14. (12) **He . . crafty,**[a] as He helps the humble, so also He thwarts the crafty. **enterprise,** that wh. seems dictated by practical sagacity. (13) **taketh . . craftiness,**[b] comp. 1 Cor. iii. 19. This is the only quotation from the Book of Job in the New Testament. **counsel . . headlong,**[c] *i. e.* precipitated before it is ready for action and so brought to naught. (14) **They . . daytime,** *etc.*,[d] bewildered by the failure of their plans ; and things turning out so dif. fr. their expectations.

Comfort in trouble. — Our great comfort in trouble is that we can address God in it. He should be sought in trouble — 1. For counsel and direction ; 2. For comfort and support under it ; 3. For grace so to bear it as to glorify God by it ; 4. For deliverance in His own time and way out of it ; 5. For the spiritual benefit and improvement intended through it. Note — (1) It is true wisdom and piety to commit our cause into God's hands. — *Hom. Com.*

Comfort in times of trouble. —

Hast thou gone sadly through a dreary night,
And found no light ;
No guide, no star, to cheer thee through the plain —
No friend save pain ?
Wait, and thy soul shall see, when most forlorn,
Rise a new morn.

Hast thou beneath another's stern control
Bent thy sad soul,
And wasted sacred hopes and precious tears ?
Yet calm thy fears,
For thou canst gain, even from the bitterest part,
A stronger heart !

Has fate o'erwhelmed thee with some sudden blow ?
Let thy tears flow ;
But know, when storms are past, the heavens appear
More pure, more clear ;
And hope, when furthest from their shining rays,
For brighter days.

Hast thou found nought within thy troubled life
Save inward strife ?
Hast thou found all He promised thee deceit
And hope a cheat ?
Endure, and there shall dawn within thy breast
Eternal rest. — *Household Words.*

15, 16. (15) **he saveth,** *etc.*, " but he saveth from the sword of their mouth, even the needy from the hand of the mighty." **poor . . mouth,**[e] by calumny, innuendoes, lies, fraudulent representations, and the like, the ungodly work, perhaps, more injury than by their actions. **from the hand,** God delivers the poor both from their words and from their deeds. — *Rawlinson.* (16) **So . . hope,** without wh. they would be poor indeed ; hope is wealth. **and . . mouth,**[f] recognizing that their speech is in vain.

The poor man's hope. — I. Great in its expectations. Looking for salvation. II. Divine in its origin. Being implanted by God. III. Firm in its foundation Resting, not upon his own piety or strength, but upon God's gracious interposition on his behalf. IV. Present in its enjoyment. The poor hath hope ; it forms a principle within them now. V. Sustaining in its operation. Upholding in trouble. VI. Certain in its end. Arriving at ultimate fulfilment. — *Pul. Com.*

True compassion (vs. 16). — A violent Welsh squire, having taken offense at a poor curate who employed his leisure hours in mending clocks and watches, applied to the bishop of St. Asaph, with a formal complaint against him of impiously carrying on a trade, contrary to the statute. His lordship,

by His knowledge He overrules the affairs of men

a Ne. iv. 15 ; Ps. xxi. 11 ; Pr. xxi. 30.

b Ps. vii. 15, 16 ; Es. ix. 25 ; Da. vi. 24.

c Pr. iii. 32.

d Pr. iv. 19 ; De. xxviii. 29 ; Is. lix. 10.

"I would bring balm and pour it into your wound, cure your distempered mind and heal your fortunes." — *Dryden.*

"Your comfort comes, as in droughts the elemental dew does on the earth; it wets, but leaves no moisture, to give the sear'd plants growth." — *Glapthorne.*

"God puts consolation only where he has first put pain."—*Mme. Swetchine.*

"Be sure your sorrow is not giving you its best unless it makes you a more thoughtful person than you have ever been before."— *Brooks.*

God is the friend of the poor

e Ps. xxxv. 10; xvii. 10, 13; lvii. 4; lix. 7.

f Ps. lxiii. 11.

"Though affliction, at the first, doth vex most virtuous natures, from the sense that 'tis unjustly laid; yet, when the amazement which that new pain brings is worn away, they then embrace oppression straight, with such obedient

cheerfulness, as if it came from heaven, not man."—*Davenant.*

"Purchase not friends by gifts; when thou ceasest to give, such will cease to love."—*Fuller.*

having heard the complaint, told the squire he might depend upon the strictest justice being done in the case; accordingly the mechanic-divine was sent for a few days after, when the bishop asked him how he dared disgrace his diocese by becoming a mender of clocks and watches. The curate, with all humility, answered, "To satisfy the wants of a wife and ten children." "That won't do with me," rejoined the prelate; "I will inflict such a punishment upon you as will make you leave off your pitiful trade, I promise you;" and immediately calling in his secretary, ordered him to make out a presentation for the astonished curate to a living of at least one hundred and fifty pounds per annum.

the happy result of Divine corrections

17, 18. (17) **happy,** fortunate. **correcteth,**[a] Eliphaz maintains the position that Job has sinned, and this trouble is for his correction. He can imagine no other reason why sorrow comes to any man, John ix. 2, 3. **therefore . . Almighty,** try rather to learn the lesson. (18) **For . . sore,** He wounds only that by healing He may give more perfect life. **he . . hands,** the same hands hold the rod and the ointment.[b]

The benefits of affliction. — I. Men in times of prosperity are apt to indulge erroneous notions, and neglect important truths. II. God often employs afflictions to correct our mistaken ideas, and rectify our foolish propensities. III. When these ends are answered, he who has been most severely chastened may well think himself most happy.—*Ryland.*

The wrath of God. — Delivered He was, not to despair, for that was impossible; nor to the torments of hell, which could never seize on His innocent soul; but to the wrath of God, which withered His heart like grass, "burnt up His bones like a hearth," and "brought Him even to the dust of death." Look now upon His countenance — it is pale and wan; upon His heart — it is melted like wax; upon His tongue — it cleaveth to the roof of His mouth. What talk we of death? The wrath of God is truly the terriblest thing in this world — the sting of sin, which is the sting of death. . . . Alas! to us God's wrath doth not appear in its full horror; for if it did, we should sooner die than offend Him. Some do but think of it; few think of it as they should; and they that are most apprehensive look upon it as at a distance, as that which may be turned away; and so, not fearing God's wrath, "treasure up wrath against the day of wrath." To us, when we take it at the nearest and have the fullest sight of it, it appeareth but as the cloud did to Elijah's servant, "like a man's hand." Many sinners have felt His rods: and His rod is comfort; His frown, favor; His anger, love; and His blow, a benefit. But Christ was struck as it were with His axe.—*A. Farindon.*

Disguised angels.—

All God's angels come to us disguised,
Sorrow and sickness, poverty and death,
One after other lift their frowning masks;
And we behold the seraph's face beneath,
All radiant with the glory and the calm,
Of having looked upon the face of God.—*Lowell.*

"Purchase not friends by gifts; when thou ceasest to give, such will cease to love."—*Fuller.*

"I fear God, and next to God, I chiefly fear him who fears Him not.—*Saadi.*

"O there is nought on earth worth being known but God and our own souls."—*Bailey.*

"Perfumes, the more they're chafed, the more they render their pleasant scents; and so affliction expresseth virtue fully, whether true or else adulterate."—*Webster.*

"When afflicted, love can allow thee to groan, but not to grumble."—*Gurnall.*

God is a great deliverer

19—21. (19) **six . . seven,** *etc.*,[c] God is never tired with helping His people, or wearied by their prayers; *six* and *seven* are round numbers meaning "many" or "all," Pr. vi. 16. (20) **famine,** one of *four* great troubles here specified; war, slander, ruin, are the others. (21) **hid . . tongue,** *etc.*,[d] *i. e.* misrepresentation; abuse shall not be able to find you.

Homiletic hints on vss. 19–21. — Deliverance promised not in one or two troubles, but in all. Every new trouble needs Divine support and guidance. Preservation in trouble, support under it, and deliverance out of it, all in the believer's charter. The time and mode of deliverance best reserved in God's own hands. Here trouble succeeds trouble, as wave succeeds wave. One past, we are to prepare for another. God either gives His people what He promised or something better. — *The security of God's people.* — This text has reference to the promises. We shall endeavor. — I. To explain them. 1. They are great and comprehensive; 2. They must be understood with limitations and restrictions. II. To confirm them. The whole Scriptures bear testimony to the truth of them. Search — 1. The law; 2. The prophets; 3. The New Testament. Convinced of the truth of these promises, we are now only concerned — III. To improve them. They teach us — 1. Submission in trials; 2. Confidence in supplications; 3. Activity in obedience. — *Simeon.*

[a] Ps. xciv. 12; Pr iii. 12; Re. iii. 19; He. xii. 5.

[b] De. xxxii. 39; Ho. vi. 1; Ps. cxlvii. 3.

[c] Ps. xci 5-7; xxxiii. 18, 19; Ge. xiv. 7; 1 Ki. xvii. 6, 15. 16; Le. xxvi. 6; Ez. xxxiv. 25; Is. lxv. 25; xxxv. 9; Da, vi. 22.

[d] Ps. xxxi. 20

Language most shows a man. Speak, that I may see thee! It springs out of the most retired and inmost part of us.—*Ben Jonson.*

Proverbs. —

"Give your tongue more holidays than your head."

'With all thy faults I love thee *still*."

"Tongues are the best and worst meat in the world."

"A fool's tongue is always long enough to cut his throat."

"Tongues run all the faster when they carry little."

"Talkative tongues are like the frogs in Egypt; they did not bite, but they wearied by their endless croaking."

"'The boneless tongue, so small and weak,
Can crush and kill,' declared the Greek."

"'The tongue destroys a greater horde,'
The Turk asserts, 'than does the sword.'"

"The Persian proverb wisely saith,
'A lengthy tongue, an early death,'"

"Or sometimes takes this form instead,
'Don't let your tongue cut off your head.'"

"'The tongue can speak a word whose speed,'
Say the Chinese, 'outstrips the steed.'"

"While Arab sages this impart,
'The tongue's great storehouse is the heart.'"

"From Hebrew wit the maxim sprung,
'Though feet should slip, ne'er let the tongue.'"

"The sacred writer crowns the whole,
'Who keeps the tongue doth keep his soul.'"

— *Spurgeon's Salt-Cellars.*

"A tart temper never mellows with age; and a sharp tongue is the only edge-tool that grows keener with constant use."— *W. Irving.*

"Give not the tongue too great a liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken, is like a sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be held wise be so wise as to hold thy tongue."— *Quarles.*

"We need not fear or despair when we must go into a great darkness; we may rather remember, with Tennyson,

'There is a Power behind the world
That makes our griefs our gain.'"

22—24. (22) **At . . laugh,**[a] fearless, bec. knowing that they are powerless. Wild beasts, like plagues, do not harm God's own. (23) **thou . . field,** industry with God's blessing will overcome natural effects of sterility of soil. **beasts . . thee,**[b] all nature, inanimate and animate, will understand that you are under the care of God, the master of all. (24) **tabernacle,**[c] tent, dwelling. **visit . . sin,** *R. V.*, "visit thy fold, and shalt miss nothing."

those whom God befriends may laugh at calamity

a 2 Ki. xix. 21.

b Ho. ii. 18.

c De. xxviii. 6.

Importance of domestic happiness. — I. This appears from the unavoidable intimacy and extent of its influence on human comfort. II. It is a blessing equally attainable by all classes of persons, and which may be enjoyed not occasionally only, but every day that we live. III. By the multiplied and wide-spread mischiefs which daily result from it absence. IV. Its essential and unavoidable influence on the church of God. V. The more general and perfect domestic happiness is, the more pure, harmonious and happy will be the community at large. Note. — 1. The folly of those who undervalue the happiness of the domestic circle, and are constantly seeking happiness elsewere; 2. It is worth while to take the greatest and most constant pains to secure this happiness. — *S. Miller.*

The only truly happy men I have ever known were Christians. — *Randolph.*

The importance of the home. — The homes of a country make it what it is. The center of power for building up a country in virtue, religion and prosperity lies in the home. The battle of science has for its central point, its Waterloo, the origin of life; the religious warfare centers round the cross, the Alcyone of all religious forces; the moral battle is about the home. It is the place nearest Paradise on earth, a hint of the Eden of the past, and a prophecy of Paradise regained. — *Peloubet.* *The friendship of the beasts.* — In a country where wild beasts are so numerous and so fierce, and where the natives have so few means of defense, can it be a matter of surprise that people on a journey are always under the influence of great fear? The father says to his son, when he is about to depart, "Fear not: the beasts will be thy friends." The dealer in charms says, when giving one of his potent spells, "Be not afraid, young man: this shall make the cruel beasts respect thee." — *Roberts.*

"It is indeed at home that every man must be known by those who would make a just estimate either of his virtue or felicity; for smiles and embroidery are alike occasional, and the mind is often dressed for show in painted honor and fictitious benevolence. — *Johnson.*

25—27. (25) **Thou . . great,** *etc.*, "it must have sounded like a bitter mockery, and as such he resents it." — *Spk. Com.* (26) **Thou . . age,** like

such shall have prosperity and long life

the patriarchs.[a] **cometh,** goeth up.[b] (27) **Lo, this we have searched,** he says; "it is even thus." But the piety and orthodoxy of the good Eliphaz do not save him from blunders at every turn. The religion of Eliphaz is made for well-to-do people like himself, and such only. — *Watson.* "However true his theory might be as a general principle or moral government, it was not universal and did not include Job's case. Job's conscience told him this. Hence the admonitions of Eliphaz fell wide of the mark, and he only aggravated the evil which he sought to heal." — *Camb. B.*

Homiletic hints on vs. 26. — When the corn is near ripe it bows the head, and stoops lower than when it was green. When the people of God are near ripe for heaven, they grow more humble and self-denying than in the days of their first profession. The longer a saint grows in this world, the better he is still acquainted with his own heart and his obligations to God; both which are very humbling things. Paul had one foot in heaven, when he called himself the "chief of sinners." When corn is dead ripe, it is apt to fall of its own accord to the ground, and there shed; whereby it doth, as it were, anticipate the harvestman, and call upon him to put in the sickle. Not unlike to which are the lookings and longings, the groanings and hastenings of ready Christians to their expected glory; they hasten to the coming of the Lord. — *J. Flavel.*

Coming to maturity. — Men often remind me of pears in their way of coming to maturity. Some are ripe at twenty, like human Jargonelles, and must be made the most of, for their day is soon over. Some come into their perfect condition late, like the autumn kinds, and they last better than the summer fruit. And some that, like the Winter-Nelis, have been hard and uninviting until all the rest have had their season, get their glow and perfume long after the frost and snow have done their worst with the orchards. — *Holmes. Coming to the grave as a shock of corn.* — Literally, "in dried up," or "shrivelled age;" and hence the term here employed is applied by the Arabians to designate the winter season, in which everything is corrugated or shriveled. On which account some commentators propose that the text should be rendered "in the winter of life;" poetically, indeed, but not thoroughly consistent with the metaphor of a shock of corn; which, in close congruity with the emblematic picture of winter, at its season of maturity, is dried up and contracted, and thus far offers an equal similitude of ripe old age; but which forcibly increases the similitude by the well-known fact, that, like ripe old age also, it must be committed to the earth in order to spring to newness of life; for, in both cases, "the seed which thou sowest shall not quicken except it die." Tyndal has given the passage thus: "In a fayre age lyke as the corn sheewes are broughte into the barne in due season:" whence Sandys,

> "Then, full of days, like weighty shocks of corn,
> In season reaped, shalt to thy grave be borne."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

Job's reply; vi.–vii.: three divisions; vi. 1–13 defends his lamentation; 14–30, deplores the attitude of his friend; vii. renews more emphatically his lament and appeals against Providence.

1, 2. (1) **answered,** meeting the argument in order. (2) **grief,** *R. V.*, "vexation." **weighed . . balances,**[c] he wishes that his vexation and his misfortune might be weighed one over against the other to see if his impatience is indeed too great.

Man's character is estimated by an enlightened natural religionist. — Eliphaz was a natural religionist. I. He regarded the fact that a man suffered as a proof of his wickedness. To judge a man's character by his external circumstances is a most flagrant mistake, for— 1. Suffering is not necessarily connected with sin; 2. It seems almost necessary to the human creature in this world; 3. As a fact it has a salutary influence on the character of the good. II. He regarded the murmuring of a man under suffering, as a proof of his wickedness. In this complaining spirit Eliphaz discovers—1. Hypocrisy; 2. Ignorance of God. — *Thomas*

The building up of character. — I have around my little cabin in the country a dozen or so of rhododendrons. Broad-leaved fellows they are. I love them in blossom, and I love them out of blossom. They make me think of many

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a Ge. xxv. 8; xxxv. 29; Pr. x. 27.

b Threshing-floors were usually on hills. Jud. vi 8; 2 Sa xxiv. 18.

"So mayest thou live, till, like ripe fruits, thou drop into thy mother's lap; or be with ease gathered, not harshly plucked; for death mature." — *Milton.*

"Eliphaz is confident that no man of sense can come to any other conclusion." — *Spk. Com.*

"An old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night."
— *Wordsworth.*

"Age is not all decay; it is the ripening, the swelling of the fresh life within, that withers and bursts the husk."— *MacDonald.*

In 1840 there were fifteen persons in Belgium above 100 years of age, of whom nine were women. One of these, Maria Theresa Mayer of Antwerp, was 104 years old; of the others, Maria Ann Stafsin, and Catherine Abrinth, of Luxemburg, were above 150 years old

Job's reply

he wishes that his sorrow were duly considered

c In the Egyptian ritual the day of weighing words is a com. term for the day of judgment.

"'Ah! my lord, could you weigh my poverty, I am sure you would relieve me.' 'The sorrows of that man's soul, who can weigh them?' Alas! if my sorrows could be weighed, then would pity be shown unto me.'" —*Roberts.*

Christians. They are like some that are in this church. Usually they come up in the spring and blossom the first thing, just as many persons come into Christian life. The whole growth of the plants is crowded into two or three weeks, and they develop with wonderful rapidity; but after that they will not grow another inch during the whole summer. What do they do? I do not know, exactly; they never told me; but I suspect that they are organizing inwardly, and rendering permanent that which they have gained. What they have added to growth in the spring they take the rest of the season to solidify, to consolidate, to perfect, by chemical evolutions; and when autumn comes, the year's increase is so tough that, when the tender plants that laughed at them, and chided them, and accused them of being lazy, are laid low by the frost, there stand my rhododendrons, holding out their green leaves, and saying to November and December, "I am here as well as you." And they are as green to-day as they were before the winter set in. Now, I like Christians that grow fast this spring, and hold on through the summer, and next spring grow again. I like Christians that, having grown for a time, stop and organize what they have gained, and then start again. I like periodicity in Christian growth. And that reproach which Christians so often heap upon themselves and each other, because they are not constant and steady in their development, frequently arises from a want of knowledge of the method by which God builds up human character.— *Beecher.*

"An English barrister, who was accustomed to train students for the practice of law, and who was not himself a religious man, was once asked why he put students, from the very first, to the study and analysis of the most difficult parts of the sacred Scriptures. 'Because,' said he, 'there is nothing else like it, in any language, for the developing of mind and character.'"— *Haven.*

3, 4. (3) **sand . . sea,** prov. expres. for what cannot be numbered or measured.[a] **words . . up,** *R. V.*, "therefore have my words been rash," he concedes that his language has been vehement, but tries to excuse it. (4) **arrows . . Almighty,** by his affliction he is thrown back to the conception of God as mere power, which "without giving reason does with man as He will."[b] **poison . . spirit,** *R. V.*, "the poison whereof my spirit drinketh up," the poison of God's arrows has entered his very spirit. **set . . me,**[c] assails me in battle-array.

the greatness of his grief may excuse his words

a Pr. xxvi. 3.

b De xxxii.23; Ps. xxxviii. 2; xci 5; Ez. v. 16; Zec. ix. 14.

c Mk. xiv. 34; 2 Co. v. 11.

The arrows of the Almighty.— Our sufferings are very much as we are made to view them. Job describes these sufferings according to his views and feelings. I. As arrows, sharp, penetrating; coming swiftly, suddenly, and with great force; not one, but many, coming in great succession. II. Arrows of the Almighty. They must be especially sharp and deadly. III. Poisoned arrows — hence especially deadly, and the painful character of his sufferings. IV. These arrows are not only discharged against him, but abiding with him, or being with him. His distress unintermitting. V. The effect of these arrows — drinking up his spirit. VI. No power of men or angel able to withstand these arrows. Note: — Satan working on our unbelief in the time of trouble, is able to make his own arrows to be mistaken for those of the Almighty. — *Hom. Com.*

The cross on Golgotha will never save thy soul: The cross in thine own heart alone can make thee whole.—*Silesius.*

Poisoned arrows. — The practice of using poisoned arrows is universal among the interior nations of Southern Africa, to whom the Gospel has not reached. The strongest of all the poisons used is that which has been discovered by the most uncivilized of all the nations, the wild Bushmen; a wound from which is attended with great pain and thirst while the poison is working throughout the system, and attended with great depression. I brought some of the poison with me to England, to see if any antidote against it could be discovered. It has exactly the appearance of black wax, and is found deposited in sheltered corners of rocks, but how it came there is yet unknown. A medical gentleman, who had devoted much attention to the different kinds of known poisons, after delivering some lectures in London on that particular subject, heard of the Bushman poison, and applied to me to furnish him with some of it, that he might analyze it, and endeavor to find out an antidote. I rejoiced that the matter had fallen in such good hands, and immediately forwarded it by post. I received different letters, containing various experiments, but all had failed. I remember the first trial he made of the power of the poison was, by wetting the point of a needle, and, after dipping it into the powder, pricking a bird with it, which died almost immediately. The same experiment was made on a second bird, while some antidote was immediately applied to counteract the effects of the poison. After a short time it also died. Various antidotes were tried in the same way, but all proved equally ineffectual. — *Campbell.*

"There are minerals called hydrophanous, which are not transparent till they are immersed in water, when they become so; as the hydrophane, a variety of opal. So it is with many a Christian. Till the floods of adversity have been poured over him, his character appears marred and clouded by selfishness and worldly influences. But trials clear away the obscurity, and give distinctness to his piety."—*Hitchcock.*

"Those whose tongues are gentlemen ushers to their wit, and still go before it." — *Ben Jonson.*

animals are contented when free from pain

5—7. (5) **ass . . ox,** "Job is not crying out for nothing: if things were as they should be, or even as Eliphaz explains, he would not complain." — *Gen-*

ung. (6) **unsavoury . . salt,**[a] much less can food be taken when bitter and unpalatable, as my food is! **taste . . egg,**[b] he compares his affliction to an insipid food. (7) **things . . meat,** *R. V.*, "my soul refuseth to touch them; they are as loathsome meat to me." **They,** *i. e.* his sufferings, they are sickening and repugnant to him.[c]

Sorrowful meat. — While the Chinese are mourning for the death of a father or mother, they eat the meanest and most unsavory food. This is done in compliance with very ancient rules, which forbid the son or the daughter to taste any pleasure while they are endeavoring to show their esteem for the dead by the outward garbs of mourning. "Sorrowful meat," or "the bread of mourners," means, in Chinese acceptation, any kind of food which has no pleasant taste, and such as is eaten merely to sustain life, without the slightest reference to enjoyment. Bread or rice of the worst kind, meat and vegetables without salt, are sorrowful meat in China, because they only suit a famished appetite, and never affect the taste with any gratification. The remarks of Eliphaz the Temanite had no taste, no relish at all in the estimation of Job; they lacked the salt of aptitude and sense; they might be good in themselves, but they were out of place, and disgusted instead of soothing the mind of the patriarch. If we would make our counsel acceptable, we must change situations with the afflicted, and borrow, if possible, the very sentiments which are exercising their minds, that we may administer the same consolation to them which we should be glad to have administered to ourselves were we placed in the same circumstances. *Consideration for friends.* — Don't flatter yourself that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into relation with a person, the more necessary do tact and courtesy become. Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friend to learn unpleasant truths from his enemies; they are ready enough to tell them. — *Holmes.*

[a] Mk. ix. 50.

[b] The Egyptians kept ducks and geese. Ostrich eggs were probably found and eaten. But the word is sup. by some to mean *purslain*, an insipid herb. The word is found only here.

[c] Ps. cii. 9.

"Let us take care how we speak to those who have fallen on life's field. Help them up, not heap scorn on them. We do not know the scars."

he longs for death and the comfort he would then have

8—10. (8) **Oh . . request,** *etc.*, death is his only hope. (9) **destroy,** *R. V.*, "crush," even that would be better than this present, long-continued anguish. (10) **yea . . spare,** *R. V.*, "yea, I would exult in pain that spareth not;" he would endure gladly the keenest torture if only he could know that it would end his existence. **not . . One,**[d] not yet. He has thus far been loyal, and he longs for death before he loses his integrity.

Job's desire for death. — It arose from — I. The comfort in the prospect of a speedy release from his extreme distress. II. The consciousness of having been God's faithful servant. This implies — 1. Fearlessness in confessing the truth; 2. Faithfulness in communicating it. The testimony of Job's conscience, that he had neither by fearfulness nor faithlessness concealed the truth of God. — *Hom. Com.*

Murmuring. — Murmuring is a mercy-embittering sin, a mercy-souring sin. As, put the sweetest things into a sour vessel, it sours them; or put them into a bitter vessel, and it embitters them: murmuring puts gall and wormwood into every cup of mercy that God gives into our hands. As holy silence gives a sweet taste, a delightful relish, to all a man's mercies, so murmuring embitters all; the murmurer can taste no sweetness in his sweetest morsels; every mercy, every morsel, tastes like the white of an egg to him. . . . The murmurer writes *Marah* — that is, "bitterness" — upon all his mercies. . . . As to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet, so to the murmuring soul every sweet thing is bitter. — *T. Brookes.*

[d] Ps. cxix. 13.

"We lose the right of complaining sometimes by forbearing it, but we often treble the force."— *Sterne.*

"Those who complain most, are most to be complained of."— *M. Henry.*

"Distress is virtue's opportunity; we only live, to teach us how to die."— *Southerne.*

he deplores his weakness

11—13. (11) **strength,**[e] exhausted by suffering, he distrusts his own powers of endurance, and sees no hope on which to rest his patience. **hope,** of prolonged life, and restored health. **end,** if I live, what will the rest of life be but a protracted misery? **prolong my life,** *R. V.*, "be patient." (12) **stones,** able to resist the storm. (13) **Is . . me?** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "is it not that I have no help in me, and that effectual working is driven quite from me?" All resource within himself, all means of recovery, is gone.

Hope regained. — A poor, suffering girl, who had long loved the Saviour, under a feeling of depression, confessed to her minister that she had deceived herself, and did not love Him. The minister walked to the window and wrote on a piece of paper, "I do not love the Lord Jesus Christ," and said, 'Susan, here is a pencil. Just put your name to that.' "No, sir," she said, 'I could not sign *that*.' "Why not?" "I would be torn to pieces before I would sign it, sir." "But why not sign it if it is true?" "Ah! sir," she said, 'I hope it is not true. I think I do love Him."— *C. H. Spurgeon.*

[e] Ps. xc. 5, 6; ciii. 15, 16.

We cannot conquer fate and necessity, but we can yield to them in such a way as to be greater than if we could.— *Hannah More.*

Moderation in sorrow. —

My friend ! enough to sorrow you have given,
The purposes of wisdom ask no more :
Be wise and cheerful ; and no longer read
The form of things with an unworthy eye.
She sleeps in the calm grave, and peace is here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
By mist and silver rain-drops silvered o'er,
As once I pass'd, did to my heart convey
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful,
Amid the uneasy thoughts that fill'd my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
The passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appear'd an idle dream, that would not live
Where meditation was. I turn'd away,
And walk'd along my road in happiness ! — *Wordsworth.*

'Is a servant ordered to do a thing for which he has not strength; to undergo great hardships; he asks, Is my strength as iron? Am I a stone?" — *Roberts.*

"Nothing can occur beyond the strength of faith to sustain, or transcending the resources of religion to relieve."—*Binney.*

14, 15. (14) **afflicted pity,** *R. V.*, "ready to faint kindness," *etc.* He had expected sympathy, not criticism, from his friends. **but he forsaketh,** *R. V.*, "even to him that forsaketh," or (*Cox*) "because he is in danger of forsaking the Almighty." His perilous spiritual condition should call out their friendliness. (15) **brook,** a desert wady. **they pass,** *R. V.*, "that pass," *i. e.* my friends have been to me in my trouble as a dried-up brook to a thirsty traveler.

he reproves his friends' lack of pity

Parepa at a funeral. — A wealthy lady of New York City, a friend of Madame Parepa Rosa, relates an instance of the great singer's sympathetic tact. The lady had for a long time given work to a poor sewing-woman and her young daughter, and when the daughter became feeble, she had supplied her with books and comforted her with gentle attentions. One bitter day in December a sad note from the mother came to tell the lady that the girl had died, and the funeral service would be held that afternoon. Parepa was present, saw the little tear-blotted letter, and at once said : "You must go, and I will go with you." The formal service was soon over, and the minister, after some well-meant words of consolation to the forlorn mourner, took his leave. In the painful pause that ensued, Parepa rose and stood beside the coffin. She laid her white hand for an instant on the cold forehead — and then for the first time the wondering spectators heard her matchless voice :

"Angels ever bright and fair,
Take, oh take me to your care !"

The scene was changed as if by enchantment. The hearers stood with rapt faces, and there were many tearful eyes. The minister came softly back, and waited reverently, hat in hand. Those squalid entries had never before known such glory of song. The good and great-hearted woman had brought earth and heaven near to each other by the melody of her art, and transfigured a childless widow's sorrow. *Streams in Palestine.* — The phenomena of streams in this country aptly illustrate the character of Job's false friends. In winter, when there is no need of them, they are full and strong, and loud in their bustling professions and promises ; but in the heat of summer, when they are wanted, they disappoint your hopes. You think your fields will be irrigated, and your flocks refreshed by them, when, lo ! they deal deceitfully, and pass away. Nearly all the streams of this country, "what time they wax warm," thus vanish, go to nothing, and perish. Such were Job's friends. There is another illustration equally pertinent. You meet a clear, sparkling brook, and so long as you follow it among the cool mountains, it holds cheerful converse with you, by its merry gambols over the rocks ; but as soon as you reach the plain, "where it is hot," it begins to dwindle, grow sad and discouraged, and finally fails altogether. Those which suggested the comparison of Job probably flowed down from the high land of Gilead and Bashan, and came to nothing in the neighboring desert ; for it is added, that the "troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped." It was on those high mountains only that Job could become familiar with the winter phenomena, when the streams "are blackish

"We say in common discourse, that a man may be his own enemy; and the frequency of the fact makes the expression intelligible. But that a man should be the bitterest enemy of his friends implies a contradiction of a peculiar nature. There is something in it which cannot be conceived without a confusion of ideas, nor expressed without a solecism in language ; yet a man is often injured by the assistance of his friend, whose impulse, however generous and sincere, combines neither prudence for its regulation nor skill for its successful adoption." — *Junius.*

"It is folly to believe that one can faithfully love who does not love faithfulness." — *Sir P. Sidney.*

by reason of the ice;" for not only are Lebanon and Hermon covered with snow in the winter and the brooks then frozen, but the same is true also of the higher parts of the Hermon, and of the mountains to the south of it, where Job is supposed to have resided. — *Thomson's Land and Book.*

false friendship as a deceitful brook

16, 17. (16) **blackish,** *etc.*, true of turbid streams in the Hauran when the winter is severe. (17) **vanish,** exhaled by heat of the sun, or losing themselves in the sand, in the time of heat when most needed.

True friendship. — Happy is the house that shelters a friend! It might well be built, like a festal bower or arch, to entertain him a single day. Happier, if he know the solemnity of that relation and honor its law. It is no idle band, no holiday engagement. He who offers himself as a candidate for that covenant, comes up, like an Olympian, to the great games, where the first-born of the world are the competitors. He proposes himself for contests where Time, Want, Danger are in the lists, and he alone is a victor who has truth enough in his constitution to preserve the delicacy of his beauty from the wear and tear of all these. The gifts of fortune may be present or absent, but all the hap in that contest depends on intrinsic nobleness and the contempt of trifles. — *Emerson.* *Oriental rivers.* — Major Colebrook, in the seventh volume of *Asiatic Researches*, "On the Course of the Ganges Through Bengal," observes, — that the occasional obstructions which the rivers of Bengal meet with, on the return of their periodical flux, produce not unfrequently some very extraordinary alterations in the course and bending of their respective beds, and hence some equally extraordinary changes in the general face of the country. While some villages that, in common, are scarcely visited by a river, even at its utmost rise, are overflowed and suddenly swept away; others, actually seated on the banks of an arm, and that used to be regularly inundated, are totally deserted, and the inhabitants have to travel over many miles to obtain water. He adds, that the Ganges has evinced changes of this nature in a greater degree than any other Indian stream; and that even since the survey of Major Rennel, in 1764, it has deviated in its course not less than two miles and a half; whence several of the villages which figure in his map are no longer to be found in the situations assigned them; while islands of considerable magnitude, now inhabited and cultivated, have started into being where the river then rolled its deepest waters. — *Good.*

"How were friendship possible? In mutual devotedness to the good and true; otherwise impossible, except an armed neutrality or hollow commercial league. A man, be the heavens ever praised, is sufficient for himself; yet were ten men, united in love, capable of being and of doing what ten thousand singly would fail in. Infinite is the help man can yield to man." — *Carlyle.*

false friendship is disappointing

18—20. (18) **paths,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "The caravans that travel by the way of them turn aside; they go up into the waste, and perish." (19) **troops . . companies,** caravans, nomadic peoples. (20) **because . . hoped,** to find water. **ashamed,** bitterly disappointed; their suffering was increased because their rightful expectations were so utterly in vain.

The redeeming power of sympathy. — I. Its secret. It redeems. 1. By giving strength to endure. 2. By softening the heart. 3. By revealing the love of God. II. Its exercise. 1. In God. Our sympathy is but a copy of God's sympathy. 2. In Christ, His redemption is a work of sympathy. (1.) In its origin. (2.) In its application. (3.) In men. We too must save by sympathy. We must understand men if we would help them. — *Pul. Com.*

Brooks in the desert. — In desert parts of Africa it has afforded much joy to fall in with a brook of water, especially when running in the direction of the journey, expecting it would prove a valuable companion. Perhaps before it accompanied us two miles, it became invisible by sinking into the sand; but two miles farther along, it would reappear and run as before, and raise hopes of its continuance; but after running a few hundred yards, would finally sink into the sand, not again to rise. In both cases it raised hopes which were not realized; of course it deceived. Perhaps it is to such brooks that Job refers in the 15th verse. There are many in Africa, which are described in verse 17, which run in the winter, or rainy season; but the return of the hot season completely dries them up, which prove often great disappointments to strange travelers.— *Campbell.*

"Sweet as refreshing dews or summer showers, to the long parching thirst of drooping flowers; grateful as fanning gales to fainting swains, and soft as trickling balm to bleeding pains— such are thy words." — *Gay.*

he did not ask for their aid

21—23. (21) **For . . nothing,** ye are like a dried-up brook. **my casting down,** *R. V.*, "a terror," *i. e.* "the awful spectacle of God's hand working His wrath in Job's leprosy. Their friendship is at the mercy of their theology." — *Genung.* (22) **Did . . me,**[a] he had not asked anything very great from his friends, only sympathy and straightforward dealings, and that they should consider him the truthful man whom they knew him to be.

[a] Je. xv. 21.

Friendship (*vs.* 22). — I. Its disclaimers. True friendship disclaims the right to be exacting; in its mutual offices all must be voluntary and free. II. Its rights. But we have great rights in friendship. These the patriarch insists on now. He has a right — 1. To good words. 2. To have the truth of his statements accepted. 3. To confidence. 4. To tender compassion, and to guidance by those whose minds are calm. 5. To self-defense. — *Johnson Hollow friendship.* — Their feelings might be read in their faces. Only one had spoken with his lips, all with their looks. Their fear as if a pious dread at the signal display of Divine judgment. Afraid — I. Of being found sympathizing with a guilty man. II. Of being involved in the same calamity. III. Of being called upon to relieve or defend the sufferer. Base to withhold sympathy and kindness from regard to our own comfort, credit, or convenience.

Washington and his friends. — An anecdote is told of the great Washington which exhibits, in a fine light, the distinction between public duty and private friendship. During his administration as President of the United States, a gentleman, the friend and the companion of the general throughout the whole course of the Revolutionary war, applied for a lucrative and very responsible office. The opponent of this gentleman was known to be decidedly hostile to the politics of Washington; he had even made himself conspicuous among the ranks of opposition. He had nothing to urge in favor of his pretensions but strong integrity, promptitude, and fidelity in business, and every quality which, if called into exercise, would render service to the State. Every one considered the application of this man hopeless; no glittering testimonial of merit had he to present to the eye of Washington; he was known to be his political enemy; he was opposed by a favorite of the general's; and yet, with such fearful odds, he dared to stand candidate. What was the result? The enemy of Washington was appointed to the office, and his table companion was left destitute and dejected. A mutual friend, who interested himself in the affair, ventured to remonstrate with the president on the injustice of his appointment. "My friend," said he, "I receive with a cordial welcome; he is welcome to my house, and welcome to my heart; but, with all his good qualities, he is not a man of business. His opponent is, with all his political hostility to me, a man of business; my private feelings have nothing to do in this case. I am not George Washington, but President of the United States: as George Washington I would do this man any kindness in my power; but as President of the United States, I can do nothing." — *Cheever.*

"There is no man so friendless but that he can find a friend sincere enough to tell him disagreeable truths." — *Bulwer Lytton.*

"A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. You may take sarza to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flour of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain, but no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession." — *Bp. Reynolds.*

"Friendship closes its eyes rather than see the moon eclipst; while malice denies that it is ever at the full." — *Hans.*

24, 25. (24) **Teach,**[a] if you are able to instruct. **I . . tongue,** I will learn in silence. **cause . . erred,** a hint that otherwise they should be silent. (25) **right words,**[b] *i. e.* straightforward speech, that declares without insinuation its real meaning. **your arguing reprove,** *lit. what doth reproving from you,* the kind of reproving that comes from you, insinuations and captious laying hold of more excited language, *reprove?* — *Cam. B.*

Job's remonstrance. — Observe — I. He had asked no favor at their hands. II. They had not attempted to show him his sin. Note Job's sense of the value of such reproof. *Right words.* — 1. The form of such words. 1. Argument: 2. Reproof; 3. Instruction; 4. Admonition; 5. Persuasion. II. The character of the words. 1. Right and true in themselves; 2. The whole truth, so far as necessary, in connection with the subject; 3. Correct in their application; 4. Spoken in uprightness and sincerity. III. The efficacy of such words. 1. In enlightening the understanding; 2. In awakening the conscience: 3. In moving the affections and will; 4. In comforting the afflicted. — *Hom. Com.*

Doing justice to others: — What makes it so difficult to do justice to others is, that we are hardly sensible of merit, unless it falls in with our own views and line of pursuit: and where this is the case, it interferes with our own pretensions. To be forward to praise others, implies either great eminence, that can afford to part with applause; or great quickness of discernment, with confidence in our own judgments; or great sincerity and love of truth, getting the better of our self-love. — *Hazlitt.*

right words are forcible

a Pr. xxv. 12.

b Pr. xxv. 11; Eco. xii. 11

"When the first time of love is over, there comes a something better still. Then comes that other love; that faithful friendship which never changes, and which will accompany you with its calm light through the whole of life. It is only needful to place yourself so that it may come, and then it comes of itself. And then everything turns and changes itself to the best." — *Bremer.*

26, 27. (26) **imagine,** propose. **speeches . . wind,** the frenzied utterance of desperation not to be regarded as proofs of guilt. (27) **ye . . fatherless,**[c] *R. V.*, "Yea, ye would cast lots upon the fatherless, and make merchandise of your friend." A strong reproof for their unfeeling behavior.

Job's estimate of his friends' reproof. — I. Their argument and reproof had been pointless and profitless. II. Their reproof was directed only against

he charges them with cruelty

c "Ye are pitiless as creditors who take the children

of a debtor after his death." — *Spk. Com.*

words uttered in deep distress and great disquietude of spirit. Note the conduct of Job's friends: all the guiltier as being — 1. Under color of friendship; 2. Under profession of piety; 3. With considerable knowledge of Divine truth. — *Hom. Com.*

he challenges investigation

a Mal. iii. 18.

"Reputation is whatmen and women think of us; character is what God and angels know of us." — *Paine.*

28—30. (28) **Now . . me,** *etc., R. V.*, "Now therefore be pleased to look upon me, for surely I shall not lie to your face." Their conduct assumes that he has been lying in his professions of integrity. (29) **let it not be iniquity,** *etc., R. V.*, "let there be no injustice; yea, return again, my cause is righteous." **Return,**[a] *i. e.* from their suspicion to their former friendly confidence in him. (30) **taste,** moral perception. His spiritual sense is not blunted. "When he says he is righteous it is from a real discernment, as keen as ever of good and evil." — *Genung.*

Job's challenge to his friends. — I. Appeal of conscious integrity. II. Truth and sincerity read in his countenance. III. The ground of his appeal. Truth and innocence court investigation. No small excellence needful to a correct moral judgment. Grace is indicated not only by a tender, but an enlightened conscience. — *Hom. Com.*

When heaven sends storms upon men, they must imitate the humble grass, which saves itself by lying meekly down.

Joy flies monopolists; it calls for two.

Self-reliance. — What I must do, is all that concerns me, not what the people think. It is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude. — *Emerson.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

an appointed time for man

b Ecc. iii. 1, 2; Jo. xi. 9, 10; Ps. xxxix. 4.

c De. xxiv. 14, 15; Ja. v. 4.

d Ps. vi. 6.

1—3. (1) **Is . . time,**[b] *R. V.*, "a warfare;" suggests a fixed period and hard toil. **hireling,** perh. the mercenary soldier. (2) **shadow,**[c] by this the time for meals or rest is judged in the E. (3) **possess . . vanity,**[d] evidently he had suffered some time before his friends arrived. Long months and weary nights.

"One step more and the race is ended;
One word more, and the lesson's done;
One toil more, and a long rest follows
At set of sun."—
Christina Rossetti.

Human life. —I. As an appointed period. Our days measured out by Him who created us. Hence — 1. Bear meekly life's trials; 2. Wait patiently for its termination; 3. Carefully improve its continuance. II. As a war-service. A time of — 1. Trouble and suffering; 2. Conflict; 3. Service. Lessons —1. Be prepared for suffering; 2. Be careful to be on the right side; 3. Be faithful, obedient and active; 4. Be hopeful and courageous. III. As the term of a hired servant. A hired laborer has — 1. Self-denying labor to undergo; 2. A limited time to do it in; 3. Due wages to receive when it is done. Hence — 1. Choose the best Master. God's service is (1) Honorable; (2) Pleasant; (3) Satisfying to the conscience. 2. Be diligent in doing the Master's work. — *Robinson.*

"Why may not I as passionately wish to see an end of life, as a slave in a hot day gasps for the refreshment of the shade? or as the laborer longs for the evening, when he may rest, and be paid for his pains?" — *Bp. Patrick.*

Measuring time by the shadow. — The people of the East measure time by the length of their shadow. Hence, if you ask a man what o'clock it is, he immediately goes in the sun, stands erect, then looks where his shadow terminates; he measures the length with his feet, and tells you nearly the time. Thus they earnestly desire the shadow, which indicates the time for leaving their work. A person wishing to leave his toil often cries out, "How long my shadow is in coming!" When asked, "Why did you not come sooner?" his answer is, "Because I waited for my shadow." — *Roberts.* In some parts of England it was customary, a few years ago, before watches became common, for all laborers, whom a long familiarity had taught the direction in which the fields lay in respect to the cardinal points of the heavens, when they wished to ascertain the hour of the day, to turn their faces towards the north, and observe the bearing of their own shadow. By this simple expedient they would often guess within a few minutes of the time.

"Like the servant, he panteth for the night shade, and like the hireling, he presseth on to his finishing." — *Good.*

Life's day. —

From the first gleam of morning to the gray
Of peaceful evening, lo, a life unrolled!
In woven pictures all its changes told,
Its lights, its shadows, every flitting ray
Till the long curtain, falling, dims the day,
Steals from the dial's disk the sunlight's gold

And all the graven hours grow dark and cold,
Where late the glowing blaze of noontide lay. — *Holmes.*

4—6. (4) **When . . say,** *etc.*, he recounts the evils of his condition, one is sleeplessness. **and . . gone,** *R. V.*, "but the night is long." (5) **flesh . . worms,** exact descr. of the disease. **skin . . loathsome,** *R. V.*, "skin closeth up and breaketh out afresh." (6) **and . . hope,** they pass without any prospect of improvement.

the night and the day alike wearisome

The loom and its lessons. — I. As weavers' shuttles are charged with various substances, so men's experiences are loaded with different elements. II. As the weaver works according to a given pattern, so men should have a purpose in life. III. As the work of the weaver employs the whole man, so life demands all our energies. IV. As in the fabric woven, the durability of the whole piece depends on the quality of each thread, so the quality of the whole of life depends on the character of the words and deeds composing it. V. As the process of weaving is often interrupted by the breaking of the thread, so life has its hindrances. VI. As the piece woven is sometimes so wide that two are required to weave it, so life has its necessary partnerships. VII. The shuttle flies swiftly, so does life. VIII. The result in both cases will be one day examined.— *J. C. Gray.*

The burden of wings. — There is a myth about the birds, that when they were first created they had no wings; and the story is, that God made the wings, put them down before the birds, and said, "Now, come and take the burdens up and bear them." The birds had beautiful plumage and voices; they could sing and shine, but they could not soar; but they took up their wings with their beaks and laid them upon their shoulders, and at first they seemed to be a heavy load, and rather difficult to bear. But as they cheerfully and patiently bore them, and folded them over their hearts, lo! the wings grew fast, and that which they once bore, now bore them. The burdens became pinions, and the weights became wings. We are the wingless birds, and our duties are the pinions; and when at first we assume them, they seem loads; but if we cheerfully bear them, going after Jesus, the burdens change to pinions, and we, who once thought we were nothing but servants bearing loads, find that we are sons and heirs of God, free to mount up with wings as eagles, running without being weary, walking without being faint. — *A. T. Pierson.*

"To talk much of one's sorrows makes one weak; but to tell one's sorrows to Him who heareth in secret makes one strong and calm." — *Tholuck.*

"Most persons have died before they expire,— died to all earthly longings — so that the last breath is only, as it were, the locking of the door of the already deserted mansion."— *Holmes.*

"The expression, when fairly rendered from the original, is peculiarly forcible: 'So much worse is my destiny than that of the bondsman and the hireling, that, while they pant and look early for the night shade, as the close of their trouble, even the night is not free from troubles to myself.'"—*Good.*

7, 8. (7) **my . . wind,**[a] a puff, a breath, a sob. **see good,** *i. e.* happiness or prosperity in this life. (8) **and . . not,** nothing can be more hopeless than the tone of *vss.* 9 and 10: "When my brief life is ended, men will see me no more: and even Thine eye shall look for me in vain."

his life is without hope

Homiletic hints on life. — The frail and fleeting nature of life; its speedy termination; life terminated by a look from the Almighty; life, compared with God's eternity, only a moment; the impossibility of its recall; only one life on earth; solemn responsibility connected with our life. — *Hom. Com.*

The purpose of our lives. — In the Memorial Hall at Harvard University there is a wonderful array of beautiful sentences frescoed on the walls in various colors, but they are all in Latin. And it is said that some of the workmen did not know the meaning of the sentences they painted, but could only put the letters and the colors on the walls as they were told, without understanding the wondrous meaning wrapped up in them. So we are often writing our lives in an unknown tongue; we can only do as we are bidden, but in due time there will be read out in some heavenly language a biography we never dreamed was ours, full of glory and blessing. — *Peloubet.*

Misunderstanding God's love. —

Hard is life
For some. They would that they could soften it;
And in the doing of their work, they sigh
As if it was their choice and not their lot;
And, in the raising of their prayer to God,
They crave His kindness for the world He made,
Till they, at last, forget that He, not they,
Is the true-love of man. — *Ingelow.*

"Those who find pleasure in dwelling upon and amplifying the faults of others, to the partial or total oblivion of their own, remind me of Hogarth's quaint picture in false perspective; wherein the trees that line the road, and the sheep traveling along it, grow larger and more distinct as they recede from the eye."— *F. W. Robertson.*

[a] Ps. lxxviii. 39; lxxxix. 47.

death will end all

a Ge. xxxvii. 35; 2 Sa. xxii. 6.

"While we are reasoning concerning life, life is gone; and death, though perhaps they receive him differently, yet treats alike the fool and the philosopher."—*Hume.*

"Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud turn forth her silver lining on the night?"—*Milton.*

9, 10. cloud . . away, is dissipated, one knows not how. **grave,** Heb. *Sheol,*[a] the underworld, Hades; it means "what is hollow and subterranean." "A neutral word presupposing neither misery nor happiness."—*Genung.* Comp. note in ch. iii. 17, 18. (10) **shall . . house,** his dwelling. **neither . . more,** the Egyptians believed that some men would have power to return to their own houses. — *Spk. Com.*

The vanished cloud (*vs.* 9). — More than once we had noticed in our early mornings dull masses of clouds in the sky. As the sun got up and gathered strength, these all vanished. They did not drift away or pass to a different region of the heavens; but they vanished on the spot, such was the absorbing power of the desert sun. Clouds that would have brought a whole day's rain in our climate disappeared. We recognized the figure in Job. — *Bonar. In and out.* — A fox once came upon a cave, into which he saw many foxes had entered, the sand being full of footprints. He was about to pass in when his cunning eye detected that all the footprints pointed one way. All were turned inwards, and there were none leading out of the cave. We have come to a great cave — the grave — and its entrance is marked by many footprints. All lead in, and none out. But Christ has set His feet the other way; and now, if we go into this cave, we shall follow Him out again. — *London S. S. Chronicle.*

he complains of Divine restraints

b Ps. xxxix. 3; 1 Sa. i. 10; Lu. xxii. 44.

c La iii. 7.

11, 12. (11) **Therefore,**[b] bec. of the brevity of life wh. has been portrayed, and the immediateness of death, Job resolves to give full vent to his complaint. (12) **sea,** or river, perhaps the Nile, which has to be kept within bounds. **whale,**[c] *R. V.*, "a sea-monster." Why does God thus mightily exert His powers on any insignificant life?

Be thou thyself! So strongly, grandly bear
Thee on what seems thy hard, mistaken road,
That thou shalt breathe heaven's clearest upper air
And so forget thy feet that meet the clod. — *Greene.*

he finds no rest at night

d Ge. xl. 5, 6; xli. 7, 8.

e Ps. cxliv. 4; lxxviii. 33.

God sometimes puts His children to bed in the dark. — *Moody.*

13—16. (13) **When,** *etc.*, anticipating relief in sleep. (14) **Then . . dreams,**[d] com. symptoms in elephantiasis. (15) **strangling,** all, to sensation of suffocation or choking. Job refers to this symptom, saying that he is driven to desire that it might be really fatal. **rather . . life,** *R. V.*, "rather than these my bones," his disease left him an emaciated skeleton. (16) **let . . alone,** this is addressed to God. "I loathe my life. I do not desire to live, cease from inflicting pain, and give a little respite ere I vanish, like a breath." **for . . vanity,**[e] full of emptiness.

Why the believer does not wish to live always.—I. He knows it is the will of God that he should not live always. II. Because here the work of grace is but imperfectly developed. III. Here the full blessedness of justifying righteousness cannot be enjoyed. IV. Here God is at best but imperfectly worshiped. V. The change is absolutely necessary for the completion of our blessedness, and the perfection of the Divine glory.

why should God consider man?

f Ps. cxliv. 3; viii. 4; He. ii. 6.

A man is just as great as he is in the sight of God — no greater. — *Farvar.*

"The record of life runs thus — man creeps into childhood, bounds into youth, softens into age, totters into second childhood, and slumbers into the cradle

17—19. (17) **What,** *etc.*,[f] irony. Why should God concern Himself with so insignificant a creature? (18) **visit . . morning,** with successive trials. (19) **depart from,** *R. V.*, "look away from." He prays God to turn His attention on something of more importance than himself! **let . . spittle,** prov. expres. = a moment or twinkling of an eye.

"*Lord, what is man?*"—I. The insignificance of man. 1. In origin, allied to the dust. 2. In character, defiled by sin. 3. In experience, weighted with misery. 4. In duration, short-lived and evanescent. 5. In destiny, doomed to dissolution. II. The greatness of man. 1. Created in the Divine image. 2. Preserved by Divine care. 3. Redeemed by Divine love. 4. Renewed (or may be) by Divine grace. 5. Immortalized (or may be) by Divine life. 6. Crowned with Divine glory, already in Christ Jesus, and afterwards in them that are his. Lessons. 1. Since man is so insignificant, be humble. 2. Since man is so great be good. — *Whitelaw.*

Imperfect instruments. — God makes use of imperfect instruments in doing his work, — imperfect apostles, imperfect churches, imperfect Christians, and yet really good work is done. A young minister insisted that everything must be squared according to his ideas of perfect right. On one occasion he undertook to tune the church organ in an emergency. He took the scale of notes used, and tuned the organ perfectly according to it. Then he struck the

notes of Haydn's Mass in five flats, and was astonished at the terrible discords he made. An organ-tuner explained afterwards to him that his scale was right, his system was right, but if you stick too close to it, it sets you wrong. Most fifths must be left flat, some few made sharp, the octaves alone tuned in unison, because the organ is an imperfect instrument. But by making proper allowance for this imperfection, wonderful and harmonious music may be produced by it. — *Peloubet.*

prepared for him, thence to be watched and cared for." — *Henry Giles.*

20, 21. I . . sinned, *R. V.*, "If I have sinned, what do I unto thee, O thou watcher of men? why hast thou set me as a mark for thee," *etc.* **what . . thee,** *i. e.* what harm. **thou . . men,** who knowest all. **set . . thee,**[a] as a butt or target for thine arrows. (21) **why . . iniquity?**[b] If I have sinned in some way that I am not aware of, why wilt thou not pardon? **in the morning,** *R. V.*, "diligently." What is the significance of torturing a life so soon to go out? — *Genung.*

why is not sin pardoned?

a La iii. 12.

b Is. lxiv. 9; 2 Sa. xxiv. 10; Mi. vii. 18, 19; Ho. xiv. 2; Jo. i. 29; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Jo. iii. 5.

Why is sin not pardoned? — Consider this inquiry — I. In the matter to which it refers. II. In the circumstances under which it may be proposed. 1. When the heart is alarmed under the judgments or threatenings of God, while there is no right knowledge of God's character; 2. When the soul is enveloped in spiritual gloom, arising out of a consciousness of personal guilt, while the Gospel is not rightly understood; 3. When there is earnestness in the spirit in seeking the Saviour, though ignorance of the Saviour's character and work is mingled with it. III. In the answer which may be returned to it. 1. Because there is no real humiliation before God; 2. Because there is no personal faith in Christ; 3. Because there is no actual determination not to turn with the whole heart to God.

Dr. Payson was asked, when enduring great bodily affliction, if he could see any particular reason for the dispensation. "No," he replied, "but I am as well satisfied as if I could see ten thousand; God's will is the very perfection of all reason."

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) **Bildad,** *see* ii. 11. (2) **these things,** *i. e.* "by way of introducing his principle Bildad expresses his wonder that Job should allow himself to speak such things as his discourse contained. He refers to the general drift of Job's speech, which appears to him to be an assertion that God was unjust." — *Cam. Bib.* **words . . wind,** omit "be like:" *i. e.* thy words are rash, unreasoning. (3) **Doth,** *etc.*,[c] you have implied that God is unjust. But this is inconceivable. Therefore (his logic is), if He makes you suffer, it is because you deserve to.

Bildad's reply — is not God just?

c Ge. xviii. 25; De. xxxii. 4.

The book of Job a dramatic poem. — Dramatic poetry is that in which the persons introduced speak or act in their own names. It is said that this kind of composition is not found in the Scriptures. On the other hand, it is shown that in the Book of Job we have the essential feature of dramatic poetry. Job, and his wife, and his three friends, are, as it were, introduced to us, and go through their several parts in person before us. Certainly the style both of this book and of the Song of Solomon differs entirely from ordinary narrative. Associating, as we too easily do, the word dramatic with the representations of life produced on the stage, and forgetting the larger and literary meaning of the term, we have been needlessly offended at any portion of our Bible being called dramatic. — *R. Tuck.* *Condemnation by public opinion.* — There is a great unwritten law of society — a law which both proclaims and enforces itself — the law of public opinion. It holds no courts, and yet its sittings are perpetual. It has no official existence, yet it is stronger than judges and governments and armies. It employs no officers, and yet, when once on a man's track, it never leaves him until it has tracked him down. It has no prisons, and it needs none, for it makes the world a prison from which the convict it condemns has no escape but death. Public opinion is the jury verdict of humanity; and its sentence, uttered by the people's thousand tongues, executes itself in retribution. — *S. S. Harris.*

"A Christian must labor to have his speech as contracted as can be in the things of this earth; and even in Divine things, or words should be few and wary. In speaking of the greatest things, it is a great point of wisdom not to speak much." — *Leighton.*

It is the one sufficient proof of the grandeur and awfulness of our nature, that we have faith in God; for no merely finite being can possibly believe the infinite. — *James Martineau.*

4—7. (4) **If . . him,** the insinuation is that Job's children were punished for some sin. **cast them away,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "delivered them into the hand of their transgression." Christ taught us, John ix. 2, 3; Lu. xiii. 4, that physical malady is not a sign of Divine anger upon the individual. This principle of Jewish sheol — rep. by Bildad — is rebuked by the Book of Job. (5) **If,** *etc.*, *i. e.* seek forgiveness for your sin. **wert,**[d] better "art," *i. e.* if on the other hand, you are as blameless as you claim, then presently he will awake (!)

God accepts those who turn to Him

d 1 Jo. iii. 22.

and set matters aright. (7) **Though . . small,**[a] by comparison with what the end may be.

A small beginning and a great ending (*vs.* 7). — I. The Christian must have a small beginning. 1. In penitence. 2. In childlikeness. 3. In spiritual experience. 4. In enjoyment of blessings. II. The Christian will have a great increase. 1. On earth. 2. In heaven. III. God leads the race from a small beginning to a great increase. — *Pul. Com.*

Growth to the perfect flower. — Each of us is a distinct flower or tree in the spiritual garden of God, — precious each for his own sake in the eyes of Him who is even now making us, — each of us watered and shone upon and filled with life for the sake of his flower, his completed being, which will blossom out of him at last to the glory and pleasure of the great Gardener. For each has within him a secret of the Divinity; each is growing towards the revelation of that secret to himself, and so to the full reception, according to his measure, of the Divine. And what an end lies before us! To have a consciousness of our own ideal being flashed through us from the thought of God! Surely, for this may well give way all our paltry self-consciousness, our self-admiration, and self-worship! Surely, to know what he thinks about us will pale out of our souls all our thoughts about ourselves. — *MacDonald.*

The living soul is ever growing in the life of God. — *Liddon.*

"The oak tree's boughs once touched the grass,
But every year they grew
A little farther from the ground,
And nearer to the blue."

he appeals to antiquity

8—10. (8) **Enquire . . age,** *etc.*[b] **and prepare,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "and apply thyself to that which their fathers have searched out," *i. e.* "give heed to the research, or to that which their fathers have searched out. By referring to a former age, and then to the fathers of that age or generation, Bildad intimates that his truth was recognized through all antiquity backwards till history loses itself in the beginning of time."— *Cam. B.* (9) **For,** *etc.*,[c] the tendency of many to underrate the present and refer to the "good old times." But there is a prob. all. to the longevity of patriarchal times. (10) **words . . heart,**[d] fr. their deep convictions, knowledge, experience.

What is life? —

And what is life? An hour-glass on the run,
A mist retreating from the morning sun,
A busy, bustling, still repeated dream.
Its length? A minute's pause, a moment's thought.
And happiness? A bubble on the stream,
That in the act of seizing shrinks to nought. — *J. Clare.*

b Ps. xliv. 1; Ro. xv. 4.

c 1 Ch. xxix. 15, Ps. xxxix. 5; Ge. xlvii. 9.

d Ps. cxlv. 4; Isa. xxxviii. 19; De. vi. 7; xi. 19.

"Life, however short, is made shorter by waste of time." — *Johnson.*

life must have its supports

11—14. (11) **Can,** *etc.*, "here the sayings of the fathers begin, and they are not without great beauty and impressiveness. Job himself assents to them *cf.* ix. 2."— *Genung.* **rush,** papyrus. **flag,** reed-grass of Nile. (12) **Whilst,** *etc.*,[e] in the very height of its luxuriance its suddenly withers. (13) **paths,**[f] ways and relations of life. **hypocrite's,** *R. V.*, "the hope of the godless man," *etc.* (14) **Whose hope,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "whose confidence shall break in sunder."

The spider's web (*vs.* 14). — Bildad compares the hope of the impious to a spider's web. I. It is quickly woven. II. It is delicate and beautiful to look at. III. It is useful for its natural end. IV. It is excessively fragile. 1. It has no substance. The man trusts (1) To his own wisdom. (2) To his goodness. (3) To his prosperity. (4) To God's goodness, which is out of the reach of the impious. 2. It is heavily tried. Here is a question of life and death. — *Adeney.*

Hollow prosperity. — Oh that great, brilliant marble house on the corner! Oh the gallery of pictures that stands behind it! Oh the magnificent glass, crystal-cut, that lets the light through the windows or would, if it were not for the splendid rags that are hung up inside! Oh the massive furniture! Oh the gorgeous upholstery! And oh the thin, stingy man who walks up and down in the midst of all this rich abundance! Would you change with him? I would rather trundle a wheelbarrow than be a curmudgeon in what men call "prosperity" in this world. Money in your pocket and hell in your heart do not make you prosperous. Reeking contempt, rasping selfishness, avarice that is vulgar and remorseless, is that prosperity? Is that what you want to live for? Was it for that you came down into life with full freight of anticipation? You cannot have any prosperity that corrupts manhood. There is nothing prosperous which does not make you more than you are. — *Beecher.*

e Isa. xix. 5-7.

f De. viii. 19; Ps. cxii. 10; Pr. x. 28.

"As the most succulent plants are dependent upon foreign support for a continuance of that succulence, and in the midst of their vigor are sooner parched up than plants of less humidity; so the most prosperous sinner does not derive his prosperity from himself, and is often destroyed in the heyday of his enjoyments, more signally and abruptly than those who are less favored, and appear to stand less securely." — *Good.*

15—16. (15) **He,** the hypocrite. **lean,**[a] rely upon as a source of comfort; **house,** worldly wealth, station. **hold it fast,** *R. V.*, "hold fast thereby," *i. e.* he tries to support himself by holding on to it. (16) **green . . sun,**[b] *i. e.* "the hypocrite, or ungoldly man is as a gourd, (Jonah iv. 6), or other rapidly growing plant, which shoots forth; full of promise in the early dawn; flourishing."

Forgetfulness of God. — To forget God is — 1. Not to think of Him; 2. Not to thank Him; 3. Not to serve and obey Him. It is to forget — 1. His presence; 2. His providence; 3. His precepts. Forgetfulness of another implies — 1. Want of love; 2. Want of respect. Observe — I. Forgetfulness of God is the root and essence of all sin. II. To forget God is to forget Him who possesses all claims to our remembrance. III. In forgetting God we give our thoughts and hearts to the world, which has no attractions but what it derives from Him, and which can neither satisfy nor save us. IV. To remember God is to elevate, ennoble, and purify ourselves. — *Hom. Com.*

Exaltation and abasement. — A certain king was dragged in the triumphal train of his conqueror, chained at the back of his chariot as the procession defiled through the dusty street. The servants saw him laughing, as if thoroughly amused by the pageant. And the conqueror turned angrily upon his seat to ask the reason of such exasperating levity. "I am not thinking of the show," the man replied, "but only concerning these wheels I am watching: how they keep whirling! one moment a bit of dust is at the top, and the next it is down upon the road again; now it is above, and now it is under. And it makes one think of kings, too; who is up, and who is down, depends on wheels; and the wheels keep turning between to-day and to-morrow." — *C. S. Robinson.*

the hope of the hyprocrite

[a] Ps. liii 5-7.

[b] Ps. xxxvii 35.

'Tis not that the hypocrite despises a good character, that he is not one himself, but because he thinks he can purchase it at a cheaper rate than the practice of it, and thus obtain all the applause of a good man, merely by pretending to be so.—*Fielding.*

"Hope! fortune's cheating lottery, where for one prize an hundred blanks there be!"—*Cowley.*

"I will despair and be at enmity with cozening hope; he is a flatterer."—*Shakespeare.*

17—19. (17) **roots . . heap,**[c] he seems therefore to be firmly rooted. **seeth . . stones,** *R. V.*, "He beholdeth the place of stones;" *i. e.* sends down his roots to the very foundations and takes hold on "the heart of the earth." (18) **If . . him,**[d] the subject is God. The point of the verse is that this luxuriant plant is destroyed, and when destroyed utterly dissapears, so that his place says, I never saw thee. **it . . deny,** *etc.*, as if ashamed of him. (19) **this . . way,** this is the grand result of all this seeming prosperity. **out . . grow,**[e] either a better race; or, to be in their turn denied.

Premonitions of death desired. — Lord, be pleased to shake my clay cottage before Thou throwest it down. May it totter awhile before it doth tumble. Let me be summoned before I am surprised. Deliver me from sudden death. Not from sudden death in respect of itself, for I care not how short my passage be, so it be safe. Never any weary traveler complained that he came too soon to his journey's end. But let it not be sudden in respect of me. Make me always ready to receive death. Thus no guest comes unawares to him who keeps a constant table. Job xiv. 2. — *T. Fuller.*

The peril of the wicked. — Down by Hell Gate, the rock is tunneled, and deep under the solid masses over which men walk with such careless security, there are now laid trains of explosive powder. All seems so safe and firm outwardly, it is hardly possible to imagine that those solid masses will ever be shaken, but a time will come when a spark will fire the whole train, and the mountain will be in a moment rent in the air, and torn to atoms. There are men here who are tunneled, mined; their time will come, not to-day or to-morrow; not for months or years, perhaps, but it will come; in a moment, from an unseen quarter, a trifling incident, their reputations will be blown to atoms, and what they have sown they will reap — just that. There is no dynamite like men's lusts and passions. — *H. W. Beecher.*

the fate of the wicked

[c] Jer. xii. 1, 2.

[d] Ps xcii. 7; xxxvii. 10, 36; lxxiii. 19.

[e] Ps lxxv. 7; cxiii. 7.

John Howard, the philanthropist, honored by a monument in St. Paul's Cathedral, but more highly honored in the hearts of the relieved prisoners, when parting with a friend previous to an intended visit to Egypt, where it seemed probable that he would die of the plague, said to him, "We shall soon meet in heaven. The way to heaven is as near from Grand Cairo as from London"

20—22. (20) **perfect,**[f] "but apparently God despises Job, for Job is suffering God's distinctive scourge. The ending of this speech, courteous though it is, comes weighted with this implication. The courtesy is only a clumsy disguise to what is really cutting and harsh." — *Genung.* **help . . doers,** grasp the hand of, *etc.*; to hold them up. (21) **Till . . mouth,** *R. V.*, "he will yet fill," *etc.*,[g] *i. e.* if thou be perfect. (22) **They . . shame,**[h] *i. e.* when, bec. of uprightness, thy mouth is filled, *etc.*

Human destiny is determined by moral character (*vs.* 20). — This is Bildad's conclusion, as contained in the three verses before us. In the passage we have two points. I. The real condition of the good. 1. It is a condition in which they will never be deserted of God; 2. It is a condition in which God will

the perfect man not cast off

[f] Ps. xciv. 14.

[g] Ps. cxxvi 2-6.

[h] Ps. cxxxii. 18.

When the babe puts his little soft hand into yours his

hand is as strong as yours, since it is yours that guides it; so when we put our hands into God's we are by His grace as strong as He is, since He leads and we only follow. — *Beecher.*

"O you unwise and unlearned! teach us first what God is, that you may be believed in accusing me of impiety; tell us where God is. Is he shut up within the walls of temples? Is this your piety, to place God in the dark, or to make Him a stony god? O you unskillful! know ye not that God is not made with hands, and hath no basis or fulcrum to stand upon, nor can be enclosed within the walls of any temple; the whole world, variegated with plants, animals, and stars, being his temple." — *Heraclitus.*

inspire them with happiness. II. The other point is the real condition of the wicked. It is here given — 1. Negatively: neither will he help the evil-doers; 2. Positively: they that hate thee shall be clothed with shame, *etc.* — *Homilist.*

The fullness of God. — It is better to be restless and unsatisfied than to find rest and satisfaction in anything lower than the highest. But we need not be restless or unsatisfied. There is a rest in expectation, a satisfaction in the assurance that the highest belongs to us though we have not reached it yet. That rest in expectation we may all have now if we believe in God and know we are His children. Every taste of Him that we have ever had becomes a prophecy of His perfect giving of Himself to us. Is is as when a pool lies far up in the dry rocks, and hears the tide, and knows that her refreshment and replenishing is coming. How patient she is. The other pools nearer the shore catch the sea first, and she hears them leaping and laughing, but she waits patiently. She knows the tide will not turn back till it has reached her. And by and by the blessed moment comes. The last ridge of rock is overwashed. The stream pours in; at first a trickling thread sent only at the supreme effort of the largest wave, but by and by the great sea in its fullness. It gives the waiting pool itself and she is satisfied. So it will certainly be with us if we wait for the Lord, however He delays, and refuse to let ourselves be satisfied with any supply but Him. — *Phillips Brooks.* *The riches of God.* — God is so rich that He can put more of what is beautiful upon a single lily or tulip than the great King Solomon could put on all his clothing. The peacock carries more that is beautiful upon his tail than the richest king could ever show. And even the poor butterfly, which is to live but a few hours, has a more glorious dress than the proudest, richest man that ever lived. If, then, He can take such care of the lilies, the birds and insects, and make them more beautiful than man can ever be, will He not take care of us, if we obey Him? Suppose your father had more oxen and horses and cattle than you could count over in a day, or in a week, would he not be able to take care of his child, and give him everything he needs? Yes. But God has "cattle upon ten thousand hills;" and "every beast of the forest" is His, and His are "all the fowls of the air." Can He not give you food from all these cattle, and clothe you, and give you beds from the feathers of all these fowls? Yes: He is able to do it all. — *J. Todd.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH

Job's reply

man cannot argue with God

1—4. (2) **I . . truth,** I know it is true that God does not pervert judgment. **how . . God?**[a] "the question implies that man cannot be just because he cannot be sure of the standard of justice. This suffering of his confuses all known standards. It makes God seem wanton in power for the mere power's sake." — *Genung.* (3) **If . . him,** in pleading his cause, and vindicating himself. **he . . thousand,** of the questions God might put to him, or of the charges which God might in subtility bring against him. (4) **He is wise,** *etc.*, "God's combination of perfect wisdom with infinite strength renders it hopeless for any man to contend with Him." **who hath hardened,** "no one has ever taken this line of absolute self-justification and prospered." — *Rawlinson.*

Job's idea of what God is in Himself. — I. He regarded Him as just. II. He regarded Him as wise. III. He regarded Him as strong. IV. He regarded Him as retributive. "Who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?" — *Homilist.* *Hardened against God* (*vs.* 4). — I. The passage intimates that appeals are addressed by God to men in order to bring them into allegiance to him. God has appealed to you by the instrumentality of — 1. Conscience; 2 Providence; 3. Revealed truth. II. We are to observe that men treat the appeal made by God with obdurate resistance. 1. The habit here indicated, we state to be heinous in its nature; 2. It is also progressive in its influence. III. Obdurate resistance to the appeals made by God exposes to fearful and fatal consequences. — *J. Parsons.*

Resistance to the Divine will. — Julian, usually styled the *Apostate*, one of the Roman emperors, with the view of invalidating the truth of our Saviour's prophecies respecting the desolation of the Jews, made an attempt to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem; but from the breaking out of terrible balls of fire near the foundations, the workmen were obliged to abandon their impious attempt. "Who hath hardened himself against God, and hath prospered?" His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure. *Resisting guidance.* —

[a] Ps. cxliii. 2; cxxx. 3; 1 Jo. i. 8; Ps. xl. 12.

"Infinity of Being is a pre-eminent mode of the essence of God, by which it is devoid of all limitation and boundary, whether from something above it or below it, from something before it or after it. It is not bounded by anything above it, because it has received its being from no one. Nor by anything below it, because the form, which is itself, is not limited to the capacity of any matter whatsoever that may be its recipient. Neither by anything before it, because it is from nothing efficient;

We were once at a hotel in Switzerland where there lay the dead body of an Austrian count. He had been up on the mountains with a competent guide. The guide had warned him against going to a certain spot; but the traveler had disregarded the advice, had gone, and, slipping over the brink, was killed. The best guide in the world is of no avail to him who will not be guided." — *A. F. Schauffler.*

nor after it, because it does not exist for the sake of another end."— *Arminius*

5–7. "A description of the might and majesty of God, transcending anything in the Psalms, and comparable to the grandest passages of Isaiah."— *Rawlinson.* (5) **Which . . mountains.**[a] He who can instantly, without warning, overturn mountains. **anger,**[b] as it may seem to the unthinking. (6) **Which . . place,** "the reference is probably to earthquakes. The earth is conceived as a structure supported on pillars, prob. the roots of the great mountains which extended downwards and bore up the earth, as the part of them above the earth supported the heavens." — *Cam. B.* (7) **Which . . not,**[c] darkness, as of night, sometimes overspreads the face of the world; it is as if the sun had not risen. **sealeth . . stars,**[d] with dense clouds.

God's agency in material nature (*vs.* 5).— I. Its almightiness is overwhelmingly grand in its manifestations. It should therefore — 1. Impress all with a sense of their utter insignificance; 2. It should impress the sinner with his impious hardihood; 3. It should impress the good with their privileges. II. Its almightiness is co-extensive with the universe. 1. God's universal agency explains all material phenomena; 2. It binds men practically to recognize Him in every part of nature.— *Thomas.*

God in nature.— The book of Nature is an expression of the thoughts of God. We have God's terrible thoughts in the thunder and lightning, God's loving thought in the sunshine and the breeze, God's bounteous thoughts in the waving harvest, God's brilliant thoughts beheld from the mountain top, and God's sweet thoughts in the little flowers that blossom at our feet. We should read all Nature as our Lord read the sparrows. If the air were a few miles less in height than it is, men would soon be suffocated, if a few miles more, it would be unendurably hot under the sun's rays. If the land were harder or softer than it is it could not be cultivated. If sea-water were heavier than it is, fishes would rise to the surface and could not swim, if lighter, they would sink to the bottom and die. If a man were conveyed to the moon, he would weigh five times less than on the earth; he might bound like a grasshopper, and would be easily overset. If the earth were as large as Jupiter our weight would be increased eleven times, and none of us could walk or stand upright. Nature is adjusted with infinite delicacy.— *Hurlbut.*

the great power of God

a Hag. ii. 6; He. xii. 26.

b "Once look on natural phenomena, of wh. the causes are hidden, as indications of special emotions in the Godhead, and the way is open for erroneous conceptions of His dealings with His creatures." — *Spk. Com.*

c "There may be a ref. to the darkness in Egypt, Ex. x. 21." — *Wordsworth.*

d Lu. xxi. 25; Jos. x. 12–14.

The world is the vesture of the unseen God; its whole atmosphere is charged with His presence. — *Freemantle.*

8–10. (8) **alone,**[e] by His almightiness: having no need of help. **waves,** mountain billows, in terrific storms, when its waves "mount up to heaven."[f] (9) **Arcturus,** He made the great northern constellation the Bear, and **Orion** on the south, and **the Pleiades** in the east.[g] **and . . south,** the vast star-spangled spaces of the southern heavens.

Job's idea of what God is to mankind (*vs.* 10).— He regarded the Eternal as— I. Inscrutable. 1. In His works; 2. In His essence. He regarded the Eternal as — II. Irresponsible. III. As resistless. 1. God is an offendable Being; 2. The proud have aiders and abettors. He regarded the Eternal — IV. As inexorable (*vss.* 14-19). Job represents God — 1. As uninfluenced by man; 2. Unapproached by human argument; 3. As too holy to encourage any one to have confidence in his own virtues; 4. As regardless of modern distinctions of society.— *Thomas.*

A child's first impression of a star.—

She had been told that God made all the stars
That twinkled up in heaven; and now she stood
Watching the coming of the twilight on,
As if it were a new and perfect world,
And this were its first eve. How beautiful
Must be the work of nature to a child
In its first impression! Laura stood
By the low window, with the silken lash
Of her soft eye upraised, and her sweet mouth
Half parted, with the new and strange delight
Of beauty, that she could not comprehend,

the power of God in creation. Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades

e Ge. i. 7, 8.

f Ps. lxxvii. 19; Ge. i. 2; Ma. xiv. 25.

g Am. v. 8.

'Tis the sublime of man,
Our noontide majesty, to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole . . . .
But 'tis God,
Diffused through all that doth make all one whole.
— *Coleridge.*

"Look up and behold the eternal fields of light that lie around about

the throne of God. Had no star ever appeared in the heavens, to man there would have been no heavens; and he would have laid himself down to his last sleep in a spirit of anguish, as upon a gloomy earth vaulted over by a material arch — solid and impervious" — *Carlyle*.

And had not seen before. The purple fold
Of the low sunset clouds, and the blue sky
That looked so still and delicate above
Fill'd her young heart with gladness: and the eve
Stole on with its deep shadows. Laura still
Stood, looking at the west with that half smile,
As if a pleasant thought were at her heart.
Presently, in the edge of the last tint
Of sunset, where the blue was melted in
To the faint golden mellowness — a star
Peep'd suddenly. A laugh of wild delight
Burst from her lips, and, putting up her hands,
Her simple thoughts broke forth expressively —
"Father, dear father! God has made a star." — *Proctor*.

the mysterious ways of God.

11, 12. (11) **Lo,**[a] *etc.*, "this is the source of Job's deepest trouble. He has lost the means of tracing God, the standard of life. God seems merely a vast Power, working in the dark, inscrutable." — *Genung*. (12) **Behold,** *etc.*,[b] *R. V.*, "behold he seizeth the prey," *etc.*, *i. e.* just as God acts in nature, seems capricious and irresistible, so in His relations to men. There is no power in man to question or to resist, only to submit.

a Ps. lxxvii. 19; Ti. vi. 16.

The Divine assailant. — I. His mysterious movements. The language (*vs.* 11) recognizes God's — 1. Personality. 2. Activity. 3. Nearness. 4. Invisibility. II. His resistless power. 1. Invincible. 2. Unchallengeable. 3. Implacable. III. His charges unanswerable because of — 1. Man's weakness. 2. God's greatness.

b Da. iv. 35; Je. xviii. 6; Ro. ix. 20, 21; Is. xlv. 9.

Learn: — 1. It is impossible to entertain too exalted a conception of the great and holy God with whom we have to do. 2. It is quite possible, even for the best of men, to misconstrue God's dealings with the soul, and to regard Him as an adversary who is really a Friend. 3. It is well to remember, in every appearance of conflict between the Creator and the creature, that all the right lies upon the side of the former. 4. The nearer saints advance towards perfection, the readier they are to acknowledge their imperfection. 5. A humble and self-abased spirit before God is quite compatible with the maintenance of one's blamelessness before men. — *Whitelaw*.

"A discreet physician minds not so much what we desire as what is convenient; so God Almighty takes away spiritual superfluities rather than grants what we inordinately desire; and a few afflictions help to moderate our affections, and appease our inordinate appetites." —*R. Boyle*.

Resignation. —

Heart be still!
In the darkness of thy woe
Bow thou silently and low;
Comes to thee whate'er God will, —
Be thou still!

Be thou still!
Vainly all thy words are spoken,
Till the word of God hath broken
Life's dark mysteries — good or ill —
Be thou still!

Rest thou still!
'Tis thy Father's work of grace, —
Wait thou yet before His face;
He thy sure deliverance will —
Keep thou still!

Lord, my God!
By thy grace, O may I be
All submissive, silently,
To the chastenings of Thy rod:
Lord, my God!

Shepherd King!
From Thy fulness grant to me
Still, yet fearless, faith in Thee,
Till from night the day shall spring! —
Shepherd king! — *Schiller*.

"The Lord is never so displeased with His children as to hate them; neither are His sharpest corrections sent in His wrath, though He may seem at these times to be angry. Outward prosperity is no infallible sign of God's love, neither are afflictions, crosses, and calamities infallible signs of God's displeasure."—*S. Smith*.

13—15. (13) **If God,**[a] *etc., R. V.*, "God will not draw his anger; the helpers of Rahab do stoop under Him." Rahab, "literally *the proud one.* An allusion to some legend, now lost, of some titanic war against God, such as is alluded to in Gen. vi. 4."—*Genung.* (14) **How . . him,** if such is the fate of the strongest. (15) **Whom,** *etc.,*[b] even innocence could not withstand such power. **my judge,** *R. V.*, "mine adversary." "Had Job right on his side he could not maintain it; overpowered by the irresistible and awful might of his opponent he would desert his just plea and supplicate his adversary."—*Cam. B.*

even the righteous cannot answer God

[a] Is. xxx. 7; xxxi. 1-3.

[b] 1 Pet. ii. 23

"Believe and fear not! in the blackest cloud a sunbeam hides; and from the deepest pang some hidden mercy may a God declare!"—*Robert Montgomery.*

Silence is best where we cannot understand.—A courtier in the retinue of Alexander the Great paid a visit to the studio of Apelles, the celebrated painter, and was received with the consideration due his rank. This excited his talkativeness, which sallied forth upon the fine art question, exposing his ignorance by a variety of criticisms. Apelles interrupted him at length in an undertone, "Do you see those boys that are grinding my colors? While you were silent they admired you, but ever since you began to talk about what you do not understand they have done nothing but laugh at you."—*Hurlburt.*

Resignation of all to God.—

Since 'tis Thy sentence I should part
With the most precious treasure of my heart,
I freely that and more resign;
My heart itself, as its delights, is Thine.
My little all I give to Thee:
Thou gav'st a greater gift, Thy Son, to me.
Take all, great God! I will not grieve;
But still will wish that I had still to give.
I hear Thy voice; Thou bid'st me quit
My paradise; I bless and do submit:
I will not murmur at Thy word,
Nor beg Thy angel to sheath up his sword.—*Keble.*

Folded hands are not necessarily resigned ones. The Patience who really smiles on grief usually stands or walks or runs.—*Ruskin.*

"What is resignation? It is putting God between oneself and one's grief."—*Mad. Swetchine.*

16—18. (16) **If . . called,** in an agony of despair: or prob. with cry of innocence. **would . . voice,** for such an answer would be a piece of inconceivable condescension. (17) **without cause,** "defines Job's issue with his friends; and we who know the prologue know that on God's own confession, ch. ii. 3, he is right. This is not a declaration of sinlessness; but of punishment beyond desert."—*Genung.* (18) **suffer . . breath,**[c] trans. "would not suffer," *etc., i. e.* if I were to call on Him, "but fill me," *etc.*

he is unworthy of Divine regard

[c] He. xii. 11.

vs. 18. "Of a cruel master it is said, 'When his servants stop to take their breath, he abuses them.' 'The man grudges me my breath.' 'What! can I work without taking my breath?' 'The toil is always upon me; I have not time for breathing.'"—*Roberts.*

The benefit of affliction.—In a journal of a tour through Scotland by the Rev. C. Simeon, of Cambridge, we have the following passage:—"Went to see Lady Ross's grounds. Here also I saw blind men weaving. May I never forget the following fact: One of the blind men on being interrogated with respect to his knowledge of spiritual things, answered, 'I never saw till I was blind; nor did I ever know contentment when I had my eyesight, as I do now that I have lost it. I can truly affirm, though few know how to credit me, that I would on no account change my present situation and circumstances with any that I ever enjoyed before I was blind.' He had enjoyed eyesight till twenty-five, and had been blind now about three years. My soul," Mr. Simeon adds, "was much affected and comforted with his declaration. Surely there is a reality in religion!"—*Patience in affliction.*—On her arrival Mrs. Tatham was greatly distressed to see her beloved child reduced by acute suffering to a state of total prostration. During this season of anguish, however, the sufferer manifested the most Christian patience. The Rev. G. I. Johnson, an aged minister of Christ, inquired of her what he should particularly pray for, and received answer, "That I may have entire resignation." "How good it is to have Jesus near us in the hour of trial." "Yes," said Miss Tatham, "but I cannot either pray or trust Him as I ought; I feel I deserve to perish. Jesus! Saviour! help me to come to Thee! Save me! Thou art all in all—all in all. My Saviour! be Thou near me through life's night. Give, O give me Thy holy spirit! Jesus! Jesus! may I not be impatient or ungrateful."—*Life of Miss Tatham.* *Faith that God will help.*—A missionary discovered in a miserable London attic an aged woman, quite alone and extremely poor. Seeing a strawberry plant growing in a broken tea pot he said, "Your plant flourishes nicely, you will soon have strawberries upon it." "Oh, sir," she said, 'I do not grow it for the sake of fruit. I am too poor to keep any living creature,

He who sits down in a dungeon which another has made has not such cause to bewail himself as he who sits down in the dungeon which he has made for himself.—*Dewey.*

"Patience in cowards is tame, hopeless fear; but in brave minds, a scorn of what they bear."—*Dryden.*

"The ground of all great thoughts is sadness."—*Bailey.*

but I know this plant can only live by the power of God, and as I see it live and grow it tells me God is near, God will help."—*Power.*

it would be folly to assert perfection

19—21. (19) *R. V.*, "If we speak of the strength of the Mighty, lo, he is there! And if of judgment, who will appoint me a time?"[a] "In these and fol. lines Job reaches the most agonized height of doubt. The world problem is insoluble on the lines of human righteousness and reward, work and wages." *Genung.* (20) *R. V.*, "Though I be righteous, mine own mouth shall condemn me; though I be perfect it shall prove me perverse," *i. e.* overcome in His presence, I should, though innocent, by my random speech declare my own guilt.[b] (21) **Though,** *etc.*[c] *R. V.*, "I am perfect; I regard not myself; I despise my life." In the presence of this thought Job declares — "Nevertheless *I am innocent.* Let God destroy me!" Here perhaps is the climax of his loyalty to righteousness. He will not declare himself to have done the evil that is imputed to him, even if this declaration cause his death.

Job's mental agitation. — I. His inability to plead with God. No creature may dispute with God. Happily, no one needs. Everyone's case left safely in His hands. II. His certainty of condemnation. However upright and consciously innocent, a fallen man must yet stand condemned before his maker. The mouth that pleads "not guilty" before God condemns itself; it is convicted — 1. Of pride; 2. Of rebelliousness; 3. Of falsehood. III. His resolution to maintain his integrity at all costs. A man may boldly maintain his integrity before his fellow-men, while he humbly abases himself as a sinner before God.— *Hom. Com.*

Afflictions winning the heart for God. — I have been all my life like a child whose father wishes to fix his undivided attention. At first the child runs about the room, but his father ties up his feet; he then plays with his hands until they likewise are tied. Thus he continues to do till he is completely tied up. Then, when he can do nothing else, he will attend to his father. Just so has God been dealing with me to induce me to place my happiness in Him alone. But I blindly continue to look for it here, and God has kept cutting off one source of enjoyment after another, till I find that I can do without them all, and yet enjoy more happiness than ever in my life before. — *Payson.*

a 1 Co. x. 22.

b Lu. xviii. 14; 1 Jo. i. 8, 10.

c Pro. xxviii. 26; Je xvii. 9, 10; Ps cxxxix. 23, 24.

This may be illustrated by the following incident in the life of Nelson. In time of war, a French officer was once brought into his presence. He went boldly up to the great admiral, and held out his hand. Nelson drew back. "Give me your sword," said he, "and then I will take your hand."

man not dealt with here according to character

22—24. (22) **This is one,**[d] *etc.*, *R. V.*, "It is all one; therefore I say, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked," *i. e.* God does not discriminate. His friends had asserted that the evil were punished, and the good rewarded in this life. (23) **If . . suddenly,** that there be no time or way of escape. **he . . innocent,**[e] "Job utters nothing more bitter than this in the whole book."—*Jerome.* (24) **The . . wicked,**[f] it seems to him as if only the wicked were left unharmed. **covereth . . thereof,** that in hearing causes they cannot discern betw. the evil and the good. **if not,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "If it be not He, who then is it?" *i. e.* who is the author of all this inequality if it be not God?

Affliction as a furnace. — I. A furnace is prepared for gold; so afflictions are appointed for the saints, who are compared to gold. II. A furnace refines gold, and makes it much purer than before III. A furnace is made sometimes very hot, according to the kind and condition of the metal; so are afflictions sometimes very grievous, heavy and trying, as the case requires. IV. A furnace melts the gold, and makes it soft before it is refined; so afflictions those whom they mean to purify. V. A furnace will destroy tin, lead, *etc.*, and also the drossy part of gold; so afflictions burn up from His people all their corruptions. VI. The metal, when it comes forth from the furnace, is more prepared for its proper use; so are the people of God when they come forth from afflictions.— *B. Keach.*

The happy surprise of death. — The Rev. Mr. Hall, of Arnsby, Mr. Evans, of Foxton, and Mr. Christian, of Sheepshead, attended a ministers' meeting at Mr. Woodman's, Sutton, in the Elms, Leicestershire. In the evening, these ministers spent their time together in the most agreeable conversation. Amongst other subjects, one of them proposed for discussion that passage in Job ix. 23, "If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent." When it came to Mr. Christian's turn to speak, he dwelt upon the subject with an unusual degree of feeling. He considered it as referring to the sudden death of the righteous; and was expatiating very largely on the desireableness of such an event, and the happy surprise with which it would be

d Ecc. ix. 2, 3.

"There is no difference whether a man be innocent or not."—*Delitzsch.* — "A terrible statement, but one wh. cannot be gainsaid, without ref. to a future compensation."—*Spk. Com.*

e "A Titanic outburst of unutterable woe."—*Spk. Com.*

f Da. iv. 17.

The strength of a man consists in finding out the way in which God is going, and going in that way too; for God goes before and ploughs and we can but follow after and plant our seed in his furrow.—*Beecher.*

attended ; when, amidst a flood of rapturous tears, he took his flight from the world while the words were yet faltering on his tongue !

25, 26. (25) **post,** *lit.* a runner ; all. two swift couriers that bear dispatches.[a] **they . . away,** intent only on reaching the end of the stage. **they . . good,** as the courier is indif. to surrounding things. (26) **swift ships,**[b] which fly bef. the wind, and leave no track on the sea or river. **eagle . . prey,** and leaving no mark in the air. He compares himself to that which is fleetest on land, water and air. Yet brief as his life is it has been cut short, withered in its prime, hopeless and miserable.

The brevity of human life (*vss.* 25–33). —These words give us a view of man in the — I. Brevity of his mortal existence. The figures which are here employed are most expressive. 1. "My days are swifter than a post;" 2. "They are passed away as the swift ships ;" 3. "As the eagle that hasteth to the prey." II. As the subject of sore affliction and distress, we remark — 1. That the distresses of some are very severe and numerous ; 2. That great afflictions should not be regarded as evidence of any special guilt. III. As guilty and polluted, but ignorant of the appointed method of deliverance. Notice — 1. The expedient proposed ; 2. The inefficacy of this expedient ; 3. The reasons of this inefficacy. (1) The disparity in the condition of God and man ; (2) The want of a suitable person to interpose between them.

The need of prompt action. — To do anything in this world worth doing we must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold dangers, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can. It will not do to be perpetually calculating risks. It did very well before the flood, when a man could consult his friends upon an intended enterprise for one hundred and fifty years and then live to see its success. But at present a man waits and doubts and consults his particular friends till one day he finds he is sixty years of age, and that he has lost so much time in consulting his friends, he has no more time to follow their advice. — *Sydney Smith.* *Swift ships.* — The author of the Fragments annexed to Calmet's *Dictionary* observes that it if can be rendered supposable that any animal, or class of animals, may be metaphorically called ships, it is the dromedary, well known to Job. The Eastern writers apply the term to camels and dromedaries. "The whole caravan being now assembled, consists of a thousand horses, mules, and asses, and of five hundred camels ; these are the ships of Arabia ; their seas are the deserts." — *Sandy's Travels.* They say that one of those Aarishes will, in one night, and through a level country, traverse as much ground as any single horse can perform in ten, which is no exaggeration of the matter, since many have affirmed to me that it makes nothing of holding its rapid pace, which is a most violent hard trot, for four-and-twenty hours on a stretch, without showing the least sign of weariness or inclination to bait ; and that then, having swallowed a ball or two of a sort of paste made up of barley-meal, and, may be, a little powder of dry dates among it, with a bowl of water, or camel's milk, if to be had, and which the courier seldom forgets to be provided with in skins, as well for the sustenance of himself as of his Pegasus, the indefatigable animal will seem as fresh as at first setting out, and ready to continue running at the same scarcely credible rate, for as many hours longer, and so on from one extremity of the African desert to the other, provided its rider could hold out without sleep and other refreshments." *The ancient post.* — Though it is alas ! too plain that the adage, "Time is money," obtains little credence in the East, yet there is one striking exception to the ordinary rule — it is in the case of the post ; thus letters are carried inland from Bombay along miserable roads, with scarce any bridges, by relays of horsemen, at the rate of at least 125 miles a day. Nor can the British government claim the credit of having been the first to insist on the speedy transmission of the mail. The necessity for this was fully understood by its predecessors in Eastern rule, the Mogul emperors. Even yet, when important battles or other political events take place in the remoter parts of India, they are said frequently to become known in Calcutta within so short a period that it has occasionally been suspected the natives may have managed to outrun the government dispatches by a private post of their own. It is unnecessary to point out the force which this imparts to the patriarch's words.

the fleetness of life

a 2 Ch. xxx. 6.

b *Lit.* ships of reed, or papyrus ; see Is. xviii. 2.

Make the best of what you have. The fullest life is not so full of good things as it would be if it reaped all the harvest of good within its reach. Our frailty is in reaching out toward the impossible and the distant. — *S. S. Times.*

The minutes have their trusts as they go by,
To bear His love who wings their viewless flight ;
To Him they bear their record as they fly,
And never from their ceaseless round alight. — *Jones Very.*

Arrest the present moment,
For be assured they all are arrant tell-tales:
And though their flight be silent . . They post to heaven, and there record thy folly. —*Nathaniel Cotton.*

"Work while you have light," especially while you have the light of morning. There are few things more wonderful to me than that old people never tell young ones how precious their youth is. They sometimes sentimentally regret their earlier days; sometimes prudently forget them; often foolishly rebuke the young, often more foolishly indulge, often most foolishly thwart and restrain, but scarcely ever warn or watch them. — *Ruskin.*

27—31. (27) **leave off,** *etc.*,[c] *R. V.*, "put off my sad countenance and be of good cheer." (28) **afraid . . sorrows,** rather, afraid by reason of my sor-

Job cannot purify himself

c Je. viii. 18.

rows. (29) **If I be wicked,** *R. V.*, "I shall be condemned; why, then, do I labor in vain?" *i. e.* God has resolved to consider me guilty. Why should I labor to clear myself? (30) **hands . . clean,**[a] *lit.* clean with lye; *i. e.* if I make myself white as snow, if I cleanse my hands with potash, yet God will make me unclean, even so that my very clothes would refuse to cover me. (31) **Yet . . ditch,** "it comes to the idea of arbitrary power; God is so great that He can compel Job to be what He holds him to be." — *Genung.*

God's impartial judgments. — On one occasion Peter Cartwright preached in a fashionable church at Nashville. In the middle of the sermon Andrew Jackson entered and walked up the main aisle. The president's presence overpowered the preacher in charge so that he bent over and said to Cartwright in an audible whisper, "General Jackson has come in! General Jackson has come in!" "And who," thundered out Cartwright, "is General Jackson? If he don't get his soul converted God will damn him as quick as He would a Guinea negro." The independence of the backwoods preacher won the general's lasting regard. — *Strickland.*

Affliction an incentive to zeal. — There is an old story in the Greek annals of a soldier under Antigonus who had a disease about him, an extremely painful one, likely to bring him soon to the grave. Always first in the charge was this soldier, rushing into the hottest part of the fray, as the bravest of the brave. His pain prompted him to fight, that he might forget it; and he feared not death, because he knew that in any case he had not long to live. Antigonus, who greatly admired the valor of his soldier, discovering his malady, had him cured by one of the most eminent physicians of the day; but alas! from that moment the warrior was absent from the front of the battle. He now sought his ease; for, as he remarked to his companions, he had something worth living for — health, home, family, and other comforts, and he would not risk his life now as aforetime. So, when our troubles are many we are often by grace made courageous in serving our God; we feel that we have nothing to live for in this world, and we are driven, by hope of the world to come, to exhibit zeal, self-denial, and industry. But how often is it otherwise in better times, for then the joys and pleasures of this world make it hard for us to remember the world to come, and we sink into inglorious ease. — *Spurgeon.*

the need of a daysman

32—35. (32) **Not a man,**[b] his deeply-felt need is that God should be like a man — on some common ground of understanding. The consciousness of his own integrity weighed in the balances of his theology, lead him to conclude that Jehovah transcends human standards. (33) **daysman,**[c] umpire, arbitrator. **that . . both,** being accepted by both, partaking of nature of each. (34) **his rod,**[d] *i. e.* let God remove his rod. (35) **Then,** *etc.*, "if God would meet Job as a man, removing His afflicting rod and laying aside His awful majesty, Job would speak out his innocence and plead his own cause without fear." — *Cam. Bib.* **but . . me,** there is nothing in me that should make me afraid were only a fair trial given me.

Daysman. — Marg., "umpire;" none between Job and the Almighty. In the combat between Prince Arthur and the two Paynim brothers who had despoiled Sir Guyon, Cymochles insultingly asks the prince :—

> "What art thou
> That mak'st thyself his dayesman to prolong
> The vengeance prest?" — Spenser, *Fairy Queen*, ii. 8.

It is properly in the Heb. a di-judicator or arbiter between two parties, and is exactly the word used by the indignant Jacob to Laban in Gen. xxxi. 37 — "Set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may *judge* between us both."

The use of suffering. — Look at some of those exquisite and extraordinary rare workings in iron at old Nuremberg (one of the most charming, I think, of the cities of Europe), in the cathedral. Do you suppose the iron was just pinched out into shape? How many strokes did it receive? How many hittings did it undergo on the anvil? How was it beaten here and there? How was it bent forward, and backward, and forward, and backward again? How was it distorted and contorted? How was it worked and worked till by and by it was covered with little *specules* as multitudinous as those in frost-pictures, and more delicate and more permanent. They were wrought out by incessant workings in the fire, and on the anvil, under the hammer. Suffering makes a man, or spoils him. A good many are spoiled in the making. — *Beecher.*

a Ps. cxxx. 3.

"Our afflictions are like weights, and have a tendency to bow us to the dust, but there is a way of arranging weights by means of wheels and pulleys, so that they will even lift us up. Grace, by its matchless art, has often turned the heaviest of our trials into occasions for heavenly joy. 'We glory in tribulations also.' We gather honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." — *Spurgeon.*

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety. — *George Müller.*

b Je. xlix. 19; Ecc. vi. 10.

c 1 Sa. ii. 25; Ps. cvi. 23; 1 Jo. ii. 1, 2.

d Ps. xc. 11; xxxix. 10.

"For every sort of suffering there is sleep provided by a gracious Providence, save that of sin." — *J. Wilson.*

"He who has most of heart, knows most of sorrow." *Bailey.*

"Should we feel at times disheartened and discouraged, a simple movement of heart towards God, will renew our powers. Whatever He may demand of us, He will give us at the moment the strength and the courage that we need." — *Fenelon.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1—3. (1) **leave . . myself,** *R. V.*, "I will give free course to my complaint." (2) **Do . . me,**[a] *i. e.* do not treat me as one proved to be wicked. **shew . . me,** let me know wherein I have done wrong. (3) **Is it good,** is it thy pleasure, does it seem right to thee? Job is groping after the discovery of some characteristic or quality in God to account for his afflictions." — *Cam. Bib.* **despise . . hands,** slight Thy servant, whose goodness is fr. Thee. **shine . . wicked,** cause the plans of the ungodly to prosper. It is like Abraham's question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Job's bitter exclamation (*vs.* 1). — I. Let us see the grounds of this bitter utterance. Observe — 1. His original condition; 2. The reverses he had experienced. II. What has often originated such an exclamation. We see it exhibited in the proud Ahithophel (2 Sam. xvii. 23), the desponding Elijah, (1 Kings xix. 1–4), in the perfidious Judas (Matt. xxvii.) and it is often manifested in the self-destroyed of our times. III. The evil such an exclamation exhibits. It is sin — 1. Against the Author of life; 2. Against the Divine goodness with the life given; 3. Against the great ends of life; 4. Against our own happiness. IV. The Divine remedy for this evil. 1. To look within and see the vileness, corruption, *etc.*; 2. Look up and see the mercy, love and pity of God waiting for your salvation; 3. Look forward and see what is to be done by you; 4. Look around and see the suffering, sad, and the desolate; 5. Look beneath and see the world of the lost. Learn: — (1) Seek daily grace; (2) Suppress wicked discontent; (3) Look and live for eternal life. — *J. Burns.*

A lesson taught by an afflicted believer. — My letter was interrupted by being called to visit an old follower of Jesus Christ. I have been much profited by the interview. I have not been to instruct, but to be instructed. One of his expressions was, "Days, weeks, and months have rolled round during my affliction, and I have scarcely known the night from the day, nor the day from the night, so rapidly and joyfully have the hours escaped me; I have felt nothing but joy and love; not for a moment have I been impatient or weary, or wished it otherwise with me; so marvelously has God wrought in me. This is the hand of God. This never grows in nature's soil." — *R. Watson. Affliction making us long for heaven.* – We had traversed the Great Aletsch glacier, and were very hungry when we reached the mountain tarn half-way between the Bel Alp and the hotel at the foot of the Æggischorn; there a peasant undertook to descend the mountain, and bring us bread and milk. It was a very Marah to us when he brought us back milk too sour for us to drink, and bread black as a coal, too hard to bite, and sour as the curds. What then? Why, we longed the more eagerly to reach the hotel towards which we were traveling. We mounted our horses, and made no more halts till we reached the hospitable table where our hunger was abundantly satisfied. Thus our disappointments on the road to heaven whet our appetites for the better country, and quicken the pace of our pilgrimage to the celestial city. — *Spurgeon.*

Job complains of his sufferings

[a] Ps. vi. 1, 2; Ro. viii. 1.

"Count each affliction, whether light or grave, God's messenger sent down to thee. Do thou with courtesy receive him. Grief should be like joy — majestic, equable, strong, commend great thoughts, thoughts lasting to the end." — *Aubrey de Vere.*

We rejoice in life because it seems to be carrying us somewhere; because its darkness seems to be rolling on towards light, and even its pain to be moving onward to a hidden joy. — *Phillips Brooks.*

"Come, then, affliction, if my Father bids, and be my frowning friend. We welcome clouds which bring the farmer rain, though they the present prospects blacken round, that, by their rich stores enrich'd, the earth may yield a fruitful summer and a plenteous crop." — *C. Swaine.*

4—6. (4) **Hast . . flesh?**[b] *etc.*, is this mistaken treatment to be accounted for by imperfect vision? Is God as blind to my character as these friends? (5) **Are . . man?** *etc.*,[c] is Thy life, like man's, short, and uncertain, so that Thou must crowd into it even punishment for sins not yet committed, lest I escape? (6) **That iniquity,** *etc.*,[d] so eagerly and relentlessly?

Afflictions. — "In all cases of suffering the people of God should consider — I. God wills them and sends them: now the will of God is perfectly righteous, and what He does is so well done that it could not be better done. II. There is need of them or we should not have them. III. Their number, measure, and continuance God determines; and, comparatively speaking, they are but for a moment. IV. The Lord will be sure to support us under them. V. They are not too many, too heavy, or too long, as Satan would have them; nor too few, too short, or too light, as our corrupt nature would have them. VI. Their end is a weight of glory, and the crown that attends them is everlasting.

Affliction increased with our strength. — "I had," said Latimer, describing the way in which his father trained him as a yeoman's son, "my bows bought me according to my age and strength; as I increased in them so my

the greatness of God makes man unworthy of notice

[b] 1 Sa. xvi. 7; Lu. xvi. 15.

[c] 2 Pe. iii. 8.

[d] Ps. xliv. 21; Zep. i. 12.

"Afflictions are God's potions, which we may sweeten by faith and fervent prayer; but we, for the most part, make them bitter,

putting into God's cup the evil ingredients of our impatience and unbelief." — *J. Dod.*

"Our crosses are not made of iron, though painted sometimes with iron colors: they are formed of nothing heavier than wood. Yet they are not made of pasteboard, and will never be light in themselves, though our Lord can lighten them by His presence. The Papists foolishly worship pieces of wood supposed to be parts of the true cross, but he who has borne the really true cross, and known its sanctifying power, will value every sliver of it, counting his trials to be his treasures, his afflictions argosies of wealth, and his losses his best gains." — *Spurgeon.*

"Sorrow is a kind of rust of the soul, which every new idea contributes to its passage to scour away. It is the putrefaction of stagnant life, and is remedied by exercise and motion." —*Johnson.*

bows were made bigger and bigger." Thus boys grew into cross-bowmen, and by a similar increase in the force of their trials, Christians become veterans in the Lord's host. The affliction which is suitable for a babe in grace would little serve the young man, and even the well-developed man needs severer trials as his strength increases. God, like a wise father, trains us wisely, and as we are able to bear it He makes our service and our suffering more arduous. As boys rejoice to be treated like men, so will we rejoice in our greater tribulations, for here is man's work for us, and by God's help we will not flinch from doing it. — *Spurgeon. Benefit of afflictions.* — What can differ more than the aspect of the on-coming and the whole phenomenon of a summer's rain, and its actual after results? The sun goes out. Birds cease their singing. Low and terrific sounds and voices, vengeful thunders, are in the air. Great winds come as *avant-couriers*, sweeping onward, and causing the trees to groan and writhe as if in pain. Weakly leaves are shredded off and hurled hither and thither. All beasts hide themselves. Everything looks dark as the judgment-day. Then comes, with mighty roar, the outpouring and beating rain, that still further shreds off the leaves, and tears the trees, and beats down the grass, and overwhelms the grain, and dishevels the flowers. In the midst of this storm let a man look out, and he will sceptically say, "Is this the refreshment of nature? Is this the cup that is put to the lips of the flowers that they may drink and be revived?" And yet, let the hour go by: let all its gloomy works and seemings be swept away with it; let the sun reappear; let the birds begin to sing again; let the trees shake themselves of drops of rain; let the grass lift itself up once more, and then man will instinctively praise God for that which before seemed to be only a process of destruction. The storm seems to have gone, but it has not gone. Those things which at first appeared — all the external signs of fury — these have passed away; and now the storm is at work on the root, and every blade of grass is drawing, and every tree is pumping, and every flower is drinking. Who could have cleansed the air as that breathing wind has? Who could have swept the vapors out of the heavens as that tornado has? Who, by any appliance of human skill, could have watered the acres as that rain has? Who could have given new life to the wasting herbage as that thunderstorm has, which went tramping through the valley and the wilderness, apparently a messenger of evil? One hour after it is gone all things silently thank God, that one hour before shuddered and trembled, and said, "Hast Thou forgotten to be gracious?" So it is with the ministrations of suffering and sorrow. While the storm pelts, men shrink. While the thunder sounds, they slink down. While the tempest rages, it is as if they were ruined. But when the violence abates a little, they begin to lift up their head, and to perceive that it was not all dark, that it was not all thunder, that it was not all beating, that there was an element of good in it; and gradually they learn the sweet bounty and benefit that God meant to bestow upon them by afflictions. — *H. W. Beecher.*

Job is as God made him

a Ps. i 6; vii 8; xvii. 3; xxvi. 1-5.

b De. xxxii. 39; Ps. l. 22; Jo. x. 27-30.

c Per a ref. to clay of the potter. Is. xxix. 16; xlv. 9; Ro. ix. 21-23.

d Ps. cxxxix. 14-16.

"I am heartily sorry for those persons who are constantly talking of the perishable nature of things

7—10. (7) **Thou . . wicked,**[a] for Thine eye reads the heart of man. **none . . hand,**[b] Thy days are everlasting, none can escape Thee. Job has been trying one explanation after another, but finds no solution of the problem. (8) **Thine hands,** *etc.* Since Thou hast taken such pains to make me what I am, wilt Thou forsake the work of Thine own hands? (9) **Remember . . clay,**[c] does the potter mold a vessel only to dash it to pieces? And hast Thou made me only to destroy me? (10) **Hast . . milk,** *etc.*,[d] ref. to human embryo, often referred to as "the most sacred and wonderful of mysteries."

Conscious integrity (vs. 7). — We propose to show — I. What we are to understand by this appeal. Job never intended to assert that he was possessed of sinless perfection. But he appealed to God — 1. That he was free from the sin imputed to him; 2. That he was on the whole upright before God. But that we may not be too hasty in making such an appeal, let us consider — II. What is necessary to warrant it. 1. That we are free from all allowed sin; 2. That we endeavor habitually to approve ourselves to God. But in proportion to the difficulty of making this appeal is — III. The blessedness of being able to make it — 1. Under any trouble that may come upon us; 2. In the prospect of death and judgment. Address — (1) Those who are living in any known sin; (2) Those who think themselves in a good state. — *Simeon.*

Note on vs. 10. — Much philological learning has been brought to the explanation of this passage. In the preceding verse Job is speaking of his death

"Wilt thou bring me into dust again?" But what has the pouring out of milk to do with death? The people of the East pour milk upon their heads after performing the funeral obsequies. Has a father a profligate son, one he never expects to reclaim, he says, in reference to him, "Ah! I have poured milk upon my head," *i. e.* "I have done with him: he is as one dead to me." "And curdled me like cheese." The cheese of the East is little better than curds; and these also are used at the funeral ceremonies. — *Roberts.* *Confidence in God's faithfulness.* — A good woman known as Old Nanny lives in the Scotch Highlands. Her pastor once said to her, "Suppose, Nanny, God were to cast you off at last? What then?" "Why, man," she replied, "God wad be the greater loser. Nanny wad lose her soul, but God wad lose His character, and if His promises should be broken, the whole universe wad gang to ruin." — *Lange.*

and the nothingness of life; for, for this very end we are here, to stamp the perishable with an imperishable worth." — *Goethe.*

11—13. (11) **Thou . . flesh,** ref. to fœtal existence. **fenced,**[a] *R. V.*, "knit me together," the intricate bodily structure. (12) **favour,**[b] providential care, including parental solicitude, *etc.* **spirit,** life. (13) **these things,** *i. e.* these present evils. **hast . . heart,** all that has happened has been the outworking of Thy hidden purpose from my creation! **know . . thee,** better "this was with thee," — was thy purpose, and in thy thoughts.

his physical frame and life are from God

Wonders of the body. — Our bodies are at all times like the fire which was shown to the hero of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in Interpreter's house, which had water poured on it on one side of the wall against which it blazed, and oil on the other. Here one tissue is burning like fuel, and there another is becoming the depository of combustible matter. We have, as it were, millions of microscopic wind-furnaces, converting into carbonic acid, water, vapor, and other products of combustion, all the combustible elements of the body; and millions of blast-furnaces reducing the starch and sugar of the food, and the sulphates and phosphates of the body, into inflammable oils and other fuels, which are finally transferred to the wind-furnaces, and burned there. Burning, and what we must call, in contradistinction, unburning, thus proceed together; the flame of life, like a blow-pipe flame, exhibiting an oxidizing and a reducing action, at points not far distant from each other. Such is the human body, ever changing, ever abiding; a temple always complete, and yet always under repair; a mansion which quite contents its possessor, and yet has its plans and materials altered each moment; a machine which never stops working, and yet is taken to pieces in the twinkling of an eye, and put together in the other; a cloth of gold, to which the needle is ever adding on one side of a line, and from which the scissors are ever cutting away on the other. — *G. Wilson.* *Preservation in danger.* — An English tradesman started to attend a fair in Bristol. On the way he was taken ill and detained so long it was useless for him to go, and he returned home. Some years afterward he happened to be present at the execution of a criminal, who beckoned him to approach. The criminal then asked him, "Do you not recollect once starting for Bristol Fair?" "Yes, perfectly well." "It is well that you did not go, for I and several others who knew that you had considerable money with you had resolved to waylay and rob and then murder you to prevent detection." — *Hurlbut.*

[a] Hence the application of the word *texture* and the term muscular *tissue.*

[b] Ac. xvii. 28.

God is all to thee; if thou be hungry, He is bread; if thirsty, He is water; if in darkness, He is light; if naked, He is a robe of immortality. — *St. Augustine.*

"As prisoners in castles look out of their grated windows at the smiling landscape, where the sun comes and goes, so we, from this life, as from dungeon-bars, look forth to the heavenly land, and are refreshed with sweet visions of the home that shall be ours when we are free." — *Beecher.*

14—16. (14) **then . . me,** *i. e.* it was Thy purpose to watch for my least sins and not to pardon mine iniquities.[c] (15) **If . . me,**[d] *i. e.* and if I commit some great sin — then some unutterable penalty was laid up in store for me. **and . . head,** and if I commit no sin, I must not dare to walk erect, but with bowed head, as if guilty. **I . . confusion,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "being filled with ignominy and looking upon mine affliction."[e] (16) **increaseth,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "and if my head exalt itself, thou huntest me," *etc.*, *i. e.* "If he should lift up his head and assert his integrity, God would spring on him like a lion." — *Cox.* **again . . me,** inflicting marvellous and mysterious trials.

Job is pursued with trials

Man's confusion and God's order (*vs.* 15.) — I. Man's confusion. 1. The conflict between health and disease; 2. The conflict between family order and domestic confusion; 3. The conflict between friendship and alienation; 4. The conflict between inheritance and destitution; 5. The conflict between spiritual good and evil. II. God's order. 1. Bodily order; 2. Family order; 3. Social order; 4. Circumstantial order; 5. Moral order. — *Homilist.*

Imputed righteousness. — When we walk abroad on a beautiful day, and survey a landscape lit up by the beams of a summer sun, our eye catches a

[c] "'Whatever sin I might commit, it was Thy intention to watch and record it, and not to cleanse me from my guilt.' The words represent an inner travail of spirit, a struggle between the consciousness of sin which Job never disguises, and the feeling that the sin, not being wilful, was not sufficient to account for his sufferings." — *Spk. Com.*

[d] Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7; Is. iii. 11; Ro. ii. 8, 9.

[e] Lu. xvii. 10.

"Those who always love have not the leisure to complain and to be unhappy." — *Joubert.*

"I will labor not to be like a young colt first set to plough, who more tires himself out with his own untowardness (whipping himself with his misspent mettle) than with the weight of what he draws; and will labor to bear patiently what is imposed upon me." — *Fuller.*

variety of colors lying on the surface of this landscape, — there is the yellow of the golden grain, the green of the pasture land, the dark brown of those thickly planted copses, the silver gleam of the stream which winds through them, the faint blue of distant hills seen in perspective, the more intense blue of the sky, the purple tinge of yonder sheet of water; but none of these colors reside in the landscape, they are not the properties of the material objects on which they rest. All colors are wrapped up in the sunlight, which, as is well known, may be seen resolved into its elementary colors in the prism or rainbow. Apart from the sunlight no object has any color: as is shown by the fact that as soon as light is withdrawn from the landscape, the colors fade from the robe of nature. The difference of color in different objects, while the sun is shining, is produced by some subtle difference of texture or superficies, which makes each object absorb certain rays, and reflect certain other rays, in different proportions. Now Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily — the fair color of every grace and Christian virtue. When Christ is shining upon the heart, then these virtues are manifested there, by one Christian grace of one description, by another of another, according to their different receptivity and natural temperament, just as, when the sun is shining, colors are thrown upon a landscape, and reflected by the different objects in different proportions. But as no part of the landscape has any color in the absence of the sun, nor can acquire any independently of the sun, so Christians have no grace except from Christ, nor hold any virtue independently of Him." — *Goulbourn.*

Job regrets that he ever lived

a Job iii. vi. 3.

The more a tree of righteousness is shaken by the wind, the more it is rooted in Christ.

"Oh, what an excellent interpreter is experience. For thus the serious Christian getteth a view of spiritual things which the most subtle school men cannot reach; yea, by the practice of truth, nearness to God, and retiring of the soul to Him, hath oft obtained more light in one hour than others by many days, putting their judgment and invention on the rack." —*Fleming.*

he pleads for rest on the ground that life is short

b Ps. xxxix. 5, 13

c 2 Sa. xii 23; xiv. 14.

d "The undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveler returns." — *Shakespeare.*

e *Virgil, Æn.* vi. 259, *ff.*; Am. iv. 13; Is. viii. 22; ix. 1.

17—19. (17) **renewest,** Thou wouldst call up new. **changes . . me,** *R. V.*, "changes and warfare are with me." (18, 19) **Wherefore . . womb?**[a] "After all that the friends have urged and all the aspects in which the case has been viewed, it remains true that there is no satisfactory solution of life. This is the summing up of the present section comprising the dreary outcome of the friends' philosophy." — *Genung.*

The destructive force of suffering (*vs.* 18).— The sufferings of Job had destroyed within him for a time — I. A sense of duty. II. A love of life. III. Hope of hereafter. Learn — 1. That great suffering in this world, in the case of individuals does not mean great sin; 2. The power of the devil over man; 3. The value of the Gospel.

Afflictions awakening gratitude. — Afflictions when sanctified make us grateful for mercies which aforetime we treated with indifference. We sat for a half an hour in a calf's shed the other day, quite grateful for the shelter from the driving rain, yet at no other time would we have entered such a hovel. Discontented persons need a course of the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, to cure them of the wretched habit of murmuring. Even things which we loathed before, we shall learn to prize when in troublous circumstances. We are no lovers of lizards, and yet at Pont St. Martin, in the Val d'Aosta, where the mosquitoes, flies, and insects of all sorts drove us nearly to distraction, we prized the little green fellows, and felt quite an attachment to them as they darted out their tongues and devoured our worrying enemies. Sweet are the uses of adversity, and this among them — that it brings into proper estimation mercies aforetime lightly esteemed. — *Spurgeon.* — *Noble piety nourished by affliction.* — The pine, placed nearly always among scenes disordered and desolate, brings into them all possible elements of order and precision. Lowland trees may lean to this side and that, though it is but a meadow breeze that bends them, or a bank of cowslips from which their trunks lean aslope. But let storm and avalanche do their worst, and let the pine, find only a ledge of vertical precipice to cling to, it will nevertheless grow straight. Thrust a rod from its last shoot down the stem, it shall point to the centre of the earth as long as the tree lives. Amid the sternest trials the most upright Christians are usually reared. The Divine life within them so triumphs over every difficulty as to render the men, above all others, true and exact. What a noble spectacle is a man whom nothing can warp, a firm, decided servant of God, defying hurricanes of temptation! — *Spurgeon.*

20—22. (20) **Are . . few?** *etc.*,[b] since life is so short, allow me a little respite fr. suffering. (21) **Before . . return,**[c] to the grave.[d] **to . . darkness,**[e] "Job's idea of the receptacle of the dead was probably derived from Chaldea, on which the land he inhabited bordered. It was within the earth,

consequently dark and sunless."— *Rawlinson.* (22) **without . . order,** chaotic,[a] "a new characteristic which we do not find in other accounts of Hades." **light . . darkness,** uncertain, flickering: not clear and pure.[b]

Longings for immortality. — There are times when the best life seems a sheer failure to the man who has lived it; his wisdom folly, his genius impotence: his best deed poor and small; when he wonders why he was suffered to be born; when all the sorrows of the world seem poured upon him; when he stands in a populous loneliness, and though weak, can only lean upon himself. In such hours he feels the insufficiency of this life. It is only his cradle-time, he counts himself just born; all honors, wealth and fame are but baubles in his baby-hand; his deep philosophy but nursery rhymes; yet he feels the immortal fire burning in his heart. Still worse, the consciousness of sin comes over him: he feels that he has insulted himself. All about him seems little; himself little; yet clamoring to be great. Then we feel an immortality; through the garish light of day we see a star or two. The soul within us feels her wings, contending to be borne, impatient for the sky, and wrestles with the earthly worm, that folds us in. — *Theodore Parker.* — *Light in death.* — When John Holland died, it was about five or six in the evening, the shadow of night was gathering round, and it was growing darker and darker. When near the last moment he looked up, and said to the family: "What is this? What is this strange light in the room? Have they lighted the candles, Martha?" "No," she said. He replied, "Then it must be heaven. Welcome, heaven." — *Talmage.*

[a] "Dark, wasteful, wild." — *Milton.*

[b] "No light; but rather darkness visible, served only to discover sights of woe."—*Milton.*

"I thank thee, my God, that though the river of Lethe may indeed flow through the Elysian fields, it does not water the Christian's Paradise." — *Madame de Gasparin.*

"Alas! while the body stands so broad and brawny, must the soul lie blinded, dwarfed, stupefied, almost annihilated?" — *Carlyle.*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

Zophar's answer

Job charged with falsehood

1—4. (1) **Zophar,** "Zophar's indignation rises still higher than that of the others; being a narrower man, his views are correspondingly more intense and dogmatic." — *Genung.* (2) **a . . talk,**[c] *lit.* a man of lips, one who makes such great professions. (3) **lies,** *R. V.*, "boastings." (4) **doctrine,** *i. e.* that God afflicts one whom He knows to be righteous. This was Job's doctrine and he had dared to defend it and to claim to be irreproachable in the sight of God.

Questionable reproof. — The reproof which Zophar addressed to Job suggests two remarks. I. The charges he brings against Job, if true, justly deserve reproof. He charges him with — 1. Loquacity; 2. Falsehood: 3. Irreverence; 4. Hypocrisy. But — II. The charges, if true, could not justify the spirit and style of the reproof. — *Thomas.*

A talker. — His measure of talk is till his wind is spent, and then he is not silenced, but becalmed. His ears have catched the itch of his tongue; and though he scratch them, like a beast with his hoof, he finds a pleasure in it. He shakes a man by the ear as a dog does a pig, and never loosens his hold till he has tired himself as well as his patient. He is a walking pillory, and punishes more ears than a dozen standing ones. He will hold any argument rather than his tongue, and maintain both sides at his own charge; for he will tell you what you will say, though perhaps he does not intend to give you leave. His tongue is always in motion, though very seldom to the purpose; like a barber's scissors, which are kept snipping as well when they do not cut, as when they do. He is so full of words that they run over, and are thrown away to no purpose; and so empty of things, or sense, that his dryness has made his leaks so wide, whatsoever is put in him runs out immediately. He is so long delivering himself, that those that hear him desire to be delivered too, or despatched out of their pain. — *Butler.*

[c] Pr. x. 19; Ja. i. 19; Ac. xvii. 18.

"Bad words are as influential as the plague and the pestilence. They have wrought more evil than battle, murder, and sudden death. They creep through the ear into the heart, call up all its bad passions, and tempt it to break God's commandments. A few bad words got into the ear of the mother of mankind; and they led her on to eat the forbidden fruit, and thus to bring death into the world." — *G. Mogridge.*

he wishes that God would speak

5, 6. (5) **oh . . speak,** *etc.*, ref. to Job's wish[d] that God would address him. Zophar sug. that if God were to reply, Job would be convinced of his guilt. (6) **double**[e] **. . is,** *R. V.*, "that it is manifold in effectual working," *i. e.*, wisdom is a far more complex matter than Job conceives. **less . . deserveth,**[f] "Eliphaz was courteous and indirect, exhorting to repentance; Bildad spoke of the sons' calamity as just. But Zophar finds Job's punishment less than his desert." — *Genung.*

Divine forbearance. (*vs.* 6). — The desert of sin. Its 1. Nature. 2. Severity. 3. Certainty. 4. Justice. II. God's forbearance. 1. The proof of it. (1) Our own lives. (2) God's word. (3) God's providential dealings with man. 2. The reason of it. (1) Mercy to man. (2) Justice to Christ. (3) His own honor. III. The instruction of man. Precious lessons should be derived

[d] Job x. 2.

[e] Ps. xxv. 14; Ma. xiii. 35; Ro. xvi. 25, 26.

[f] Ez ix. 13; Ps. ciii. 10.

"Stars shine brightest in the

darkest night; gold looks brighter for scouring; the palm tree proves the better for pressing. Such is the condition of God's people; they are most triumphant when most tempted, most glorious when most afflicted." — *Bogatsky.*

"Through all Thy sorest judgments love doth shine —
Lord, of a truth,
Thou doest all things well."
— *Ingelow.*

from the study of so grand a truth. 1. Submission. 2. Repentance. 3. Hope.— *Pul. Com.*

Sin detected.— I could both sigh and smile at the simplicity of a native American, sent by a Spaniard, his master, with a basket of figs and a letter (wherein the figs were mentioned) to carry them both to one of his masters' friends. By the way this messenger ate up the figs, but delivered the letter, whereby his deed was discovered, and he was soundly punished. Being sent a second time on the like message, he first took the letter (which he conceived had eyes as well as tongue) and hid it in the ground, sitting himself on the place where he put it; and then securely fell to feed on his figs, presuming that that paper which saw nothing could tell nothing, then, taking it again out of the ground, he delivered it to his master's friend, whereby his fault was perceived, and he worse beaten than before. Men conceive they can manage their sins with secrecy; but they carry about them a letter, or book rather, written by God's finger, their conscience bearing witness to all their actions. But sinners being often detected and accused, thereby grow wary at last, and to prevent this speaking paper from telling any tales, do smother, stifle and suppress it, when they go about the committing of any wickedness. Yet conscience (though buried for a time in silence) hath afterwards a resurrection, and discovers all, to their greater shame and heavier punishment.— *Thomas Fuller.*

the unsearchableness of God

a Ps. lxxvii. 19.

b Is. lv. 9; Ps. cxxxix. 6-8; Am. ix. 2.

c Ep. iii. 18, 19; Ps. cxxxix. 9, 10; lxv. 5-8.

7—9. (7) **Canst . . God?**[a] can you fathom the depths of the wisdom of God? **canst . . perfection?** can you understand the perfection of the Almighty? (8) **It . . heaven,**[b] "His wisdom is immeasurable, unfathomable. The words are an exclamation: heights of heaven! what canst thou do?— thou art impotent before it, to scale it or reach it."— *Camb. B.* (9) **measure,** *etc.*,[c] it includes all lengths and breadths. That is, He is infinite in knowledge, man is finite.

Incomprehensibility of God. — The Emperor Trajan pressed the Rabbi Joshua to show him his God. In vain the Jew replied that his God, though everywhere present, was invisible. The emperor insisted, and the other replied: "Come, then, with me; I will show you first one of his embassadors." He led the emperor into the open air — it was about midday, and no cloud obscured the sun. The rabbi desired the emperor to look at it. "How can I, man?" said the latter; "the light blinds me." Then the Jew said: "Art thou unable to endure the sight of one of God's creatures, and yet dost thou expect to behold the infinitely brighter glory of the Creator? Such a sight would not dazzle thee only, it would destroy thee. For thus it is written, 'Thou canst not see my face; there shall no man see me and live.'"— *Krummacher.* — Though the sun is the source of light, there is little good in gazing at it except to get blinded. We use the light the sun gives us to see by and to search into all things, the sun excepted. Himself we cannot explore beyond what he reveals of himself in the light and heat which he sheds upon us, and in the colors by which he is reflected from the earth. There is no searching of the sun; our eyes are too weak. How much less can we search the sun's Creator, before whom the myriads of suns are as so many cloud-bodies. — *Pulsford.*— All the discoveries of modern science serve to exalt the Deity; but they do not contribute a single iota to the explanation of His purposes. They make Him greater, but they do not make Him more comprehensible. He is more shrouded in mystery than ever. It is not Himself whom we see, it is His workmanship; and every new addition to its grandeur or to its variety which philosophy opens to our contemplation, throws our understanding at a greater distance than before from the mind and conception of the sublime Architect. Instead of the God of a single world, we now see Him presiding, in all the majesty of His high attributes, over a mighty range of innumerable systems. To our little eye He is wrapt in more awful mysteriousness; and every new glimpse which astronomy gives us of the universe magnifies, to the apprehension of our mind, that impassable barrier which stands between the counsels of its Sovereign and those fugitive beings who strut their evanescent hour in the humblest of its mansions. If this invisible Being would only break that mysterious silence in which He has wrapt Himself, we feel that a single word from His mouth would be worth a world of darkling speculations. Every new triumph which the mind of man achieves in the field of discovery binds us more firmly to our Bible; and by the very proportion in which philosophy multiplies the wonders of God, do we prize that

"Let us be men with men, and always children before God; for in his eyes we are but children. Old age itself, in the presence of eternity, is but the first moment of a morning."—*Joubert.*

"Patience, time, and money overcome everything. The world is his who has patience." — *Italian.*

"Mine be the reverent, listening love
That waits all day on thee,
With the service of a watchful heart
Which no one else can see; —
The faith that, in a hidden way
No other eye may know,
Finds all its daily work prepared
And loves to have it so."
—*A. L. Waring.*

book on which the evidence of history has stamped the character of His authentic communication. — *Chalmers.*

10—12. (10) **If he,** *etc.,*[a] *R. V.*, "If he pass through, and shut up, and call unto judgment, then," *etc.;* If God be against a man who shall call Him to question? (11) **knoweth . . men,**[b] hollow, empty men. **will . . it?** rather, He doth not consider it: *i. e.* it causes Him no loss of time to estimate man; He does so at a glance. (12) **For vain man,**[c] *etc., R. V., margin,* "But an empty man will get understanding, when a wild ass's colt is born a man," *i. e.* never.

Taking away in love. — To a lady, who was bitterly lamenting the death of an infant child, Bishop Heber related the following beautiful apologue, as one with which he had himself been affected. A shepherd was mourning over the death of his favorite child, and in the passionate and rebellious feeling of his heart, was bitterly complaining that what he loved most tenderly, and was in itself most lovely, had been taken from him. Suddenly, a stranger of grave and venerable appearance stood before him, and beckoned him forth into the field. It was night, and not a word was spoken till they arrived at the fold, when the stranger thus addressed him: "When you select one of these lambs from the flock, you choose the best and most beautiful among them; why should you murmur, because I, the Good Shepherd of the sheep, have selected from those which you have nourished for Me, the one which was most fitted for My eternal fold?" The mysterious stranger was seen no more, and the father's heart was comforted.

Existence of God. —

And can there be who doubt there is a God,
And life eternal! When the river flows,
Deny the fountain-head who will, the wave
That, curling, murmurs farthest from its source,
That source attests. Show me some well-wrought **work**
Of matter or of mind; though you produce
No author, I conclude that such there was,
Or this had never been, and give him praise.
And why should sense demur? When the poor **slave,**
Doom'd by some tyrant's hard decree to starve,
Wakes in his dungeon on his rocky bed,
From sleep, then wildly casts his eyes around,
As if in search of death, let him espy
In osier frame sweet herbage of the field
To greet his famished lip, and from the spring,
In earthen jar, the lucid draught to cheer
His parching tongue; will he not straight exclaim
That some kind hand hath oped his prison door,
And brought this bounty? Will he not invoke
A blessing on the donor as he tastes,
And feels the temperate tide of health return
To cool the heated vessels of his heart,
And pacify the fever in his brain?
Tell him 'twas chance — but no; you could not **thus**
Abuse his ear, nor wound his swelling soul
In presence of the angel Gratitude. — *Cowper.*

13, 14. (13) **If . . heart,**[d] "thou" is emphatic. Passage means, bring into a right condition of thought and feeling. **stretch . . him,**[e] in earnest prayer. (14) **If . . hand,**[f] if thou hast gotten anything unlawfully, make restitution. **in thy tabernacles,** practically charges him with having the spoils of robbery in his tent.

The life of the godly and the doom of the wicked (*vss.* 13–20). — I. The life of the godly. 1. The nature of a godly life. Two leading facts are associated with it. (1) The seeking after God; (2) The abandonment of evil. 2. The blessedness of a godly life. There is in it — (1) Cheerfulness of aspect; (2) Steadfastness of mind; (3) Fearlessness of soul: (4) Deliverance from all suffering: (5) Cheerfulness of being. II. The doom of the wicked. 1. Here is the loss of energy; 2. Here is the loss of safety; 3. Here is the loss of hope. — *Thomas.*

God knows and can do all things

a Is. xiv. 27; Re. iii. 7.

b Ps. xciv. 11; x. 13, 14; He. iv. 13; Re. ii. 23.

c Ro. xii. 16; 1 Co. iii. 18–20.

"There are certain pagans whose god is known as Buddha. Their priests say to the people, 'Think of Buddha and you will be transformed into Buddha. If men pray to Buddha, and do not become Buddha, it is because the mouth prays and not the mind.' How much greater the power of prayer sincerely offered to the Christian's God!"

"We all must suffer, if we aught would know;
Life is a teacher stern, and wisdom's crown
Is oft a crown of thorns, whence trickling down,
Blood, mixed with tears, blinding her eyes, doth flow."
— *Lowell.*

"He that troubles not himself with anxious thoughts lives little less than the life of angels, whilst, by a mind content with little, he imitates their want of nothing." —*Cave.*

he exhorts Job to put away sin.

d 2 Ch. xii. 14; xix. 3; Pr. xvi. 1.

e La. iii. 41.

f Ez. xviii. 30, 31; Is. i. 16; Ja. iv. 8.

"All the doors that lead inward to the secret place of the Most High, are

doors outward — out of self, out of smallness, out of wrong."— *MacDonald.*

"Patience! why 'tis the soul of peace; of all the virtues, 'tis nearest kin to heaven; it makes men look like gods."— *Decker.*

A forgotten beholder. — A man who was in the habit of going into a neighbor's corn-field to steal the ears, one day took his son with him, a boy of eight years of age. The father told him to hold the bag, while he looked if any one was near to see him. After standing on the fence, and peeping through all the corn rows, he returned and took the bag from the child, and began his guilty work. "Father," said the boy, "you forgot to look somewhere else." The man dropped the bag in a fright, and said, "Which way, child?" supposing he had seen some one. "You forgot to look up to the sky, to see if God was noticing you." The father felt this reproof of the child so much that he left the corn, returned home, and never again ventured to steal; remembering the truth his child had taught him — that the eye of God always beholds us. — *Whitecross.*

he promises comfort if he be innocent

15—17. (15) **For then,** *R. V.*, "surely then." **lift . . spot,** stain of sin. **stedfast,**[a] molten; *i. e.* firm as metal cast by melting in the furnace. (16) **waters . . away,**[b] *see* on vi. 15–17. (17) **age,** *R. V.*, "life," not "old age." **clearer . . noonday,**[c] as the sun rising out of morning mists to the brightness of noon. **thou . . forth,**[d] *R. V.*, "Though there be darkness, it shall be as the morning," as the darkness of night disappears before the dawn.

The confidence of innocence. — Julius Drusus, a Roman tribune, had a house that in many places lay exposed to the view of the neighborhood. A person came, and offered that, for five talents, he would so alter it that it would not be liable to that inconvenience. "I will give thee ten talents," said Drusus, "if thou canst make my house conspicuous in every room of it so that all the city may behold in what manner I lead my life." — *Arvine.*

a Pr. xxviii. 1; xiv. 26; Ps. cxii. 6-8; cxix. 6.

b Is. liv. 4; lxv. 16.

c Pr. iv. 18; Ps. cxii. 4.

d Mal. iv. 2.

and adds the promise of peace and safety

18—20. (18) **secure,**[e] confident, because then, having confessed, he need fear no more calamity. He will be at peace with God. **dig,** *R. V.*, "search," *i. e.* for grounds of alarm, and finding none, rest in security. (19) **lie . . afraid,** thy nights shall be peaceful instead of full of suffering as now, or fearful of enemies as in the past. **shall . . thee,** caress thee: *lit.* stroke thy face, *i. e.* be eager to win your aid and friendship. (20) **eyes . . fail,**[f] when they look for relief. **they . . escape,** the justice of God. **hope . . ghost,** *R. V.*, "shall be the giving up of the ghost," *i. e.* death, the only thing they can expect to hope for.

The deceitful hope (*vs.* 20). — It is like giving up the ghost, for — I. It is giving up that which is very dear. II. Yet, dear as it is, it must be given up. III. Yes, it must be given up, and that suddenly. IV. Depend upon it, the giving up must be soon. V. When given up it will leave no substance but perfect despair.

The hope of the upright. — In the time of Lord North "Junius" was in opposition. It was resolved to hire Goldsmith to baffle his terrible sarcasm. Dr. Scott, chaplain to Lord Sandwich, was deputed to negotiate with him. I found him," says Dr. Scott," in a miserable suite of chambers in the Temple. "I told him my authority. I told how I was empowered to pay for his exertions; and would you believe it? he was so absurd as to say, 'I can earn as much as will supply my wants without writing for any party; the assistance you offer is therefore unnecessary to me;' and so I left him in his garret." A rich banker of Tipperary — a radical and a demagogue — got himself returned to Parliament, and in course of time, to quiet him, he was made a lord of the treasury. A coronet seemed to gleam before his eyes. But in this he was disappointed. He had launched into Italian, American and Spanish railways, and lost heavily. Then he began to forge deeds, conveyances and bill for hundreds of thousands of pounds. His clever but unprincipled schemes failed; his bills were dishonored; his ruin was imminent. Late at night he entered his study, and took from it a phial of prussic acid. He strayed to Hampstead Heath, drank the poison and died. One of the last letters that he wrote was to his cousin. He said, "To what infamy I have come step to step, heaping crime upon crime. I am the cause of ruin, and misery, and disgrace to thousands. Oh how I feel for those on whom this ruin must fall! I could bear all punishment, but I could not bear to witness their sufferings. It must be better that I should not live. Oh that I had never quitted Ireland! Oh, that I had resisted the first attempts to launch me into speculation! I might then have remained what I was — honest and truthful. I weep and weep now, but what can that avail?"— *Samuel Smiles.*

e Le. xxvi. 5; Pr. iii. 26; Ps. iii. 5.

f Pr. xi. 7; Am. ix. 1.

"Affliction has its dangers as well as prosperity. The one is a smooth sea with rocks beneath the shining surface. The other is a troubled ocean, in a dark and stormy night."

"The hours of a wise man are lengthened by his ideas, as those of a fool are by his passion. The time of the one is long because he does not know what to do with it; so is that of the other because he distinguishes every moment of it with useful or amusing thoughts; or, in other words, because the one is always wishing it away, and the other always enjoying it."— *Addison.*

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

Job's reply

he ridicules the wisdom of his friends

1—3. (1) **answered,** Job who has thus far accepted the friends' philosophy, while unable to reconcile it with facts, now sees how futile it is. There is some other philosophy of suffering. Henceforth "he ceases to arraign God and arraigns the friends instead."—*Genung.* (2) **ye . . people,** the only wise men in the world. (3) **understanding,** *lit.* heart.[a] **I . . you,** in power to quote and apply proverbs. **yea . . these,** the reference is to Zophar's exhib. of the Divine wisdom and might, ch. xi. 7–12.

Independency of thought in religion (*vss.* 1–5). — That this is man's prerogative appears from the following considerations: I. From the capacity of the soul. 1. Man has a capacity to form conceptions of the cardinal principles of religion; 2. And a capacity to realize the practical force of these conceptions. II. From the despotism of corrupt religion. It always seeks to crush this independency of the individual soul. III. From the necessary means of personal religion. It begins in individual thinking. IV. From the condition of moral usefulness. V. From the teachings of the Bible. Men are commanded to use their reason. VI. From the transactions of the judgment. Men will have to give an account of their thoughts and words as well as deeds. — *Thomas.*

Colored light. — I can picture to myself a candle which should in some way mingle a peculiarity of its own substance with the light it shed, giving to that light a hue which did not belong essentially to the fire at which it was lighted. Men who saw it would see not only the brightness of the fire. They would see also the tone and color of the lamp. And so it is, I think, with the way in which some good men manifest God. They have really kindled their lives at Him. It is His fire that burns in them. They are obedient, and so He can make them His points of exhibition, but they cannot get rid of themselves. They are mixed with the God they show. They show themselves as well as Him." — *Brooks.*

[a] With the Hebs. the heart was the seat of the understanding and the bowels the seat of the emotions.

"Wisdom is better without an inheritance, than an inheritance without wisdom."—*Lacon-ics.*

"Patience is a plaster for all sores. The longest day will have an end. When one door shuts, another opens. It is a sore battle from which none escape."—*English Proverbs.*

he reproves them for shallow judgments

4—6. (4) **I . . neighbour,**[b] "I am to be one that is a laughing-stock to his friends, I who called on God and he answered me: a laughing-stock, the just and perfect man."—*Cam. Bib.* **the just,** *etc.*, by the situation in which he is placed, being innocent and yet suffering. (5) **He . . feet,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "In the thought of him that is at ease there is contempt for misfortune; it is ready for them whose foot slippeth." All, to the contempt of these friends. (6) **into . . abundantly,**[c] contrasts the seeming Divine protection of the wicked with the evident suffering of the righteous.[d]

Contempt for the unfortunate. — I. We cannot understand the trouble we do not share. II. We are tempted to despise the trouble we do not understand. III. We may use our own trouble as a means of stimulating our sympathy with the troubles of others. IV. The sorrows of Christ helped to make Him a perfect Saviour. — *Adeney.*

The uncertain security of the wicked. — A scientific gentlemen was deputed by the English government to examine the scene of a fatal explosion. A colliery hand accompanied him. As they were inspecting the edge of a region of foul air their safety lamps were "afire." "I suppose," said the inspector, "there is a good deal of fire-damp hereabout." "Thousands and thousands of cubic feet," replied his companion. "What!" exclaimed the official, "do you mean to say there is nothing but that shred of wire gauge between us and eternity?" "Nothing but that gauge, sir, to keep the whole mine from being blown up." So it is with sin. We must not tamper with danger. — *Hurlbut.*

[b] Ps. xxii. 7, 8; Ma. xxvii. 29; Heb. xi. 36.

[c] Ps. xxxvii. 35; lxxiii. 12; Mal. iii. 15.

[d] "Who has no God but his own hand, or weapon."—*Spk. Com.*

"Oh was it spoken,
'*Go ye forth, heal the sick, lift the low, bind the broken,*'
Of the body alone?
Is our mission then done
When we leave the bruised hearts if we bind the bruised bone?'
—*Meredith.*

he directs them to nature as a teacher

7—10. But . . beasts, *etc.*,[e] so far fr. these three friends having a monopoly of wisdom, all creation was full of illustrations of Divine wisdom, and capable of instructing them. **teach . . till,** *etc.*, that God does not deal with His creatures acc. to their character. (8) **earth,** ref. to all forms of lower animal life wh. reveal the ways of Providence. (9) **Who . . these,**[f] *etc.*, *i. e.* by all these: *i. e.* by these the great truths of Divine sovereignty and power may be learned. **Lord,** the word Jehovah occurs here only in Job's addresses, and those of his friends. (10) **soul,**[g] life. **every . . mankind,** all are subject to the rule of one sovereign God, who dispenses life and death to man and beasts in absolutely arbitrary fashion.

[e] Pr. vi. 6; Is. i. 3; Je. viii. 7.

[f] 1 Sa. ii. 7.

[g] Da. v. 23; Ps. civ. 29, 30.

"We comprehend the earth only when we have known heaven. Without the spiritual world the material world is a disheartening enigma."—*Joubert.*

"You have marked the spring as it has unfolded its mantle, and hung it gracefully on the shoulders of the hills, and spread its gifts of flowers on the lap of the grateful earth; that is a manifestation of God's all-transforming powers."—*J. Parker.*

"Thy might is self-creative, and Thy works immortal, temporal, destructible, are ever in Thy sight and blessed there. The heavens are Thy bosom, and Thine eye is high o'er all existence; yea, the worlds are but Thy shining footprints upon space."—*Bailey.*

"The noblest mind the best contentment has."—*Spenser.*

God's treatment of man in this world not according to human character. — Three things show this. I. The experience of human life. The prosperity of the wicked is—1. One of the most common facts in human experience; 2. One of the most perplexing facts in human experience; 3. One of the most predictive facts in human experience. — *Thomas.* — *The history of inferior life.* — The creatures of God may be studied in two aspects. I. As a revelation of God: His wisdom, goodness, superintending care. II. As a revelation of duty they teach us by their conduct how we should act. 1. They act in harmony with the laws of their nature, so should we; 2. They seek their pleasure from the true source, so should we; 3. They answer the ends of their existence, so should we.

The earth as a teacher. — To the attentive ear all the earth is eloquent; to the reflecting mind all nature is symbolical. Each object has a voice which reaches the inner ear, and speaks lessons of wise and solemn import. The streams murmur unceasingly its secrets; the sybilline breeze in mountain glens and in lonely forests sings forth its oracles. The face of nature is everywhere written over with Divine characters, which he who runs may read. But beside the most obvious lessons which lie, as it were, on the surface of the earth, and which suggest themselves to us often, when we are least disposed for inquiry or reflection, there are more recondite lessons which she teaches to those who make her structure and arrangements their special study, and who penetrate to her secret arcana. She has loud tones for the careless and superficial, and low suggestive whispers to those who hear with an instructive and attentive mind. She has beautiful illustrations to fascinate the childish, and solemn, earnest truths in severe forms to teach the wise; and those who read her great volume, admiring with the poet and lover of nature the richly colored and elaborate frontispieces and illustrations, but not arrested by these — passing on, leaf after leaf, to the quiet and sober chapters of the interior — will find in these internal details revelations of the deepest interest. As we step over the threshold, and penetrate into the inner chambers of nature's temple, we may leave behind us the beauty of the gardens and ornamental parterres, but we shall find new objects to compensate us — cartoons more wonderful than those of Raphael adorning the walls, friezes grander than those of the Pantheon, sculptures more awe-inspiring than those which have been disinterred from the temples of Karnak and Assyria. In descending into the crust of the earth we lose sight of the rich robe of vegetation which adorns the surface, the beauties of tree and flower, forest, hill, and river, and the ever-changing splendors of the sky; but we shall observe enough to make up for it all in the extraordinary relics of ancient worlds strewn around us and beneath our feet. — *Hugh Macmillan.*

he refers them to the voice of experience

11—13. (11) **mouth,** *R. V.*, "even as the palate tasted its meat." "Is it not as much the business of the ear to discriminate between wise and unwise words, as of the palate to determine between pleasant and unpleasant tastes?" — *Rawlinson.* Even so our reason is able to discern bet. truth and falsehood. (12) **ancient,** aged. **wisdom,** *etc.*, this would be more likely at a time when knowledge was gained by experience and observation. (13) **With him,** *i. e.* with God.[a]

The duty of exercising private judgment (*vs.* 11). — Men's duty to examine and judge of what they hear. Observe — I. Man possesses a faculty by which to judge of moral and religious statements. II. Man's duty to exercise that faculty in regard to all such statements, with 1. Seriousness and attention. 2. Candor and patience. 3. Modesty and humility. 4. Impartiality and absence of prejudice. 5. Prayer for Divine enlightenment. III. Human authority on Divine subjects to be respected, but not regarded as paramount, *vss.* 12, 13. In *vs.* 12 Job's object is 1. To vindicate his own knowledge of God. 2. To show that the wisdom of God infinitely surpasses the wisdom of men. — *Hom. Com.*

Pursuit of knowledge. — Some years ago an effort was made to collect all the chimney-sweepers in the city of Dublin, for the purpose of education. Among others came a little fellow, who was asked if he knew his letters. "Oh, yes," was the reply. "Do you spell?" "Oh, yes," was again the answer. "Do you read?" "Oh, yes." "And what book did you learn from?" "Oh, I never had a book in my life, sir." "And who was your schoolmaster?" "Oh, I never was at school." Here was a singular case: a boy could read and spell without a book or a master. But what was the fact?

[a] Pr. viii. 14; Is xl. 13, 14.

"Although the living members of Christ be never without trouble in this world, but always exercised under the cross, yet the cause and consideration why God will have them thus exercised is either for the honor and glory of His own name, or the profit, commoditie and exceeding benefit of them whom He thus afflicteth, or for both these considerations together."—*T. Timme.*

Why, another little sweep, a little older than himself, had taught him to read by showing him the letters over the shop doors which they passed as they went through the city. His teacher, then, was a little sweep like himself and his book the sign-boards on the houses. What may not be done by trying!

14—16. (14) **he . . down,**[a] cities, houses, personal estates, by wars, or by the destructive forces of nature, cyclone and disease as in Job's case. **he . . man,** in poverty, sorrow, *etc.*, such as take away man's freedom of action. (15) **waters,**[b] rain springs. (16) **wisdom,** *R. V.*, "effectual working." He has the power to execute his plans. **deceived . . his,**[c] *lit.* "he that errs and he that leads into error," he that is ruled and he that rules oppressively. These are distinctions among men; to God both are the same, or both are equally in his hand. —*Cam. Bib.*

he asserts that power and wisdom are with God

[a] Mal. i. 4.

[b] Je. xiv. 22; Na. i 4; Ja. v. 17, 18.

[c] Ez. xiv. 9; 1 Ki. xxii. 21–23.

Reasonableness of miracles. — "I regard a miracle," said uncle, "to be merely such an interference wi' the established coorse o' things as infallibly shows us the presence and the action o' a supernatural pooer. What o'clock is it wi' you, sir, if you please?" "It is half-past twelve, exactly; Greenwich time," replied Smith. "Well, sir," said uncle, pulling a huge old time-piece from his pocket, "it's ane o'clock wi' me. I generally keep my watch a bitte forrit. But I may hae a special reason noo for setting my watch by the railway; and so, see ye, I'm turnin' the hauns o't around. Noo, wad ye say that I have violated the laws o' a watch? True, I hae dune what watchdom, wi' a' its laws, cooldna hae dune for itself; but I hae dune violence to nane o' its laws. My action is only the interference o' a superior intelligence for a suitable end; but I hae suspended nae law, violated nae law. Weel, then, instead o' the watch, say the universe; instead o' moving the hands, say God acting worthily of Himsel'; and we hae a' that I contend for in a miracle; that is, the unquestionable presence of an Almighty hand working the Divine will. And, if He sees fit to work miracles what can hinder Him? He has dune it aftener than once or twice already, and wha daur say that He'll not get leave to do't again?" —*Peloubet.*

"God uses not the rod where He means to use the sword."—*Bishop Hall.*

"Heaven is above all yet. There is a Judge that no king can corrupt."—*Shakespeare.*

17, 18. (17) **counsellors,**[d] great and wise men; also politic schemers. **spoiled,** stripped of office and power. "So much is said here of captivity and of removal, as from an eye-witness, that we conclude some great national upheaval was fresh in memory. To me this event seems most probably to have been the fall of the Northern kingdom." —*Genung.* **maketh . . fools,** in human estimation by the overthrow of their plans. (18) **He . . kings,** with which they hold others in bondage. **and . . girdle,** that they be led in captivity themselves.

and that He confounds the wise and mighty

[d] 2 Sa xvii. 14; Is. xix. 12; xxix. 14; 1 Co. i. 19, 20.

The overthrow of the proud. — You will never be worth anything for God and the church until you lose fifty thousand dollars, or have your reputation upset, or in some way, somehow, are thrown and humiliated. You must go down before you go up. Joseph finds his path to the Egyptian court through the pit into which his brothers threw him. Daniel would never have walked amidst the bronze lions that adorned the Babylonish throne if he had not first walked amidst the real lions of the cave. And Paul marshals all the generations of Christendom by falling flat on his face on the road to Damascus. Men who have always prospered may be efficient servants of the world, but will be of no advantage to Christ. You may ride majestically seated on your charger, rein in hand, foot in stirrup, but you will never be worth anything spiritually until you fall off. They who graduate from the school of Christ with highest honors have on their diploma the seal of a lion's muddy paw, or the plash of an angry wave, or the drop of a stray tear, or the brown scorch of a persecuting fire. In nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of the thousand there is no moral or spiritual elevation until there has been a thorough worldly upsetting. — *Talmage.*

"As every mercy is a drop obtained from the ocean of God's goodness, so every affliction is a drachm weighed out in the wisdom of God's providence."

"We mount to heaven mostly on the ruins of our cherished schemes, finding our failures were successes." — *Louisa M. Alcott.*

19—21. (19) **princes,**[e] *R. V.*, "priests." The chief of a tribe was at that time both prince and priest.[f] (20) **speech,** *lit.* lip. "He takes away the power of giving safe counsel or good advice." **taketh . . aged,** on whose wise speech the young relied. (21) **He . . princes,**[g] by making them objects of scorn.

and makes them incapable of ruling and advising

[e] Da. ii. 21.

[f] As Melchizedek and Jethro.

[g] Jos. x. 24, 42; 1 Sa. xvii. 50; Is. xlv. 1.

All that God does is well done. — Rabbi Akiba was once traveling through the country, and he had with him an ass, a rooster, and a lamp. At nightfall he reached a village, where he sought shelter for the night without success.

"All that God does is well done," said the rabbi, and, proceeding toward the forest, resolved to pass the night there. He lit his lamp, but the wind extinguished it. "All that God does is well done," he said. The ass and the rooster were devoured by wild beasts, yet still he said no more than "All that God does is well done." Next day he learned that a troop of the enemy's soldiers had passed through the forest that night. If the ass had brayed, if the rooster had crowed, or if the soldiers had seen his light, he would surely have met with death, therefore he said again, "All that God does is well done." —*Talmud.*

"A saint may suffer without sinning, but he cannot sin without suffering. The vessels of mercy are seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in."

He brings hidden things to light

a Is. iii. 1-3.

"Affliction is the wholesome soil of virtue; where patience, honor, sweet humility, calm fortitude, take root and strongly flourish." —*D. Mallet.*

"The desire of knowledge, like the thirst of riches, increases ever with the acquisition of it." —*Sterne.*

He takes away the confidence of men

b Is. xxiii. 9; Ex. viii. 2, 6, 16, 24; Da. iv. 33; Ac. xii. 23.

c Ps. cvii. 27; Ac. xiii. 11.

"There is more evil in a drop of sin than in a sea of affliction."

"The most difficult thing in life is to know yourself." —*Thales.*

He retorts their charge of falsehood

d Je. xii. 1; Ps. lxxiii.

e Is. i. 18-20.

f Ps. cxix. 69.

g Je. vi. 14; viii. 11; Ez. xxxiv. 4; Ho. v. 13; Je. xlvi. 11.

h "Quacks, not physicians, in the cure of souls." —*T. Hood.* "'*A numine salus*,' the motto on the coach of an eminent quack was translated by Ld. Mansfield, God help the patient."

i Am. v. 13.

j Pr. xvii. 28

22, 23. (22) **He . . discovereth,** *i. e.* "brings to sight." God through his wisdom sees into the profoundest and darkest deeps, and brings what is hidden to light. (23) **He,** *etc.*,[a] as hist. abundantly proves. **straiteneth them,** *R. V.*, "bringeth them in." ref. to the marvelous growth and then shrinkage of empire, so common in the East.

God at work. — Wherever there are beings of free will, there, whether it be in far-off stars or in the depths of space beyond that farthest star itself, there must be struggle, the possibilities of evil, the choice between the evil and the good. And in no part of His universe can God be passive. Everywhere He must be the foe of the evil and the friend of the good. Everywhere, therefore, throughout the great perplexed, tumultuous universe we can see the flashing of His sword. "His sword," we say; and that must mean His nature uttering itself in His own form of force. Nothing can be in His sword which is not in His nature. And so the sword of God in heavenly regions must mean perfect thoroughness and perfect justice contending against evil and self-will, and bringing about everywhere the ultimate victory of righteousness and truth. — *Phillips Brooks.*

24, 25. (24) **heart,** intelligence. **of . . people,**[b] rulers. **wander . . way,** rulers without a policy, and full of perplexities. (25) **grope . . light,** ignorantly trying to feel their way. **stagger,** "wander;" pursuing a devious and senseless course.[c]

A drunkard rebuked. — A rich drunkard kept two monkeys for his sport. One day he looked into his dining-room, where he and his guests had left some wine, and the two had mounted the table, and were helping themselves generously to the wine — jabbering and gesturing, as they had seen their master and his guests. In a little time they exhibited all the appearance of drunken men. First they were merry, and jumped about; but soon they got to fighting on the floor, and tearing out one another's hair. The drunkard stood in amazement. "What!" said he, "is this a picture of myself? Do the brutes rebuke me?" It so affected his mind that he resolved he would never drink another drop; and from that day he was never known to be any other than a sober and a happy man.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1—5. (1) **Lo . . this,** *etc.*, *i. e.* I am speaking out of my own observation and experience. (2) **What . . also,** *see* xii. 4. (3) **Surely . . Almighty,**[d] bec. his friends cannot help him in his dilemma, nor present anything worth the name of reason. **I . . God,**[e] what he believes about God and what he sees of God's doings seem not to agree, and only God can explain. (4) **forgers,**[f] they had misquoted his statement and made out for him a character that was not true. **all . . value,**[g] they came without being sent for, and had no remedy to offer;[h] *vss.* 4-12 are a digression; an outburst of wrath against the boasted wisdom of his friends. (5) **O . . peace,**[i] and that would make for Job's peace. **and . . wisdom,**[j] for now your speech betrays your folly.

Speaking to God (*vs.* 3). — This speaking to God — I. Implies the highest practical recognition of the Divine existence. II. Involves the truest relief of our social natures. Before a man will unbosom his soul to another he must be certified of three things: 1. That the other feels the deepest interest in him; 2. Will make the fullest allowance for his infirmities; 3. Will assist him in his trials. III. The most effective method of spiritual discipline. IV. Reveals the highest honor of created spirit. — *Thomas.*

A charlatan. — Count Cagliostro sold at an enormous price the "Balm of Life." and declared he had already attained an age of two hundred years; an

that with the use of this wonderful medicine he was entirely insensible to poison. When descanting one day at Strasburg before a large audience, he made the statement that he was invulnerable to poisons. A physician who was present left the room privately and obtained two pills. Coming back to the hall where the Count was haranguing the people, he approached him and said, "Here, my worthy Count, are two pills — the one contains a mortal poison, the other is perfectly innocent. Choose one of them and swallow it, and I engage to take that which you leave. This will be considered a decisive proof of your medical skill, and enable the public to ascertain the efficacy of your extolled elixir." Cagliostro struggled with the situation, made many apologies, but would not touch the pill. His opponent swallowed both, and then proved by the apothecary that they were simply common bread.

"If in all our afflictions Christ is afflicted, surely we may take comfort in His sympathy."

he reproves them for false zeal in the defense of things holy

6—9. (6) **Hear,** *etc.*, in reply to the wise things you have said. Job answers their assertions "that he has offended God;" "that God will restore prosperity if confession is made." (7) **Will . . God,**[a] defending God's ways and character on wrong principles. **talk . . him,** not only should the truth be stated, but stated truly. (8) **Will . . person?**[b] *R. V.*, "Will ye respect His person?" *i. e.* will ye be partial on His side, unjust to me in order to gain favor with God? **will . . God,** as a special pleader. (9) **Is . . out?** what would be the result if God were to examine the arguments you employ in defense of Him, and in explanation of my condition. **mocketh,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "deceiveth another, do ye so deceive him?" with specious, deluding statements.

God-dishonoring zeal in religion (*vss.* 6, 7). — I. Men sometimes set forth false views in order to honor God. II. Those views are an insult to the Almighty and exposed to His displeasure. III. Those views are irreverent and rotten. — *Thomas.*

Unrighteous zeal for God. — A Jewish story relates how that when Abraham sat at his tent door he espied an old man, a hundred years of age, leaning on his staff and weary with travel, coming toward him. He received him, washed his feet, and provided supper, but, observing that the old man begged no blessing from God, inquired as to the reason. The other said he worshiped the fire only, and acknowledged no other God; at which Abraham grew so angry that he thrust him out of his tent and exposed him to the evils of the night. When the old man was gone God asked where he was. Abraham said, "I thrust him away because he worshiped not Thee." God answered, "I have suffered him for these hundred years though he dishonored me, and couldest thou not endure him for one night?" — *Stanley.*

a 2 Co. iv. 2.

b Ro. x. 2.

"We may not lie for the glory of God." — "*Bp. Sanderson*, ii. 57.

"If a cause be good the most violent attacks of its enemies will not injure it so much as the unjust defense of it by its friends."

"One of the ancient fathers replied to a clamorous disputant who shouted, 'Hear me! hear me!' 'I will neither hear thee nor do thou hear me, but let us both hear Christ.'" — *Hurlbut.*

he exhorts them to reverence for God, and silence

10—13. (10) **if . . persons,**[c] *R. V.*, "respect persons," for with God justice will be the first and sole consideration. (11) **excellency,** exaltation, majesty, glory. **afraid,**[d] of His righteous anger. (12) **remembrances,**[e] *R. V.*, "Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes. Your defenses are defenses of clay;" and therefore likely to crumble away. **ashes,** valueless.

Fear of God forbids respect of persons. — Knox furiously opposed Queen Mary's proposed marriage with the Roman Catholic prince of Spain. She regarded him as her enemy. She sent for him, and in tears said that no prince had ever been handled as she; she had borne his bitterness and endured his reprimands, but now she would be avenged. He said, "Madam, I never delighted in the weeping of God's creatures. I can scarcely abide the tears of my own boys whom my own hand corrects, but I have spoken the truth, and must sustain your majesty's tears rather than hurt my conscience." — *Hurlbut.* *The providence of God.* — Must not the conduct of a parent seem very unaccountable to a child when its inclinations are thwarted; when it is put to learn letters; when it is obliged to swallow bitter physic; to part with what it likes, and to suffer, and do, and see many things done contrary to its own judgment? Will it not, therefore, follow from hence, by a parity of reason, that the little child man, when it takes upon itself to judge of parental providence — a thing of yesterday to criticise the economy of the Ancient of Days — will it not follow, I say, that such a judge of such matters must be apt to make very erroneous judgments, esteeming those things in themselves unaccountable which he cannot account for! and concluding of some things, from an appearance of arbitrary carriage toward him, which is suited to his infancy and ignorance, that they are in themselves capricious or absurd, and cannot proceed from a wise, just, and benevolent God? — *Berkeley.*

c Pr. xxiv. 23; Ps. lxxxii. 2; Ja. ii. 1, 9.

d Je. v. 22; Re. xv. 4.

e Ps. xxxiv. 16.

"Dust are your stored-up savings." — *Good.*

"Your maxims are words of dust." — *Noyes.*

"The seeds of knowledge may be planted in solitude, but must be cultivated in public." — *Johnson.*

he avows his undiminished confidence in God

14—16. (14) **Wherefore . . teeth,**[a] "Why do I incur this danger, do you say? Never mind. It is not your affair. For bare existence I care nothing." —*Watson.* (15) **though,** *etc., R. V.,* "Though He slay me, yet will I wait for Him: nevertheless I will," *etc.* The sense of the *A. V.* is right, though the translation is not correct. **but . . maintain,** *etc.,* I will vindicate my sincerity. (16) **He . . salvation,**[b] "This also shall be my salvation, that a godless man," *etc.,*—*Amer. Revisers; i. e.* my innocence is my protection. Only the godless need fear.

Note on vs. 15. —When a master chastises an affectionate slave, or tells him to leave his service, he says, "My lord, though you slay me, yet will I trust in you." Does a husband beat his wife, she exclaims, "My husband, though you kill me, I will not let you go." "Kill me, my lord, if you please, but I will not leave you; I trust in you." "Oh! beat me not; do I not trust in you?" "What an affectionate wife that is: though her husband cut her to pieces, yet she trusts in him." "The fellow is always beating her, yet she confides in him." — *Roberts.*

Firm trust in God. — Some years ago an officer in the army, who was a pious man, was drafted abroad with his regiment. He accordingly embarked, with his wife and children. They had not been many days at sea when a violent storm arose, which threatened the destruction of the ship, and the loss of all their lives. Consternation and terror prevailed among the crew and passengers; his wife was also greatly alarmed. In the midst of all he was perfectly calm and composed; his wife, observing this, began to upbraid him with want of affection to her and her children, urging, that if he was not concerned for his own safety, he ought to be for theirs. He made no reply, but immediately left the cabin, to which he returned in a short time with his drawn sword in his hand, and with a stern countenance pointed it to her breast; but she, smiling, did not appear at all disconcerted or afraid. "What!" said he, "are you not afraid when a drawn sword is at your breast?" "No," answered she, "not when I know that it is in the hand of one who loves me." "And would you have me," replied he, "to be afraid of this storm and tempest, when I know it is in the hand of my heavenly Father, who loves me?"

a Is. ix. 20.

b Is. xii. 2; Je. iii. 23; Ac. iv. 12.

"The heart that trusts forever sings,
And feels as light as it had wings;
A well of peace within it springs."
—*Isaac Williams.*

"And my soul complaineth not,
For she knows not pain or fear,
Clinging to her God in faith,
Trusting though He slay her here."
—*Winkler.*

"I would run into the arms of Christ if He stood with a drawn sword in His hand." —*Luther.*

he prays them to give heed to his words

17—19. (17) **Hear,** *etc.,* he invites them to closely watch his line of argument. (18) **ordered,** arranged. **I shall be justified,**[c] *R. V.,* "I am righteous," as the very first point he reasserts his innocence of evil. (19) **Who . . me?** argue against me. **if I hold,** *etc., R. V.,* "shall I hold my peace and give up the ghost? Shall I die without speaking and stating my case?"

The soul turning from man to God. — Mark the attitude of a saint towards God. I. It is confidence. II. It is confidence as a sinner. III. It is confidence arising from God's character alone. IV. It is confidence in spite of all accusers. — *Bonar.*

A rock to rest on. — The Rev. John Rees, of Crown street, Soho, London, was visited on his death-bed by the Rev. John Liefchild, who very seriously asked him to describe the state of his mind. This appeal to the honor of his religion aroused him; it freshened his dying lamp, and raising himself up in his bed, he looked his friend in the face, and with great deliberation, energy, and dignity, uttered the following words:—"Christ in His person, Christ in the love of His heart, and Christ in the power of His arm, is the Rock on which I rest; and now (reclining his head on the pillow), death, strike!"

c Ps. xxxvii. 6; Job xlii. 9; Is. l. 8.

"Those who have suffered much are like those who know many languages: they have learned to understand and be understood by all." —*Mad. Swetchine.*

"Man cannot really disguise for long periods the true features of the soul."—*Liddon.*

he prays that his afflictions may be less, and a trial vouchsafed

20—22. (20) **two things,** stated in next verse. **then will I not hide,** *etc., i. e.* then I shall be able to stand before God and plead. (21) **Withdraw . . me,**[d] let this bodily suffering end, so that it may not distract my mind. He looks upon the pain as from God, and ceasing when God's hand is lifted. **let . . afraid,** so that my mind may be calm to argue. (22) **call,** *i. e.* call me to the trial, and state the case against me. **or . . speak,** let me speak first, as the plaintiff.

The mercy and love of God. — The great and wonderful abasement of the Word's Divine person and nature, by its incarnation, should stir up in us a love of and thankfulness unto God. . . . We may gather how much He reckoned of us, by how little and low He was made for us. Oh! what matter of admiration and astonishment doth His mercy afford! The Word put on flesh; God, dust and ashes; the Potter, clay; Life, death. The veiling of God in the flesh is the revealing and manifestation of God's love unto the flesh; a manifestation of the special extraordinary, and tender mercies of God; of the riches and treasures of His love and goodness unto mankind. — *Jeanes.*

d Ps. xxxix. 10.

"Fasten your hold on Christ. Having him, though my cross were as heavy as ten mountains of iron, when He putteth His sweet shoulder under me and it, my cross is but a feather."

God hears prayer. —

Thou wilt not hold in scorn the child who dares
Look up to thee, the Father — dares to ask
More than thy wisdom answers. . . . .
. . . . . Thine image, the great sun,
Girt with his mantle of tempestuous flame,
Glares in mid-heaven; but to his noontide blaze
The slender violet lifts its lidless eye,
And from his splendor steals its fairest hue,
Its sweetest perfume from the scorching fire. — *Holmes.*

"The body of all true religion consists in obedience to the will of the Sovereign of the world, in a confidence in His declarations and an imitation of His perfections."—*Edmund Burke.*

23—25. (23) **How . . sins?** So great suffering must mean many sins. How many? and what are they? **make . . sin,** that in particular on acc. of wh. I now suffer. (24) **Wherefore . . face,**[a] as if offended. "Job does not believe God to be his enemy, but he recognizes a present alienation, and desires to be made acquainted with the cause of it."[b] — *Rawlinson.* (25) **break . . fro?**[c] he compares himself to a leaf severed from the living tree, withered and driven about by the wind. **wilt . . stubble?** a poor, vain, helpless thing, unworthy the anger of God.

he protests his great unworthiness

a Ps. x. 1; lxxxiii. 14.

b La. ii. 5.

c Is. xlii. 3; Ma. xii. 20.

Note on vs. 24. — Job, in his distress, makes this pathetic inquiry of the Lord. Should a great man become displeased with a person to whom he has been previously kind, he will, when he sees him approaching, avert his face or conceal it with his hand, which shows at once what is the state of the case. The poor man then mourns, and complains and asks, "Ah! why does he hide his face?" The wife says to her offended husband, "Why do you hide your face?" The son to his father, "Hide not your face from your son." — *Roberts.*

"Take me, O Infinite Cause, and cleanse me of wrong!
Take me, raise me to higher life through centuries long!
Cleanse me, by pain, if need be, scores of days!
Take me and purge me, still will I answer with praise —
There is no death forever."
— *E. Morris.*

The explanation of suffering. — Do you suppose all suffering is sent according to desert? Suffering comes as summer does. A wise way to take summer is not to say: "I wonder whether God sent this summer that I might raise a hundred bushels of wheat or a hundred bushels of corn." Did God think of any such thing as that? No, He willed it so that you might determine what should be the results of the summer. Now God puts you under a discipline of suffering, and leaves you to say, not this: "Where did it come from?" but this: "What can I do with it?" It is not for you to say, "Why was I sick?" but "Having been overtaken by sickness, what can I do with it?" We are no to say, "Why did I lose such a friend?" but, "Having lost such a friend, how shall I be more a man in consequence?" Ask, "How shall I see the bright lining that is beyond the dark cloud?" In other words, study suffering through the lens of hope. Look forward, and not backward. Suffering may be a rod to chastise. It may be a sceptre to empower. Make it a sceptre. Rule in it and rule over it. So God rules in you. — *Beecher.*

"Sanctified afflictions are like so many artificers, working on a pious man's crown, to make it more bright and massive."

26—28. (26) **writest . . me,** ref. to judicial proceedings. The "bill of indictment," filled with alleged offenses. **possess,** *R. V.*, "inherit." **the . . youth,** to answer for in my age, the sins I committed when young. (27) **stocks,** fetters of affliction and poverty. **lookest . . paths,** so that I cannot escape. **settest . . feet,** *R. V.*, "Thou drawest thee a line about the soles of my feet," drawing bounds beyond which he may not move. (28) **and he,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Though I am like a rotten thing which consumeth, like a garment," *etc.* **garment . . eaten,**[d] worthless, will not hold together.

he is haunted by the sins of his past life

d Ps. xxxix. 11; Ho. v. 12.

"O white young souls, strain upward, upward still,
Even to the heavenly source of purity."— *L. Morris.*

Influence of past habits. — Late observations have shown that under many circumstances the magnetic needle, even after the disturbing influence has been removed, will continue wavering, and require many days before it points aright, and remains steady to the pole. So it is ordinarily with the soul, after it has begun to force itself from the disturbing forces of the flesh and of the world. — *Coleridge.* — *Habits are habitual acts.* — As habits belonging to the body are produced by external acts, so habits of the mind are produced by the exertion of inward practical principles — that is by carrying them into act, or acting upon them, the principles of obedience, of veracity, justice and charity . . . . Resolutions to do well are properly acts . . . . All these, therefore, may and will contribute towards forming good habits. But going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it, this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible — that is, form a habit of insensibility to all moral considerations. And from these two observations

vs. 26. "'Ah! the things that man has written against me to the judge, are all *kassapu*, all bitter.' 'Oh! that is a bitter, bitter fault.' 'Who will make this bitterness sweet?'"

"Habitual evils change not on a sudden, but many days must pass and many sorrows;

conscious remorse and anguish must be felt, to curb desire, to break the stubborn will, and work a second nature in the soul, ere virtue can resume the place she lost."— *Rowe.*

"Wherever formed, habit acts involuntarily and without effort, and it is only when you oppose it that you find how powerful it has become."— *Smiles.*

"Habits are a necklace of pearls, untie the knot, and the whole unthreads." — *From the Russian.*

together, that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us, it must follow that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, while these motives and excitements themselves are, by proportionate degrees, growing less sensible — that is, are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen . . . . Active habits are to be formed by exercise. — *Butler.—The peril of tampering with sin.* — A gentleman wandering along the beach of Scotland, where the high rocks came near the sea, was unmindful of the fact that the tide was rising, which would cut off his retreat. A man on the top of the rocks shouted, "Hallo! the tide is rising, and this is the last place through which you can make your escape; you had better climb up on to the rocks!" The man laughed at the warning and went on. After a while, he thought it was time to return; he came back and found retreat cut off. He tried to scale the rocks; he clambered half way up, could get no farther. The waves came to his feet, came to his waist, came to his chin, and with a wild shriek for help, he perished. The tides of eternity are rising. Those only will be saved who get on to the Rock of Ages; yet men saunter along in their sin and play in the sand. We come out and shout, "Hallo! Hallo! the tide is rising." They laugh at our excitement, and say there is no danger. After a while they resolve to return, but it is too late. The waters of eternal destruction gather about their feet; they try to climb, but get no farther than the foot of the rock, and, with eyes rolling in horror, and hands flung up, and a shriek of despair that rolls among the mountains of death with long-reverberating echo, they drop forever. — *Talmage.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

the life of man is brief and sorrowful

a Ecc. ii. 23.

b 1 Ch. xxix. 15.

c Ps. cxliii. 2.

1—3. (1) **Man . . of woman,** herself weak and doomed to sorrow. **and . . trouble,**[a] *i. e.* his short life is full of trouble. (2) **cometh . . flower,** beautiful and full of promise. **and . . down,** by the ills of life, or by death; as a flower by the wind. **fleeth . . shadow,**[b] swift, noiseless. **and . . not,** leaves no trace. (3) **dost . . one,**[c] as man, so weak and worthless. **and . . thee,** "can it be right that a creature so frail, so evanescent, so laden with sorrow, should be dogged with incessant vigilance and called to a stern judicial account?" — *Cox.*

Clean out of unclean (*vs.* 4). — I. Matters of impossibility in nature. 1. Innocent children from fallen parents. 2. A holy nature from the depraved nature of any one individual. 3. Pure acts from an impure heart. 4. Perfect acts from imperfect men. 5. Heavenly life from nature's moral death. II. Subjects for practical consideration for every one. 1. That we must be clean to be accepted. 2. That our fallen nature is essentially unclean. 3. That this does not deliver us from our responsibility. 4. That we cannot do the needful work of cleansing by our own strength. 5. That it will be well for us to look to the Creating Spirit for new creation. III. Provisions to meet the case. 1. The fitness of the gospel for sinners. 2. The cleansing power of the blood. 3. The renewing work of the Spirit. 4. The omnipotence of God in spiritual creation, resurrection, quickening, preservation and perfecting. Lessons — 1. Despair of drawing any good out of the dry well of the creature. 2. Have hope for the utmost cleansing, since God has become the worker of it. — *Spurgeon.*

Afflictions of the good. — Joseph (Ge. xxxix. 20-23; Ps. ciii. 15-19). Moses (He. xi. 23). Eli. (1 Sa. iii. 18).

"I have learned to seek my happiness by limiting my desires rather than in attempting to satisfy them."—*J. S. Mill.*

"Why should we ever weary of this life!
Our souls should widen ever, not contract
Grow stronger, and not harder, in the strife,
Filling each moment with a noble act."
— *Lowell.*

Man proposes, God disposes. — The wild fellow in Petronius that escaped upon a broken table from the furies of a shipwreck, as he was sunning himself upon the rocky shore, espied a man rolled upon his floating bed of waves, ballasted with sand in the folds of his garments, and carried by his civil enemy, the sea, towards the shore to find a grave: and it cast him into some sad thoughts that peradventure this man's wife, in some part of the continent, safe and warm, looks next month for the good man's return; or it may be his son knows nothing of the tempest; or his father thinks of that affectionate kiss which still is warm upon the good old man's cheek ever since he took a kind farewell, and he weeps with joy to think how blessed he shall be when his beloved boy returns into the circle of his father's arms. These are the thoughts of mortals, this the end and sum of all their designs: a dark night and an ill guide, a boisterous sea and a broken cable, a hard rock and a rough wind, dashed in pieces the fortune of a whole family, and they that shall weep loudest for the

"One thing acquired with pain is better than a hundred acquired with ease"

accident, are not yet entered into the storm, and yet have suffered shipwreck. —*Jeremy Taylor.*

4—6. (4) **Who . . unclean?**[a] *i. e.* "Oh, that out of this impure origin one pure person might be born. But there is not one!" A confession of universal sin. (5) **Seeing . . determined,**[b] as they are fixed he cannot pass the bounds of his allotted time. (6) **Turn from him,** *etc.*, cease to watch him so pitilessly. **accomplish,** fill up the little time that is given to him. **hireling,** who works no longer than the appointed time.

The bills of mortality. — In the most healthful times, two hundred and upwards was the constant weekly tribute paid to mortality in London. A large bill, but it must be discharged. Can one city spend according to this weekly rate and not be bankrupt of people? At leastwise, must not my shot be called for to make up this reckoning? When only seven young men, and those chosen by lot, were but yearly taken out of Athens to be devoured by the monster Minotaur, the whole city was in a constant fright, children for themselves, and parents for their children. Yea, their escaping of the first was but an introduction to the next year's lottery. Were the dwellers and lodgers in London weekly to cast lots who should make up this two hundred, how would every one be affrighted! Now none regard it. My security concludes the aforesaid number will amount of infants and old folk. Few men of the middle age, and amongst them surely not myself. But oh! is not this putting the evil day far from me, the ready way to bring it the nearest to me? The lot is weekly drawn (though not by me) for me, I am, therefore, concerned seriously to provide, lest that death's prize prove my blank.— *T. Fuller.*

the length of life is fixed by God

a Je. xiii. 23; Lu. i. 35.

b Ac. xvii. 26; Lu. xii. 20.

"The following are common sayings:—'Who can turn a black crow into a white crane?' 'Who can make the bitter fruit sweet?' 'Who can make straight the tail of the dog!' 'If you give the serpent sweet things, will his poison depart?'" —*Roberts.*

7—10. (7) **hope . . tree,**[c] but not of man. Even the inanimate world seems to be more favored than man. (8) **Though . . earth,** *etc.*, and seems to have perished. (9) **scent,** *lit.* breath, exhalation. **bud,** germinate. (10) **But man,**[d] the word is "the brave, strong man," even he must die and be "laid prostrate." **Where is he?** The attitude of the O. T. toward the condition after death; not a certainty, but a question.

Death. —"Where is he"—I. As to any opportunity of serving God? II. As to any means of benefiting his own soul? III. As to any hope of carrying into effect his purposes and resolutions? IV. As to any possibility of preparing for his eternal state? Let me then ask —1. If the time were come for us to give up the ghost, where should we be? 2. As the time for your giving up the ghost will shortly come, where should you now be?— *C. Simeon.* — *The death of man.*— I. On the supposition that he was a good man, then —1. He is where he has long desired to be; 2. Where he was prepared to be; 3. Where he will for ever remain. II. On the supposition that he was a bad man —1. He is where he never desired to be; 2. Where he was prepared to be; 3. Where he can never wish to remain. — *Ad. Clerum.*

Life after the grave. — In this world of sin, he that takes away the hope of heaven, takes away the consolation of those that sorrow. There is nothing else that can comfort a heart crushed by bereavement and losses. It is but for a moment. Out of my tree the bird has flown, and sings there no more. But it sits in the tree of life and sings and I shall hear it again. I am alone; I have no counsellor; I am without a companion; I am heart-sick and life-sick — but, what then? I shall find again all that I have lost, and more, and more blessedly. Sorrows, as storms, bring down the clouds close to the earth; sorrows bring heaven down close; and they are instruments of cleansing and purifying. I have seen many a man that was not not true to his philosophy, and whose theory broke down at the side of the grave, because he could not endure the belief that he was burying what he had loved; and who said, "Is my child like a clock, when some chance blow has passed through it? Is my child like a shattered clock, that kept time until it was struck, and then ceased, and shall never keep time again?" Never was there such an engine of torment as this world; never was there such a miserable thing as men with such susceptibilities, and in whom sorrows so beat like waves of the sea on the shores of experience. if there is no balm, no hope and no future. — *Beecher.*

comparison of the end of a tree and of a man

c Jo. xii. 24; 1 Co. xv. 36.

d Lu. xvi. 22, 23.

"We go to the grave of a friend saying, 'A man is dead;' but angels throng about him saying, 'A man is born.'" —*Beecher.*

"I feel my immortality o'ersweep
All pains, all tears, all time, all fears, and peal,
Like the eternal thunder of the deep,
Into my ears this truth—'Thou livest forever!'"
—*Byron.*

11, 12. (11) **As . . fail,** by evaporation. **sea,** or large body of water, as lake or river.[e] **flood,** river, so that nothing is left of it; complete extinction.

life compared with failing waters

e Nile, Is. xix. 5; *Euphrates,* Is.

vs. 7. "Trees here appear to be more tenacious of life than in England. The plantain-tree, after it has borne fruit once, is cut down; but from its roots another springs up, which, in its turn, also gives fruit, and is then cut down, to make way for another."—*Roberts.*

xxvii. 1. See also 2 K. xxv.

a Is. li. 6; 2 Pe. iii. 7-10; Is. lxv. 17; Re. xx. 11; Jo. xi. 25; 1 Th. iv. 14-16.

"We have had in these *vss.* 'such a picture of faith struggling to get free from the inexorable suggestions of this phenomenal life and find a full standing point in the unseen beyond as can hardly be paralleled elsewhere in literature.'" — *Genung.*

"Our journey is not to the grave. I am not growing into old age to be blind, and to be deaf, and to be rheumatic, and to shrink a miserable cripple into the corner, shaking and tottering, and forgetting all that ever I knew. The best part is untouched. I sit enshrined within the *me*. No physical weakness touches the soul."
—*Beecher.*

"It is said of Cleombrotus, a heathen, that, after reading the discourses of Plato upon the immortality of the soul, he cast himself headlong from a high rock, and brake his neck, that he might enter upon that immortality which he loved, and believed would follow after death."

death a great change

b "Job has no hope on earth; he longs for the grave, as the gate to a resurrection in another world." — *By Wordsworth. Barnes* thinks the word here rendered grave should be taken to mean the place of departed spirits.

c Ac. xxvi. 8; Ez. xxxvii. 3-10; Jo. v. 28, 29; Re. xx. 12, 13.

d La. iii. 25, 26; Ja. v. 7, 8.

(12) **So . . down,** in the grave. **and . . not,** to his former state. **till . . more,**[a] *i. e.* never.

The future life. — I. The eager, unsatisfied cry of men apart from Divine revelation. II. The partial unfolding of the truth in the earlier revelations. III. The perfect and unequivocal revelation made by Jesus Christ. Of this last we may notice — 1. Christ's teachings all proceed on the assumption that there is a future life. 2. His teachings are constantly supported by an appeal to the future conditions of reward and punishment. 3. Very much of His teaching would be unmeaning and inexplicable in the absence of such future. 4. But He crowns all His teaching by Himself becoming the Disputant, and affirming and demonstrating the future life. 5. He crowns all by the raising of the dead to life, and by the example of His own triumph over death. — *Pul. Com.*

Doubt of the resurrection removed. — I am about to relate to you one of the strong emotions of my life. I found myself in the crypt of a church at Palermo. My friends and I had gone down into it without exactly knowing where we went, and walked with more of surprise than terror between a double line of skeletons. And yet the spectacle was ghastly enough. Those perpendicular dead bodies, dressed in brown garments that hung loosely around their bony limbs, with crossed hands, holding some sort of shield, with their names written on it, had fallen into dislocated attitudes, even more grotesque than horrible. The portals of our Gothic church cathedrals have no representations that equal this. And yet we were not conscious of any terror. Death presented us, indeed, with his material aspect, his sad, repulsive aspect, but the likeness of humanity was still there. With one word, we felt God could call those dry bones to life again. The next chamber had a more appalling spectacle in reserve. All along the walls — as in the cabin of some great ship — were ranged berths of equal lengths, and on these, dressed in gorgeous attire, hands gloved, lay corpses of women, with discolored faces, empty eye-sockets, sunken features, hollow mouths, and wreaths of roses upon their heads. There were hundreds upon hundreds of them, in all the pomp of their court dresses, and a nauseating smell, the cold, faint smell of death, rose from the vaults where the bodies were drying. In the presence of these faces, with their beauty so inexorably destroyed, of this ghastly satire on worldly vanities, I felt my blood congeal. But when at the end of the passage, lit by our guide's torch, a well yawned before us, and he lowered the red and smoking light he held to show it better; when I saw that nameless *detritus*, damp, pestilential, which overflowed the well's mouth, and when our guide said, "This is the dust of those yonder; when they have lain their time, we throw them in here," I remained almost lifeless with horror. With my hand half plunged in those ashes, looking at what they had left on my fingers, a despairing doubt flashed blightingly across my soul. As I fled in haste from that fatal crypt, and mounted with unsteady step the stair that led us back into the nave, just where the daylight began to appear, I suddenly saw four letters carved on the wall, I. N. R. I. Then a voice resounded very near, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, yea verily, Thou wilt do it! From that day I have never for a moment doubted of the resurrection of the dead. — *Mad. de Gasparin.*

13, 14. (43) **O . . grave,**[b] "Job rises to the thought that there might be another life after this one. This thought is expressed in the form of an impassioned desire." — *Cam. Bib.; see* on iii. 13. **until . . past,** wh. now rages like a tempest. **that . . time,** "that God would appoint him a period to remain in death, and then remember him with returning mercy and call him back again to His fellowship." (14) **If . . again,**[c] Job begins now to think that there is another life. **my appointed time,**[d] *etc., R. V.*, "my warfare would I wait, till my release should come," *i. e.* I would endure any suffering if only I could hope for that final restoration. **till . . come,** of the precise nature of wh. change he is ignorant.

The change that takes place at death. — I. What is that change that awaits us all? It is — 1. Great; 2. Momentous; 3. Permanent. II. Let us consider our duty in reference to it. To wait in a state of — 1. Patient expectation; 2. Of diligent preparation. Let the subject teach us — (1) The folly of ambition; (2) The wisdom of true piety. — *Simeon.* — *A glimpse into the life beyond.* — "If a man die, shall he live again?" I. No! 1. The voice of nature is against it. 2. The testimony of experience is against it. 3. The verdict of

science is against it. II. Yes! 1. The phenomena of nature suggest it. 2. The instincts of humanity desire it. 3. The dignity of man demands it. 4. The witness of revelation proclaims it. 5. The resurrection of Christ secures it. — *Pul. Com.*

"Though winter howleth at the gate,
In our hearts 'tis summer yet."
— *Sargent.*

The soul; its existence apart from the body. — We once heard a minister trying to teach some children that the soul would live after they were all dead. They listened, but evidently did not understand. He was too abstract. Snatching his watch from his pocket, he said, "James, what is that I hold in my hand?" "A watch, sir!" "A little clock!" says another. "Do you see it?" "Yes, sir." "How do you know it is a watch?" "Because it ticks, sir." "Very well, can any of you hear it tick? All of you listen now." After a pause, "Yes, sir, we hear it." He then took off the case, and held the case in one hand and the watch in the other. "Now, children, which is the watch? you see there are two which look like watches." "The little one in your right hand, sir." "Very well, again. Now I will take the case, and put it away down here in my hat. Now, let us see if you can hear the watch ticking?" "Yes, sir, we hear it!" exclaimed several voices. "Well, the watch can tick, and go, and keep time, you see, when the case is taken off, and put in my hat. The watch goes just as well. So it is with you, children. Your body is nothing but the case — the body may be taken off and buried in the ground, but the soul will live and think, just as this watch will go, as you see, when the case is taken off." — *J. Todd.* — *Paulinus.* — There is an anonymous poem concerning Paulinus, who preached to the heathen Britons, and was the means of the conversion of Northumbria. He bade King Edwin cast out his idols and worship the Lord, but "Edwin answered not a word."

"Has not the soul an end which nothing else can fulfil?" — *Plato.*

"I'm kneeling at the threshold, weary, faint and sore;
Waiting for the dawning, for the opening of the door;
Waiting till the master shall bid me rise and come
To the glory of His presence, to the gladness of His home!"

"Rose then a sage old warrior,
Was five score winters old,
Whose beard from chin to girdle
Like one long snow wreath rolled.

At Yule time, in our chamber,
We sit in warmth and light,
While cold and howling round us
Lies one black land of night.

Athwart the room a sparrow
Darts from the open door,
Within the happy hearth-light,—
One red flash and no more.

We see it come from darkness,
And into darkness go;
So is our life, King Edwin—
Alas that it is so!

But if this pale Paulinus
Have somewhat more to tell,
Some news of whence and whither
And where the soul will dwell,

If on the outer darkness
The sun of hope may shine,
He makes life worth the living,
I take his God for mine."

"There is nothing strictly immortal but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end. All others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction." — *Sir T. Browne.*

"Bonaparte was visiting the picture gallery of Soult with Dénon, and was struck with one of Raffaelle's pictures, which Dénon complimented with the term 'immortal.' 'How long may it last?' asked Bonaparte. 'Well, some four or five hundred years longer,' said Dénon. 'Belle immortalité!' said Bonaparte, disdainfully." — *Lady Morgan.*

15, 16. (15) **Thou . . thee,** faith that the voice of the living God would penetrate the region of the dead. **thou . . hands,**[a] "and surely, he argues, if I have such a yearning for God must not He who implanted it have a corresponding yearning for me?" — *Cox.* (16) **now . . steps,**[b] the present diligent oversight a pledge of the future. **dost . . sin,** or, acc. to *Ewald*, "wilt thou not pass over (and forgive) my sin?" "His thoughts return to his present condition. He is a criminal at the bar of an incensed and powerful judge, who dogs his every step and maintains a keen and incessant watch for every sin."

our steps numbered, and sin watched

a Ps. cxxxviii. 8; Phi. i. 6.

b Ps. cxxxix 1-3; Je. xvi. 17; Pr. v. 21.

God sees everything. — The master of three drunken and thievish slaves,

having observed a great change in their conduct, asked its cause. One of them replied, "Massa, God Almighty in top!" (above). He was answered, "Was not God Almighty in top when you got drunk and robbed me?" "Yes, massa; but we not know then." He then asked them how they came to know. They answered, "Massa, we been gone a chapel, and preacher tell we so; and now we 'fraid to get drunk and rob, like fore time. God will see, and He will be angry: Him see ebery thing." — *God sees our sins.* — How dreadful is the eye of God on him who wants to sin! Do you know about Lafayette, that great man who was the friend of Washington? He tells us that he was once shut up in a little room in a gloomy prison for a great while. In the door of his cell was a very small hole cut. At that hole a soldier was placed day and night to watch him. All he could see was the soldier's eye; but that eye was always there. Day and night, every moment when he looked up, he always saw that eye. Oh! he says, it was dreadful! There was no escape, no hiding: when he lay down and when he rose up, the eye was watching him. How dreadful will the eye of God be upon the sinner, as it watches him in the eternal world forever. — *J. Todd.*

"Spencer tells of a village in England called Wotton, to which it was said God never came. Could such a place be found now, it would be more througed than Saratoga. To obtain a residence in some land where God's eye never penetrated, what would men not give?"— *Cuyler.*

"Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us."—*Samuel Smiles.*

transgressions sealed

17—19. (17) **My . . bag,**[a] counted, hoarded up, so that there can be no diminution or loss when the day of settlement comes. **sewest,** one sewn to another. (18) **mountain . . nought,**[b] *etc.*, the most solid of earthly things are movable, why should man hope to be exempt fr. the law of change? (19) **thou washest,** *R. V.*, "the overflowings thereof wash away the dust of the earth." Mountains, rocks, the earth itself, under the influence of constant forces, are worn away. **the hope of man,** is destroyed by this constant severity of God.

Sealed transgression (*vs.* 17).— I. We cannot take back our sins. II. Our sins are with God. III. Our sins are reserved for the future. IV. It is our impenitence, not God's will, that causes our sins to be sealed up in God's bag. V. The gospel of Christ breaks the seal of sins. — *Adeney.*

Sealed up in a bag. — Not only had the Oriental judge or accuser an open pouch in which he kept documents needful for the establishment of his case, but he had an inward and lesser compartment, carefully sewn up, in which were the special proofs that the general impeachment was sound. This is what Job saw when he looked upon God. Said he: I see the scrip the full pouch; I see the documents that are written against me; and behind them all are proofs I cannot deny; the case is well ordered and set forth with masterly skill; not a point will be overlooked, and where I am strongest in denial God will be strongest in evidence. Men make mistakes about this matter; they confuse their documents and their references; sometimes they lose papers which are essential to their case, and sometime they cannot read all their own hands have written: and therefore even the wicked man will escape a just judgment: but when God undertakes to be judge, there is the scrip, there is the general accusation, there are the particular proofs, day and date, down to hour and moment, and locally down to a footprint, and there is no reply to omniscience. — *Parker.*

a Ho xiii. 12; De. xxxii. 33-35.

b Re. vi. 14.

vs. 19. "Is a man found fault with because he makes slow progress in his undertaking, he says, 'Never mind; the water which runs so softly, will, in time, wear away the stones.'"—*Roberts.*

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone, leads to the land where sorrow is unknown; no traveler ever reached that blest abode, who found not thorns and briars in his road."—*Cowper.*

the end of human life

20—22. (20) **Thou,** the God of nature, and all power. **prevailest,** *etc.*, *i. e.* thou art continually oppressing poor, weak man. **passeth,** he is dissolved away. **thou . . countenance,** all. to change of death. **and . . away,** fr. presence of living. (21) **His sons,** *etc.*,[c] having passed away, ignorant of the honors or disgraces of his posterity. (22) **flesh . . pain,**[d] the dead knoweth nothing of the upper world, only this can be said of him that his flesh hath pain and his soul mourneth.— *Cam. Bib.*

Lessons to be learned from the speech of Job.— I. The comparative insignificance of worldly prosperity or adversity in view of the eternal world. II. The infinite importance of securing a place of happiness beyond the grave— 1. For ourselves; 2. For our children and friends. III. The value of the gospel, and the duty of making ourselves acquainted with its precious contents. IV. The paramount necessity of a personal interest in Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life."— *Robinson.*

Death always near. — "My ancestors," said a sailor, "were all seamen, and all of them died at sea: my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather, were all buried in the sea." Then said a citizen, "What great cause have you then, when you set out to sea, to remember your death! and to commit your soul to the hands of God!" "Yea, but," said the mariner to

c Ps. xxxix. 6.

d Or, "his flesh shall drop away from him."—*Good.*

"'Paid the debt of nature.' No; it is not paying a debt; it is rather like bringing a note to a bank to obtain solid gold in exchange for it. In this case, you bring this cumbrous body, which is nothing worth, and which you could not wish to retain long; you

the citizen, "where, I pray, did your father and your grandfather die?" "Why," said he, "they died all of them in their beds." "Truly, then," said the mariner, "what a care had you need to have every night, when you go to bed, to think of your bed as the grave, and the clothes that cover you as the earth that must one day be thrown upon you!"—*Spencer.*

If I should die to-night.—

If I should die to-night,
My friends would look upon my quiet face
Before they laid it in its resting-place,
And deem that death had left it almost fair;
And, laying snow-white flowers against my hair,
Would smooth it down with tearful tenderness,
And fold my hands with lingering caress.
Poor hands, so empty and so cold to-night.

If I should die to-night,
My friends would call to mind with loving thought,
Some kindly deed the icy hand had wrought,
Some gentle word the frozen lips had said;
Errands on which the willing feet had sped.
The memory of my selfishness and pride,
My hasty words, would all be put aside,
And so I should be loved and mourned to-night.

If I should die to-night,
Even hearts estranged would turn once more to me,
Recalling other days remorsefully.
The eyes that chill me, with averted glance
Would look upon me as of yore, perchance,
And soften in the old, familiar way.
For who could war with dumb, unconscious clay?
So I might rest, forgiven of all, to-night.

Oh friends, I pray to-night,
Keep not your kisses for my dead, cold brow.
The way is lonely, let me feel them now.
Think gently of me; I am travel-worn;
My faltering feet are pierced with many a thorn.
Forgive, oh hearts estranged, forgive, I plead!
When dreamless rest is mine, I shall not need
The tenderness for which I long to-night.

lay it down, and receive for it, from the eternal treasures, liberty, victory, knowledge, rapture."—*J. Foster.*

"We know, O Lord, that our rent due to Thee is our soul, and the day of our death is the day, and our death-bed the place, where this rent is to be paid. And we know, too, that he that hath sold his soul for unjust gain, or given away his soul before in society and fellowship of sin, or lent away his soul for a time by a lukewarmness and temporizing to the dishonor of Thy name, to the weakness of Thy cause, to the discouraging of Thy servants, he comes to that day and to that place, his death and death-bed, without any rent in his hand, without any soul, to this purpose, to surrender it unto Thee."—*Donne.*

"To live in hearts we leave behind, is not to die.—*Campbell.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

the answer of Eliphaz

unprofitable talk.

1–3. (1) **answered,** here begins the second colloquy betw. Job and his friends. (2) **wise man,** Eliphaz regards the guild of wise men dishonored by these strange ideas of Job. **vain knowledge,**[a] *Heb.* knowledge of wind. **belly,** seat of thought and desire. **east wind,** withering, parching,[b] and violent.[c] (3) **should . . talk?** words to no purpose.

The egotistic talker.—Almost every circle is blessed with the egotist, who exercises a kind of dictatorship over it. Are you in a mistake as to the matter of fact? He cannot suffer you to proceed till you are corrected. Have you a word on the end of your tongue? He at once comes to your relief. Do you talk bad grammar? He quotes rules and gives examples like a pedagogue. Does he discover that there is a link wanting in the chain of your argument? He bids you stay till he has supplied it. Do you drop a word to which he has devoted much research? He asks you whether you know its primitive signification, and straightway inflicts upon the circle a long philological disquisition. When you relate an incident which you suppose new and affecting, your friend listens without emotion. When you have done, he observes that he heard the same long ago, and adds a very material circumstance which you omitted. He is never taken by surprise, and it is impossible to give him any information. And yet he never takes the lead in conversation, nor advances an original thought. It is his business to come after, and

[a] Mat. xii. 36, 37.

[b] Ex. xiv. 21; Is. xxvii. 8; Jonah iv. 8.

[c] Ps. xlviii. 7.

"The wise man can never be without pleasure in himself, nor can anything out of himself molest and trouble him. Nor is this a happiness to be attained to but by long accustomance, and by doing by our mind just as we do by our bodies in time

of pestilence, that is, by carefully avoiding all commerce with those that are sick." — *Fleckmoe.*

"Life is short, and conversation apt to run to mere words."— *Holmes.*

self-condemnation

a Lu. xviii. 1; Ja. iv. 2.

"Thee mustna undervally prayer. Prayer mayna bring money, but it brings us what no money can buy — a power to keep us from sin, and be content with God's will whatever He may please to send." — *Geo. Eliot.*

"The pure and noble, the graceful and dignified simplicity of language, is nowhere in such perfection as in the Scriptures and Homer. The whole Book of Job, with regard both to sublimity of thought and morality, exceeds beyond all comparison, the most noble parts of Homer."— *A. Pope.*

let the past teach

b De. xxiv. 29; Ro. xi. 31; 1 Co ii. 11, 26; Pr. iii. 32.

"When a majority of people agree on any subject, should an individual pertinaciously oppose them, it will be asked, 'What! were you born before all others?' 'Yes, yes: he is the first man; no wonder he has so much wisdom!' 'Salam to the *first!* man.'" — *Roberts.*

"Hope is a prodigal young heir, and Experience is his banker; but his drafts are seldom honored, since there is often a

pick up the words which others let slip in a running talk, or to check their impetuousity, that he may point out to them their missteps. Had he lived in the days of Solomon, he would have flattered the royal sage with an intimation that some of his proverbs were but plagiarisms; or, had he been a contemporary of Solomon's father, would have felt himself bound to give the slayer of Goliath some lessons on the use of the sling, and hinted to the sweet singer of Israel his private opinion that the shepherd bard did not perfectly understand the use of the harp. — *G. W. Harvey.*

4—6. (4) **casteth off,** *R. V.*, "doest away with fear." **prayer,**[a] rather, devout meditation. (5) **uttereth,** *i. e.* teacheth. *R. V.*, "for thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth," *i. e.* his mouth is used by his evil speech as its instrument. **chooseth . . crafty,** instead of teachings of wisdom. (6) **Thine . . thee,** by the sentiments thou dost utter.

Christian speech. — I. That the interests of religion are greatly in the keeping of its professors. II. That a believer in trouble should be careful, so to speak, as to bear a good testimony to religion before the world. — *Robinson.*
Restraining prayer. — I. Its evils. We lose—1. What God gives in response to prayer. 2. The spiritual blessedness of prayer. II. Its causes. 1. Whatever leads to unbelief. 2. Worldly living. 3. Sin. — *Pul. Com.*

Dogmatical talking. —

When men of judgment creep and feel their way,
The positive pronounce without dismay;
Their want of light and intellect supplied
By sparks absurdity strikes out of pride.
Without the means of knowing right from wrong,
They always are decisive, clear and strong;
Where others toil with philosophic force,
Their nimble nonsense takes a shorter course;
Flings at your head conviction in the lump,
And gains remote conclusions at a jump;
Their own defect, invisible to them,
Seen in another, they at once condemn;
And, though self-idolized in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.
The cause is plain and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride;
Few competitions but engender spite;
And those the most where neither has a right. — *Cowper.*

7—10. (7) **Art . . born?** sug. of old belief in the original wisdom of Adam; or hast thou lived fr. the creation and treasured up all the wisdom since? (8) **Hast . . God?**[b] or "wast thou present as a hearer in the counsel of God?" **restrain . . thyself?** hast thou a monopoly of wisdom? (9) **What . . not?** by wh. exceptional knowledge, or means of knowing, thy superior wisdom may be proved. (10) **With us,** *etc.*, we are speaking the experience of ancient sages, or, "among us is one gray-headed and aged," an indirect claim for himself as worthy of respect and his judgments as mature and experienced above Job's.

Provision for happiness in old age. — It is not for youth alone that the great Parent of creation hath provided. To novelty, to acuteness of sensation, to hope, to ardor of pursuit, succeeds what is, in no inconsiderable degree, an equivalent for them all, "perception of ease." Herein is the exact difference between the young and the old. The young are not happy but when enjoying pleasure; the old are happy when free from pain. The vigor of youth was to be stimulated to action by impatience of rest; whilst to age, quietness and repose become positive gratifications. This same perception of ease oftentimes renders old age a condition of great comfort, especially when riding at its anchor after a busy or tempestuous life. It is well ascribed by Rousseau to the interval of repose and enjoyment between the hurry and the end of life. — *Paley.—The humility of wisdom.* — I have heard of a young man who went to college; and when he had been there one year, his parent said to him, "What do you know? Do you know more than when you went?" "Oh, yes!" said he; "I do." Then he went the second year, and was asked the same question, "Do you know more than when you went?" "Oh, no!" said he; "I know a great deal less." "Well," said the father, "you are

getting on." Then he went the third year and was asked the same question, "What do you know now?" "Oh!" said he, "I don't think I know anything." "That is right," said the father: "you have now learned to profit, since you say you know nothing." He who is convinced that he knows nothing of himself, as he ought to know, gives up steering his ship, and lets God put his hand on the rudder. He lays aside his own wisdom and cries, "O God! my little wisdom is cast at thy feet: my little judgment is given to thee." — *Spurgeon.*

heavy balance against him, because he draws largely on a small capital, is not yet in possession, and if he were, would die."—*C. Colton.*

11—13. (11) **consolations,**[a] *etc., R. V.,* "Are the consolations of God too small for thee, and the word that dealeth gently with thee?" *i. e.* are our interpretations of Providence not of sufficient importance to meet your case? In the phrase "dealeth gently," *etc.,* he refers to the gentle manner of his first speech. (12) **Why . . away?** why allow yourself to be controlled by feeling? **wink,**[b] or roll in pride, contempt. (13) **spirit,** "Job has turned against the friends' conception of God, a being without affection, and dealing only according to iron justice." — *Genung.*

there must be a reason for turning from God

[a] 2 Co. i. 3-5.

[b] Pr. x. 10.

Heart wanderings (*vs.* 12). — I. We are led by our hearts; by 1. The inner life. 2. The thought. 3. The affections and desires. II. Our hearts are prone to err. 1. In weakness. 2. In sinfu inclination. III. The wandering heart leads to ruin. We are tempted to neglect the evil on three accounts. 1. That it is internal. 2. That it is under our control. 3. That it only concerns ourselves. IV. The wandering heart needs to be renewed. 1. Cleansing. 2. Recovery. 3. Preservation. — *Adeney.*

Consolation for a mother. — Dr. Payson, visiting a mother who was disconsolate for the loss of a child, said, "Suppose, now, some one was making a beautiful crown for you to wear, and you knew it was for you, and that you were to receive it and wear it as soon as it should be done. Now, if the maker of it were to come, and, in order to make the crown more beautiful and splendid, were to take some of your jewels to put into it, should you be sorrowful and unhappy because they were taken away for a little while, when you knew they were gone to make up your crown?"

"It is when our budding hopes are nipped beyond recovery by some rough wind, that we are the most disposed to picture to ourselves what flowers they might have borne, if they had flourished."—*Dickens.*

14—16. (14) **What . . clean?**[c] what is there to justify such passion — thy pretended innocence? (15) **saints,** servants, *i. e.* the angels. **heavens,** all places and beings impure and imperfect, by comparison, in view of a holy God. (16) **How . . man,** *R. V.,* "How much less one that is abominable and corrupt, a man that drinketh," *etc.* **which . . water?**[d] sins as naturally as when thirsty he drinks water.

the holiness of God

[c] Pr. xx. 9; Ec. vii. 20.

God and man. — When Christ showed us God, then man had only to stand at his highest and look up to the Infinite above him to see how small he was. And always the true way to be humble is not to stoop till you are smaller than yourself, but to stand at your real height against some higher nature that shall show what the real smallness of your greatest greatness is. The first is the unreal humility that always goes about depreciating human nature; the second is the genuine humility that always stands in love and adoration, glorifying God. — *Phillips Brooks.*—*The holiness of God.*— The holiness of God is not to be conceived of as one attribute among others: it is rather a general term representing the conception of His consummate perfection and total glory. It is His infinite moral perfection crowning His infinite intelligence and power. There is a glory of each attribute viewed abstractedly, and a glory of the whole together. The intellectual nature is the essential basis of the moral. Infinite moral perfection is the crown of the Godhead. Holiness is the total glory thus crowned. — *Hodge.*

[d] Pr. xix. 28; Ps. xiv. 1-3; Ro. i. 28-32; iii. 9-19.

No stranger can get a great many notes of torture out of a human soul; it takes one that knows it well; — parent, child, brother, sister, intimate. — *Holmes.*

17—19. (17) **I . . thee,** "Eliphaz here introduces a studied description by himself of the proceedings and consequent sufferings of the wicked. It is plainly leveled at Job." — *Rawlinson.* (18) **and . . it,** but freely communicated it. (19) **earth,** land where they lived. **and . . them,**[e] the idea is that the coming in of strangers would have corrupted the truth.

appeal to antiquity

The unreliableness of tradition. — Would persons as readily believe the correctness of a report transmitted by word of mouth in popular rumors from one end of the kingdom to another, as if it came in a letter passed from one person to another over the same space? Would they think that because they could trust most servants to deliver a letter, however long or important, therefore they could trust the same to deliver the contents of a long and

[e] "Eliphaz here speaks like a genuine Arab, whose pride is in his tongue, his sword, and his pure blood."—*Umbreit.*

"Not to know what has been transacted in former times, is to continue always a child. If no use is made of the labors of past ages, the world must remain always in the infancy of knowledge." — *Cicero.*

important letter in a message by word of mouth? Let us put a familiar case. A footman brings you a letter from a friend upon whose word you can perfectly rely, giving an account of something that has happened to himself, and the exact account of which it concerned you to know. While you are reading and answering the letter, the footman goes into the kitchen and there gives your cook an account of the same thing, which he says he overheard the upper servants at home talking over as related to them by the valet, who said he had it from your friend's son's own lips; the cook relates the story to the groom, and he in turn tells it to you. Would you judge of that story by the letter, or the letter by the story? — *Illus. of Truth.*

the state of the ungodly in this life

20—22. "Here begin the words of the fathers, Eliphaz brings up this lurid picture of the wicked in order to counteract Job's intimations that the wicked are prospered, while the righteous suffer." — *Genung.* (20) **wicked . . days,** a constant sufferer through his sin. **and . . oppressor,** *R. V.*, "Even the number of years that are laid up for the oppressor." (21) **dreadful sound,**[a] *R. V.*, "A sound of terrors," he thinks he hears the sound of coming destruction. **prosperity . . him,** all this was in all. to the case of Job himself. (22) **believeth . . darkness,** *etc.*, his sin destroys all hope of recovery.

a 1 Th. v. 3; Ac. xii. 22, 23; 1 Sa. xxv. 36–38.

"The panic fears of a conscience-stricken criminal, however wealthy and noble, rob him of rest, and prevent him from enjoying his prosperity." — *Wordsworth.*

Deceitfulness of sin. — It hath many secret ways of insinuating; it is like a Delilah; it is like a Jael to Sisera; sin is a sweet poison, it tickleth while it stabbeth; the first thing that sin doth is to bewitch, then to put out the eyes, then to take away the sense and feeling; to do to a man as Noah's daughter did to him, make him drunk, and then he doth he knoweth not what. As Joab came with a kind salute to Abner, and thrust him under the fifth rib, while Abner thought of nothing but kindness, so sin comes smiling, comes pleasing and humoring thee, while it giveth thee a deadly stab. — *Anthony Burgess.* — *The horrors of a guilty conscience.* — Philo Judæus telleth that Flaccus played all the parts of cruelty that he could devise against the Jews, for their religion's sake, but afterwards, when the doom of Caligula fell upon him, and he was banished to Andros, an island near Greece, he was so tormented with the memory of his bloody iniquities, and a fear of suffering for them, that if he saw any man walking softly near to him, he would say to himself, "This man is devising to work my destruction:" if he saw any go hastily, "Surely it is not for nothing; he maketh speed to kill me." If any man spake him fair, he suspected that he would cozen him, and sought to entrap him; if any talked roughly to him, then he thought that he contemned him. Thus his sin did lie upon him, and ever reminded him that some vengeance was to follow. — *Spencer.* — *Sin and cowardice.* — Rowland Hill was one dark night traveling with his wife in a phaeton, near London, when they were stopped by three highwaymen. The preacher thought that he would try the effect of noise upon their cowardly consciences; so he bawled and screamed out a succession of unearthly noises, till one of them exclaimed, "O we've stopped the devil by mistake!" and away they scampered. — *Hurlbut.*

"Fear in itself is a thing not sinful. For is not fear a thing natural, and for men's preservation necessary, implanted in us by the provident and most gracious Giver of all good things, to the end that we might not run headlong upon those mischiefs wherewith we are not able to encounter, but use the remedy of shunning those evils which we have not ability to withstand?" — *Hooker.*

the ungodly man is full of fears

23—25. (23) **He . . bread,**[b] as one reduced to bitterest poverty. **he knoweth,** the wicked man is sure that he will suffer for his wickedness, and he fears the dark day as if it were always at hand. **darkness,**[c] destruction. (24) **king . . battle,**[d] ready to attack, and vain to resist. (25) **For,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Because he hath stretched out his hands against God, and behaveth himself proudly against," *etc.* These are the reasons for his apprehensions.

b "He is destined to be food for vultures." — *LXX.*

c Pr. i. 24–27.

d Pr. vi. 11; xxiv. 34.

Effects of the first sin. — There was a time when all the sin which was in the world was enclosed in one sinful wish in the breast of one woman. She had permission to eat of every tree but one, but that one God prohibited, saying, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shall surely die." A transient thought, immediately repressed or disapproved, would not have been sin; for, as Milton says:

"Evil into the mind of God or man
May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
No spot or blame behind;"

but she indulged that wish, and hankered after that fruit; and in the sinful wish all the sin of the earth once lay. That wish became an act; and now let him who would write the sins and woes of earth first count for us the

"He that stands below, and looks to the top of St. Paul's, or any other high place, thinks the people upon the height but children, while those below are giants. If he stands on the height, and looks

snowflakes of five thousand winters, and tell us the number of drops in all the rivers and oceans. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" and their history is the history of wars, lust, intemperance, violence. O sin! what hast thou done? What canst thou not do? — *N. Adams.* — *Needless fear.* — I believe that when you are worrying yourself by imagining all kinds of evils as likely to befall you, it will do you a great deal of good to be allowed to see something of other people, who are always expecting something awful to happen, and with a morbid ingenuity devising ways of making themselves miserable. You will discern how ridiculous such people look; how irritating they are; how, so far from exciting sympathy, they excite indignation. My friend Jones told me that after several months of extremely hard head-work, which had lowered his nervous system, he found himself getting into a way of vaguely dreading what may come next: and of receiving his letters in the morning with many anticipations of evil. But happily a friend came to visit him, who carried all this about a hundred degrees farther; who had come through all his life, expecting at least an earthquake daily, if not the end of the world. And Jones was set right. In the words of Wordsworth, "He looked upon him, and was calmed and cheered." Jones saw how like a fool his friend seemed; and there came a healthy reaction; and he opened his letter-box bravely every morning, and was all right again. Yes, let us see the Helot drunk, and it will teach us to keep sober. My friend Gray told me that for some little space he felt a growing tendency to scrubbiness in money matters. But having witnessed pinching and paring (without the least need for them) carried to a transcendent degree by some one else, the very name of economy was made to stink in his nostrils; and he felt a mad desire to pitch half-crowns about the streets wherever he went. In this case, the reaction went too far; but in a week or two Gray came back to the middle course, which is the safest and best.

down, the case is reversed. So it is with men. Their troubles and worldly interests seem great while groveling among them; but let them get up where God resides, and how trivial will all appear!"

"There needs no other charm to raise infernal spirits up, but fear, that's both a prisoner to itself, and jail; draws more fantastic shapes than in the grains of knotted wood, in some men's crazy brains, when all the cocks they think they see, and bulls, are only in the insides of their skulls." — *Butler.*

the headlong impiety of the ungodly

26–28. (26) **even . . neck,** *R. V.*, "He runneth upon him with a stiff neck, with the thick bosses of his bucklers." "The words describe the wicked man's demeanor toward God. The figure is that of a warrior making an assault. The 'bosses'[a] are the convex sides of the bucklers,[b] the sides turned to the foe, who here is God." — *Cam. Bib.* (27) **Because,**[c] *etc., i. e.* he gives himself up to a life of animal pleasures. (28) **dwelleth,** or "and he dwelt." **are ready to become,** or, "were destined to be." The idea seems to be that the wicked man settled in and rebuilt places that were under the curse of God, and destined by Him for perpetual desolation. To settle in and rebuild such ruins indicates the extreme of impiety. — *Davidson.*

Ancient wrestlers. — Wrestlers, before they began their combats, were rubbed all over in a rough manner, and afterward anointed with oil, in order to increase the strength and flexibility of their limbs. But as this unction, in making the skin too slippery, rendered it difficult for them to take hold of each other, they remedied that inconvenience, sometimes by rolling themselves in the dust of the Palæstra, sometimes by throwing fine sand upon each other, kept for that purpose, in Xystæ, or porticoes of the Gymnasia. Thus prepared, they began their combat. In this manner the athletæ wrestled standing, the combat ending with the fall of one of the competitors. To this combat the words of Eliphaz seem to apply, "For he stretcheth out his hand against God," like a wrestler, challenging his antagonist to the contest, "and strengthening himself," rather vaunteth himself, stands up haughtily, and boasts of his prowess in the full view of "the Almighty," throwing abroad his arms, clapping his hands together, springing into the middle of the ring, and taking his station there in the adjusted attitude of defiance. "He runneth upon him, even on his neck," or with his neck stretched out, furiously dashing his head against the other. — *Paxton.*

"God knows, thou art a collop of my flesh." — *Shakespeare.*

a Ross fr. Fl. *bosse*, = a bunch or lump; Du. *bosse*, or *busse*, the knob of a shield. A boss is a knob or protuberance ornament; generally, but not exclusively applied to the knob of a shield.

b Mal. iii. 13; Da. v. 22, 23; Ac. ix. 5.

c De. xxxii. 15; Je. v. 26, 28.

the recompense of trusting in vanity

29–31. (29) **He . . rich,**[d] *see* last *vs.* **neither shall he prolong,** *etc., R. V.*, "shall their produce bend to the earth," *i. e.* of all his effort he shall reap no mature fruit, his wealth shall not last.[e] (30) **He . . darkness,**[f] he shall not escape from calamity. **flame . . branches,**[g] the wrath of God shall consume him as a fire destroys a dry tree. **breath . . mouth,** by the blast of God. (31) **Let,** *etc.,*[h] *R. V.*, "Let him not trust in vanity, deceiving himself." Comp. iv. 8; v. 13.

The folly of trusting in vanity. — Let us consider — I. The caution. Men are apt to trust — 1. Vain conceits; 2. In vain possessions; 3 In vain hopes;

d Ja. v. 1–5.

e "His possessions shall not be extended on the earth." — *Noyes.*

f 2 Pe. ii. 9, 17; Ma. xxii. 11, 13; Jude 13.

g Ez. xx. 47; 2 Th. i. 7–8.

h Ga. vi. 7, 8.

4. In vain purposes. Consider — II. The reason with which this caution is enforced. They shall reap — 1. Disappointment; 2. Vexation; 3. Ruin. Observe — (1) How necessary it is to mark the state and habit of our minds; (2) How thankful should we be that there is an all-sufficient Friend to trust. — *C. Simeon.*

The value of trust in God. — Several German princes were once extolling the glory of their realms. One boasted of his excellent vineyards; another of his hunting-grounds; another of his mines. At last, Abelard, Duke of Wurtemburg, took up the subject, and said, "I own that I am a poor prince, and can vie with none of these things: nevertheless, I, too, possess a noble jewel in my dominion; for were I to be without attendants, either in the open country or wild forests, I could ask the first of my subjects whom I meet to stretch himself upon the ground, and confidently place my head upon his bosom, and fall asleep without the slightest apprehension of injury." Was not this a precious jewel for a prince? I, however, have something better, for I can rest my head and heart in the lap of God's providence, and upon the bosom of Christ Jesus our Lord, with a perfect assurance that neither man nor devil can touch me there.— *Gotthold.*

Not with possession, not
With fairest earthly lot,
Cometh the peace assured, his spirit's guest;
With much it looks before,
With most it yearns for more;
And "this is not our rest" and "this is not our rest."— *Ingelow.*

the fate of the hypocrite

a Rev. 1. 13.

"Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player, that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more; it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."— *Shakespeare.*

She had turned herself out of the paradise of innocence; she had gathered the apple and not tasted its sweetness. How was she to know what a common experience this is? How could she suppose that the promised good in evil was all a cheat, and that she should find nothing but bitterness in it from the very first? The everlasting lie had been uttered to her also.—*Ingelow.*

The hope of the hypocrite is like "a spider's web." He may call it a house, but it is unavailable to "hide from the storm, or cover from the tempest." He may hold fast by it, but it shall fall, and he perish in the ruins. There is, there can be, no shelter, safety, nor security, in the cobweb of self-righteousness. If not stript off in the world, it will be swept away by the first breath of eternity.

32—35. (32) **accomplished,** or "while yet his time is not, it shall be paid in full." — *Genung. i. e.* while he yet lives he shall receive a fearful recompense for his evil. **branch . . green,** but shall wither away. (33) **unripe . . vine,**[a] as in this country a late frost will often strip a tree of its young fruit. **cast . . olive,** which the slightest breath of wind will scatter. So transient and unprofitable is the life of the wicked. (34) **congregation,** household. **the . . bribery,** the homes of those who receive bribes. "Every trace of the wicked man perishes, not a vestige is left to tell of his labors,— a statement even more untrue to facts than those which preceded!" — *Cox.* (35) **They . . vanity,** vanity, or emptiness, the great outcome of their plottings.

The wind and the blossom.— A north or a northeast wind frequently proves injurious to the olive trees in Greece, by destroying the blossom. Dr. Chandler says, "We ate under an olive tree, then laden with pale yellow flowers; a strong breeze from the sea scattered the bloom and incommoded us, but the spot afforded no shelter more eligible." In another place he observes: "The olive groves are now, as anciently, a principal source of the riches of Athens. The mills for pressing and grinding the olives are in the town; the oil is deposited in large earthen jars, sunk in the ground, in the areas before the houses. The crops had failed five years successively when we arrived; the cause assigned was a northerly wind, called Greco-Tramontane, which destroyed the flower. The fruit is set in about a fortnight, when the apprehension from this unpropitious quarter ceases. The bloom in the following year was unhurt, and we had the pleasure of leaving the Athenians happy in the prospect of a plentiful harvest."— *Burder. Saint Anthony and the cobbler.*— We read a pretty story of St. Anthony, who, being in the wilderness, led there a very hard and strait life, insomuch that none at that time did the like; to whom came a voice from heaven, saying, "Anthony, thou art not so perfect as is a cobbler that dwelleth at Alexandria." Anthony, hearing this, rose up forthwith, and took his staff, and went till he came to Alexandria, where he found the cobbler. The cobbler was astonished to see so reverend a father come to his house. Then Anthony said unto him, "Come, and tell me thy whole conversation, and how thou spendest thy time." "Sir," said the cobbler, "as for me, good works have I none, for my life is but simple and slender. I am but a poor cobbler. In the morning, when I rise, I pray for the whole city wherein I dwell, especially for all such neighbors and poor friends as I have; after I set me at my labor, where I spend the whole day in getting my living; and I keep me from all falsehood, for I hate nothing so much as I do deceitfulness; wherefore, when I make to any man a promise, I keep it and perform it truly. And thus I spend my time poorly with my wife and children, whom I teach and instruct, as far as my wit will serve me, to fear and love God. And this is the sum of my simple life." In this story you see how God loveth those that follow their vocation, and live uprightly without any falsehood in their dealing. Anthony was a great holy man; yet this cobbler was as much esteemed before God as he.—*Bp. Latimer.*

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

Job's reply to Eliphaz

miserable comforters

1—4. (2) **I . . things,** moral commonplaces. **miserable . . all,** (*see* xiii. 4), irritating, disappointing. (3) **vain words,** *lit.* "is there any end to words of wind?" *i. e.* this sort of speech can go forever and is as vain as the wind. **emboldeneth,** *R. V.*, "provoketh." **answerest?** in such a way as this. (4) **I . . do,** easy to speak thus. **if . . stead,** if I were you. **could heap up,** better *could compose*, as you have so calmly done. **shake . . you,**[a] and look as wise and solemn at you, as you now at me.

Miserable comforters.—I. Miserable comforters fail for lack of sympathy. II. Miserable comforters add to the griefs which they vainly try to assuage, through 1. Disappointment. 2. Weariness. 3. Injustice. III. We need Divine grace to help us to be true comforters. —*Pul. Com.*

The power of sympathy. — Happy is the man who has that in his soul which acts upon the dejected as April airs upon violet roots. Gifts from the hand are silver and gold; but the heart gives that which neither silver nor gold can buy. To be full of goodness, full of cheerfulness, full of sympathy, full of helpful hope, causes a man to carry blessings of which he is himself as unconscious as a lamp of its own shining. Such a one moves on human life as stars move on dark seas to bewildered mariners; as the sun wheels, bringing all the seasons with him from the south. — *Beecher.*

what he would do if he were in their place

5—8. (5) **But,** if you were me, and I were you. **strengthen,** encourage, comfort. **mouth** and **lips,** are the emphatic words. "I could give you lip comfort." **asswage,** restrain. (6) **Though I speak,** "he hardly knows whether he shall speak or be silent, so overcome is he and so unavailing to help him or make men judge truly of him are both speech and silence."—*Cam. Bib.* (7) **he . . weary,** God has taken my strength away. **company,** family. (8) **thou . . wrinkles,**[b] *etc.*, *R. V.*, "thou hast laid fast hold on me," referring to the afflictions which are assumed to be proofs of guilt.[c] **leanness . . face,** the idea seems to be — my poverty, *etc.*, is turned into a reproach, and made to witness against me.

A true comforter. — To be a true comforter we require — I. To be able to sympathize with the troubled. II. To understand generally the meaning and use of trouble. III. To be acquainted ourselves with the truth with which we are to comfort others. IV. To possess the spirit and imitate the conduct of Him whose mission on earth was to "comfort them that mourn." V. To speak truthfully and suitably to the case, while we present such views of God and His dealings as are fitted to impart light and comfort to the sad and sorrowing. — *Robinson.*

The appeal of need to God. — The unconscious needs of the world are all appeals and cries to Him. He does not wait to hear the voice of conscious want. The mere vacancy is a begging after fullness; the mere poverty is a supplication for wealth; the mere darkness cries for light. . . . Alas for us if God helped us only when we knew we needed Him and went to Him with full self-conscious wants! Alas for us if every need which we know not, had not a voice for Him, and did not call Him to us! Our hope is in the ear which God has for simple need; so that mere emptiness cries out to Him for filling, mere poverty for wealth. — *Ph. Brooks.*

the conduct of his persecutors

9, 10. (9) **teareth,** *etc.*,[d] *R. V.*, "He hath torn me in his wrath, and persecuted me." Fig. taken fr. the ferocity of the wild beasts. **mine . . eyes,** all. to fierce and glaring eyes of lions, *etc.*, when ab. to spring on their prey. (10) **They,** Job's undefined terms for the powers of evil. **gaped . . mouth,**[e] like the wild beast ref. to in *vs.* 9. **they . . cheek,**[f] per. the greatest insult that can be inflicted on an Oriental. **they . . together,**[g] forming bands of conspirators ag. his peace.

Opportunity in affliction. — There are no times in life when opportunity, the chance to be and do, gathers so richly about the soul as when it has to suffer. Then everything depends on whether the man turns to the lower or the higher helps. If he resorts to mere expedients and tricks, the opportunity is lost. He comes out no richer nor greater; nay, he comes out harder, poorer, smaller for his pain. But if he turns to God, the hour of suffering is the turning hour of His life. Opportunity opens before him as the ocean opens before one who sails out of a river. Men have done the best and worst, the noblest and the basest things the world has seen, under the pressure of excessive

[a] Ps. xxii. 7; cix. 25.

Consolation indiscreetly pressed upon us, when we are suffering under affliction, only serves to increase our pain and to render our grief more poignant. — *Rousseau.*

[b] Ru. i. 21.

[c] "What is consolation? It is the relief of mind under any trouble or pain; or the presence and enjoyment of a good which is able to prevent altogether, or else carry away and bear down before it, as in a full tide or flowing stream, all evil felt or feared."—*Beaumont.*

"We are always thinking we should be better with or without such a thing; but if we do not steal a little content in present circumstances, there is no hope of any other." — *Adam.* (Phil. iv. 11).

[d] La. iii. 11; Ho. v. 14.

[e] Ps. xxii. 13; xxxv. 21.

[f] Is. l. 6; Ma. xxvi. 67.

[g] Ps. xxxv. 15.

"His eyes are like arrows; they pierce my life."

"Truly, his cutting eyes are always upon me."

"Words are the counters of wise men, and the money of fools."—*Hobbes.*

pain. Everything depended on whether they looked to the depths or to the hills for help. — *Phillips Brooks. Sympathy.* — To understand any man, we must have sympathy for him, even affection. No intellectual acuteness, no amount even of pity for his errors, will enable us to see the man from within, and put our own souls into the place of his soul. To do that, one must have passed more or less through his temptations, doubts, hunger of heart and brain. — *Chas. Kingsley.*

he had been delivered to the ungodly

a Ps. xxvii. 12; Job i. 15, 17.

b La. iii. 11; ii. 11.

c Jer. xxiii. 29.

d "As a warrior assaults a city."—*Wordsworth.*

11—14. (11) **God . . ungodly,** *etc.*,[a] as a captive, to do with him as they pleased. Job perceived what had really occurred. (12) **ease,** happy and secure. **but . . asunder,** crushed me. **taken . . pieces,**[b] as an animal its prey. **mark,**[c] for His arrows. (13) **archers,** or arrows. **compass . . about,** fly or whiz around me. (14) **He . . breach,** the attack is again and again renewed. **he . . giant,**[d] as a mighty and irresistible warrior.

Hope from suffering. —

I look upon the peopled desert Past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to Sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I felt to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.
— *Byron.*

Blossoms are to plants what comforts are to Christians, very beautiful, but very fading.

he asserts his integrity

e Ps. lxxv. 10.

f "Involuntary weeping is said to be a symptom of elephantiasis."—*Cam. Bib.*

g Ps. lxvi. 18, 19; Pr. xv. 8.

"*Emblems of prayer.* Incense; a bow drawn by the hand of faith; the air by which we live; the little pitcher which fetches the water from the brook; the barometer of the soul; the tuning of an instrument; the link that connects earth with heaven; the 'gift of the knees,' the Yoruba Christian's phrase for prayer; the letter sent from the child on earth to his 'Father in heaven.'"—*Bowes.*

15—17. (15) **sewed . . skin,** a sign of mourning; it was worn next the skin. By *sewing* it on Job indicates that his mourning is perpetual; or it clung to his sores and could not be removed. **horn . . dust,**[e] *i. e.* his insignia of honor was defiled. (16) **foul,** swollen.[f] **and . . death,** his sight had failed. (17) **Not . . hands,** *R. V.*, "Although there is no violence in mine hands;" he still asserts his innocence of sins on acc. of wh. his friends said he suffered. **my . . pure,**[g] "his whole religious walk with God was pure. This is reply to xv. 4, and the first part of *vs.* is reply to xv. 34."

Purity in prayer. — Prayer is pure when — I. Not in hypocrisy or out of feigned lips. II. When not accompanied with the practice of sin. III. When from right motives and for right objects. IV. When addressed to the only true God. V. When presented in a way according to His own will. VI. When offered with right disposition and feelings. VII. When made with humility through the one Mediator, and with faith in His atoning sacrifice. — *Robinson.*

The reason of tribulation. — In the pictures of an ancient mode of threshing grain, one man is seen stirring up the sheaves, and another is riding on a rude dray, with three or four rollers instead of wheels, drawn by a pair of oxen. This ancient threshing instrument was called by the Romans *tribulum.* The rollers had sharp stones, or rough bits of iron, imbedded in their surface, to make them cut up the straw and facilitate the separation of the grain. From hence we get our word tribulation. Just as the sheaves might be imagined to complain of the sharp rollers going over them and cutting into them; so a man in great affliction would speak of himself as a sheaf torn to pieces under the tribulum. But as no thresher ever yoked his tribulum for the mere purpose of tearing up his sheaves, but, on the contrary, for the sole purpose of bringing the precious grain into a shape to be useful to him as food, so our loving Father never puts us under the tribulum for the mere purpose of bringing upon us tribulation, but always for a Divine purpose of good. — *W. W. Smith.*

he asserts that his record is on high

h Ro. i. 9.

i Heb. v 7.

"In all ages and all countries, man, through the disposition he inherits

18—20. (18) **earth . . blood,** all. to the old belief that the blood of one slain unjustly remains on the earth, comp. Is. xxvi. 21; Ezek. xxiv. 76. **place,** *R. V.*, "resting place," *i. e.* where it will cease to be heard. (19) **witness . . heaven,**[h] men on earth witnessed against him; God, in heaven, witnessed for him. **record,** *R. V.*, "he that voucheth for me." The climax of this conception is reached in xix. 25–27. (20) **My . . me,** or, scorners are my friends. **but . . God,**[i] who would understand his integrity though man might scorn.

The heavenly witness and record. — View this text — I. In reference to Job. 1. A declaration of his belief; 2. An avowal of his sincerity; 3. A proof of

his devotion. II. In reference to ourselves. 1. In seasons of self-suspicion; 2. Under assaults of calumny; 3. In the prospect of death. — *G. Brooks. The appeal of innocence to the highest tribunal* (*vss.* 19–20). — Before man can commit his cause to God with confidence he needs — I. A conviction of the insufficiency of human judgments. II. A conscious integrity. III. An unhesitating faith in God's righteous dealings. IV. A calm patience to await the Divine award. — *Green.*

A word to students for the ministry. — The Rev. Dr. Payson, of America, being once asked what message he would send to the young men who were studying for the ministry in one of the colleges, thus addressed them: "What if God should place in your hand a diamond, and tell you to inscribe on it a sentence which should be read at the last day, and shown there as an index of your thoughts and feelings! What care, what caution would you exercise in the selection! Now this is what God has done. He has placed before you immortal minds, more imperishable than the diamond, on which you are about to inscribe, every day and every hour, by your instructions, by you spirit, or by your example, something which will remain, and be exhibited for or against you at the judgment day." *Still small voice.* — I have had to do that in past days, to challenge Him through outer darkness and the shadow of night, till I almost expected that He would vindicate His own honor by appearing visibly as He did to St. Paul and St. John; but He answered in the still small voice only; yet that was enough. — *Kingsley.*

from our first parents, is more desirous of a quiet and approving, than of a vigilant and tender conscience; desirous of security instead of safety; studious to escape the thought of spiritual danger more than the danger itself; and to induce, at any price, some one to assure him confidently that he is safe, to prophesy unto him smooth things, and to speak peace, even when there is no peace." — *Whately.*

21, 22. (21) **O . . one,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "That he would maintain the right of a man with God, and of a son of man[a] with his neighbour." "Job is thinking of the Daysman (ix. 32 *ff.*) whom he so longed for; and we see his advance in faith by the fact that the being whose existence he despairingly decried then, he now acknowledges with passionate assertion." — *Genung.* **neighbour,** his friend whom he knows and loves. (22) **few . . come,**[b] if years, yet few at the utmost. **way . . return,** the old way of all the race, — death. This *vs.* belongs with xvii. 1, 2.

The final journey anticipated. — I. Consider the momentous journey which is here anticipated. It is — 1. Solemn in its nature; 2. Indisputable in its certainty; 3. Unknown in its commencement; 4. Important in its consequences. II. Describe the effect which this anticipation ought to produce. 1. It should elicit serious examination respecting our state of preparation; 2. Excite just fear in those who are unprepared; 3. Stimulate the righteous to constant watchfulness; 4. Furnish a source of consolation to the afflicted Christian.

Appearance of death. — Many a man has an ill-favored countenance, is lean and haggard, pale and sallow, and mean in his attire, and yet, under an ungainly exterior, conceals great talents and virtues. Such is the case with death. Ah, me! how much that is good and sweet and blessed is concealed beneath its sour aspect and transitory bitterness! It is not I who die when I die, but my sin and misery. As often as I think of death, I figure to myself that I see a messenger coming from a distant land, bringing me good news of my Saviour, the Bridegroom of my soul, and of the inheritance which He has purchased with His blood, and reserves for me in heaven. What care I although the messenger have an ugly face, be armed with a long dart, wear a tattered coat, and knock rudely at my door? I attend less to his appearance than to his business. — *Gotthold.*

The evanescence of life. —

Between two breaths what crowded mysteries lie,—
The first short gasp, the last and long-drawn sigh!
Like phantoms painted on the magic slide,
Forth from the darkness of the past we glide,
As living shadows for a moment seen
In airy pageant on the eternal screen,
Traced by a ray from one unchanging flame,
Then seek the dust and stillness whence we came. — *Holmes.*

the way whence we shall not return

[a] Job xiii. 20, 21.

[b] Job vii. 21; xix. 25–27.

"It is with us in this world as with poor men, that, being invited to a rich man's board, have the use of his plate and silver whilst they are there; but if any of them are so bold as to put up a piece of plate or a spoon, there is search made by the porter, ere they are let out, for what is missing. So it is with us in regard to temporal blessings. We have liberty to use them while here; but when we go hence, there is One waiting that will be sure to strip us, and suffer nothing to pass with us."— *Spencer.*

Death's cold white hand is like the snow
Laid softly on the furrowed hill,
It hides the broken seams below,
And leaves the summit brighter still.— *Holmes.*

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

the waiting grave

1, 2. (1) **corrupt,**[a] *R. V.*, "My spirit is consumed." (2) **Are . . me,** *R. V.*, "Surely there are mockers with me, and mine eye abideth in," *etc.* The connection indicates that the reference is to the illusory hopes and promises of restoration in this life which the friends held out to Job. — *Davidson.* **continue,** lodge, live.

Death always ready. — A man far advanced in years, or one who is in deep affliction, says, "The place of burning is near to me, and the wood is laid together for my funeral pile." "How are you, my friend?" "How am I? I will tell you. Go, order them to get the wood together to burn this body." A father sometimes says of his wicked sons, "Yes, I know they desire my death; they have been preparing for the funeral; they are ready to wash me: the bier is at hand, and the wood is prepared." "Why do you all look so anxious? I am not ready for the washing." — *Roberts. The approach of death.* — Mr. George Moir, an eminently pious man, after having been worn out by a long and painful illness, was told by his wife that the change of his countenance indicated the speedy approach of death. "Does it?" he replied, "bring me a glass." On looking at himself in the glass, he was struck with the appearance of a corpse which he saw in his countenance; but giving the glass back, he said, with calm satisfaction, "Ah! death has set his mark on my body, but Christ has set His mark upon my soul." — *Whitecross.*

a Is. xxxviii. 10; Ps. lxxxviii. 3-5.

"Death is a commingling of eternity with time; in the death of a good man, eternity is seen looking through time."—*Goethe.*

"Death is not dreadful to a mind resolved: it seems as natural as to be born."—*Lee.*

he asks in vain for a surety

3, 4. (3) **Lay . . now,**[b] *R. V.*, "Give now a pledge, be surety for me with thyself." Job beseeches God to undertake that He will cause his innocence to be acknowledged with God. A division of God into two parties, persecutor and surety. **who . . me?** and thus pledge himself, my surety with God? (4) **For . . understanding,**[c] "the insight that Job's faith has given him makes him see also that the friends are spiritually blind. He has mistrusted this before, now he is sure of it. (Comp. xii. 1-3.) From this point on he is their open antagonist."— *Genung.* **therefore . . them,** by giving them their anticipated verdict.

Job's appeal to God.— We have a twofold ground of Job's request for a fair trial of his case by God Himself. I. The incapacity of his friends to judge in the matter. II. His consciousness of his innocence and that in the controversy he will gain the cause. Job is called to wage a double controversy. 1. As against God, in His appearing to afflict him as a wicked man; 2. As against his friends, in their charging him with being such. — *Robinson.*

Hidden from understanding.— There is a little preliminary that the astronomer has to do before he can make his observation. He has to take the cap off his telescope. Many a man thinks he is looking at truth when he is only looking at the cap. Many a time I have looked down my microscope, and thought I was looking at the diatom for which I had long been searching, and found I had simply been looking at a speck of dust upon the lens itself. Many a man thinks he is looking at truth when he is only looking at the spectacles he has put on to see it with.— *Drummond.*

b He. vii. 22.

c Ma. xi. 25.

A good conscience is better than two witnesses. It will consume your grief as the sun dissolves ice — it is a spring when you are thirsty — a pillow in death.

"Blush at terror for a death which gives thee to repose in festive bowers, where nectars sparkle, angels minister, and more than angels share, and raise, and crown, and eternize the birth, bloom, bursts of bliss."—*Young.*

he had been made a byword of the people

5—7. (5) **He that,**[d] *etc.*, *R. V.*, "He that denounceth his friends for a prey."[e] **even . . fail,** his punishment shall reach to his children. (6) **byword,**[f] a term of reproach. **and . . tabret,** *R. V.*, "And I am become an open abhorring," or an abominable thing. (7) **dim . . sorrow,**[g] weakened by much weeping. **all . . shadow,** emaciated by suffering.

False friends.— Observe — I. Treachery and unfaithfulness on the part of professed friends one of the most cutting trials with men, and the most condemning sins with God. II. Some sins are more heinous in themselves and more disastrous in their consequences than others. III. Sin in many cases entails its consequences on a man's children as well as on himself.— *Robinson. The sorrow-dimmed eye.* (*vs.* 7.)— I. Sorrow prevents us from seeing all the truth. II. Sorrow should lead us to exercise faith. III. Sorrow may open our eyes to new truths. IV. It is cruel to be harsh with those whose blindness comes from sorrow. V. Ultimately God will give clear vision to the sorrow-blinded eye.— *Pul. Com.*

Considerate friendship.— When the attempt was made upon the life of King George III. by Margaret Nicholson, as he was going to St. James's to hold a levee, a council was ordered to be held as soon as the levee was over.

d Pr. xxix. 5; Ps. xii. 3; Pr. xx. 19; 1 Th. ii. 5.

e *Lit.* "a man who gives up his friend to be despoiled." — *Spk. Com.*

f 1 Ki. ix. 7; Ps. xliv. 14.

g Ge. xxvii. 1; De. xxxiv. 7; Zec. xi. 17; Ps. vi. 7; xxxi. 9.

The Marquess del Campo, the Spanish ambassador, being apprised of that circumstance, and knowing that the council would detain the king in town three or four hours beyond the usual time, took post horses, and set off for Windsor. Alighting at the castle, he called upon a lady there with whom he was acquainted. The queen, finding that the king did not return at the usual time, and understanding that the marquess was in the palace, sent to ask him if he had been to the levee. He replied that he had, and that he had left his majesty in perfect health, going to council. When the king arrived, he, of course, told her majesty the extraordinary occurrence of the morning. The queen expressed great surprise that the Marquess del Campo, who had been nearly three hours in the palace, had not mentioned the subject to her; he was then sent for, when he told their majesties that finding upon his arrival at the castle that no rumor of the attempt upon the life of his majesty had reached the queen, he did not think it expedient to apprise her of it till his majesty's arrival gave full assurance of his safety; but at the same time, fearing that some incorrect and alarming reports might be brought down, he deemed it right to remain in the palace, in order, in that case, to be able to remove all apprehensions from her majesty's mind by acquainting her with the real facts. The king took the ambassador graciously by the hand, and assured him that he scarcely knew a man in the world to whom he was so much obliged.

"The loss of my friend, as it shall moderately grieve me, so it shall another way much benefit me, in recompense of his want; for it shall make me think more often and seriously of earth and of heaven, Of earth, for his body which is reposed in it; of heaven for his soul which possesseth it before me; of earth, to put me in mind of my like frailty and mortality; of heaven, to make me desire, and (after a sort) emulate his happiness and glory."—*Bp. Hall.*

8—10. (8) **Upright . . this,**[a] at his sufferings and men's treatment of him. **and,** *etc.*, stimulated by his example. (9) **righteous . . way,** the righteous will not allow themselves to be misled from the path of rectitude by these moral wrongs which they see prevail in God's rule of the world; they will cling in spite of them to their righteous life.—*Cam. Bib.* **shall . . stronger,**[b] in his attachment to God and holiness. (10) **return,** to the charge. **cannot . . you,**[c] he challenges them contemptuously to go on with their accusations. They only reveal their own folly and ignorance.

Dark dispensations overruled for the establishment of the saints.—We will proceed to state—I. The general principles upon which the perseverance of the saints is founded. It may be proved—1. From the immutability of God; 2. From the covenant of grace; 3. From the intercession of Christ. II. The particular manner in which the most untoward circumstances shall be overruled to promote it. To guard against an abuse of this doctrine, we entreat you to bear in mind—1. The characters who alone can take comfort in it; 2. The way in which alone it should be improved.—*C. Simeon.*

Providence helping the righteous.—In the early part of his ministerial career, a circumstance occurred which he regarded as a particular interference of Divine Providence. Knowing that he could not always enjoy the benefit of the Polyglot Bible in the public library, he began earnestly to wish to have a copy of his own; but £3 per quarter and his food, which was the whole of his income as a preacher, could ill supply any sum for the purchase of books. Believing it to be the will of God that he should cultivate Biblical knowledge, both on his own account, and on that of the people to whom he ministered, and that the knowledge of the Scriptures in their original languages was necessary for this purpose; and finding that he could not hope to have money sufficient for this purchase, he thought that God, in the course of His providence, would furnish him with this precious gift. He soon after received a letter, containing a bank note of £10, from a person from whom he never expected anything of the kind. He wrote to a friend in London, who procured him a copy of "Walton's Polyglot," the price of which was exactly £10.

the way of the righteous

a Ec. v. 8.

b Ps. lxxxiv. 7-11; Is. xl. 29-31; 2 Co. xii. 9, 10.

c 1 Co. vi. 5.

It is from the depth of our humility that the height of our destiny looks grandest. For let me truly feel that in myself I am nothing, and at once, through every inlet of my soul, God comes in and is everything in me—*Mountford.*

"Satires and lampoons on particular people circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties, than by printing them."—*Sheridan.*

11—13. (11) **My . . past,** my life is nearly over. **my . . off,**[d] my plans are frustrated. **thoughts,** cherished schemes, hopes. (12) **They,** seems to refer to his friends, with their delusive words. **light . . darkness,** *R. V.*, "The light, say they, is near unto darkness," *i. e.* it is "always darkest just before dawn." (13) **If . . house,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "If I look for Sheol as mine house: If I have spread my couch in the darkness;" *vss.* 13 and 14 should each end with a semicolon. These *vss.* form the protasis, and *vs.* 15 the apodosis. **bed,** where I shall soon lie down. **darkness,** in the grave.

Broken purposes.—I. Men form purposes. Mind is active and made to think. Men speculate and resolve. II. These purposes not always fulfilled. 1. As they are impossible to realize; 2. Providence intervenes; 3. Procrastination prevents performance; 4. Satan hinders. III. This is a sad fact in

broken purposes

d Ro. i. 13.

Nothing in nature weeps its lot,
Nothing, save man, abides in memory,
Forgetful that the past is what
Ourselves may choose the coming time to be.

experience. My purposes. Good resolutions formed and never carried out. Plans adopted and forsaken. Speculate less and work more. *Mistaken purposes.* — These are of an intermediate character. Good in intention, they would not have turned out well if we had been permitted to execute them. Therefore God has frustrated them. Some of these are quite excellent, only they are altogether beyond our reach. The brave lifeboat crew tries to save the shipwrecked sailors, but, alas! the sea runs too high to permit them to approach, and their purpose is broken. Some whole lives seem to be failures simply because their owners have mistaken their vocation. The man who is a failure as a barrister might have become an excellent farmer; he has chosen an unsuitable sphere. We wish to do good. Then let us pray for light lest we blunder into mischief-making in the very effort to help our neighbors.— *Pul. Com.*

All things are circular; the Past
Was given us to make the Future great;
And the void Future shall at last
Be the strong rudder of an after fate.
—*J. R. Lowell.*

"In the pursuit towards the similitude of God's goodness or love, which is one thing, neither man nor spirit ever hath transgressed or shall transgress."—*Bacon.*

"See first that the design is wise and just
That ascertained, pursue it resolutely.
Do not for one repulse forego the purpose
That you resolved to effect."
—*Anon.*

Steadiness in purpose. — Many who slumber in nameless graves, or wander through the tortures of a wasted life, have had memories as capacious, and faculties as fine as he (Macaulay), but they lacked the steadiness of purpose, and patient, thoughtful labor, which multiplied the "ten talents" into "ten other talents beside them." It is the old lesson, voiceful from every life that has a moral in it — from Bernard Palissy, selling his clothes, and tearing up his floor to add fuel to the furnace, and wearying his wife and amusing his neighbors with dreams of his white enamel, through the unremunerative years. It is the old lesson, a worthy purpose, patient energy for its accomplishment, a resoluteness that is undaunted by difficulties, and, in ordinary circumstances, success.— *J. M. Punshon. Steadfastness of purpose.*— We have, indeed, but to glance at the biographies of great men to find that the most distinguished inventors, artists, thinkers, and workers of all sorts, owe their success in great measure, to their indefatigable industry and application. They were men who turned all things to gold,— even time itself. Disraeli, the elder, held that the secret of all success consisted in being master of your subject, such mastery being attainable only through continuous application and study. Hence it happens that the men who have most moved the world, have not been so much men of genius, strictly so-called, as men of intense mediocre ability, untiring workers, persevering, self-reliant and indefatigable; not so often the gifted, of naturally bright and shining qualities, as those who have applied themselves diligently to their work, in whatever line that might be.— *Smiles.*

"Sarcasm I now see to be, in general, the language of the devil, for which reason I have long since renounced it."—*Carlyle.*

no rest but in the grave

14—16. (14) **I have said,** *R. V.*, "if I have said,"[a] in ref. to the grave wh. he foresees. **father,** *etc.*, he speaks of death as his nearest relative who will soon claim kindred with him. (15) **And where . . hope?** *R. V.*, "Where then is my hope?" the hope that the friends suggest. Not in this life! **as . . it,** if I have any hope, who will see its fulfillment? (16) **They,** my hopes. **to . . pit,** to the lowest deep. **when . . dust,** *R. V.*, "When once there is rest in the dust," *i. e.* when he has reached this rest at last.

a Ps. xvi. 10; 1 Co. xv. 42, 53, 54.

Hope and its value. — Nothing can compensate for the loss of hope in a man, — it entirely changes the character. "How can I work, — how can I be happy," said a great but miserable thinker, "when I have lost all hope?" Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us. One of the most cheerful and courageous, because one of the most hopeful of workers, was Carey, the missionary. When in India, it was no uncommon thing for him to weary out three pundits, who officiated as his clerks, in one day, he himself taking rest only in change of employment. Carey, himself the son of a shoemaker, was supported in his labors, by Ward, the son of a carpenter, and Marsham, the son of a weaver. By their labors a magnificent college was erected at Serampore; sixteen flourishing stations were established; the Bible was translated into sixteen languages, and the seeds were sown of a beneficent moral revolution in British India. — *Smiles.*

vs 14. "Those who retire from the world to spend their lives in a desert place, for the purpose of performing religious austerities often exclaim to the beasts, 'Yes; you are my relations, you are my parents; these are my companions and friends.'" — *Roberts.*

the reply of Bildad

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

he reproves Job for ensnaring words

1—3. (1) **Then,** *etc.*, "Eliphaz made the punishment of the sinner come greatly from his own conscience; Bildad attributes it to the order of nature and the moral instinct of mankind, both of which rise up against the sinner; while Zophar explains it from the retributive operation of sin itself."— *Cam. Bib.* (2) **long . . words?**[b] *R. V.*, "How long will ye lay snares for words?" *i. e.* you have to hunt for your argument! **mark,**[c] consider, understand. (3)

b Pr. xviii. 13.

c "How long wilt thou go on artfully and deceitfully

Wherefore . . beasts, as if we had no sense. **and . . vile,** *R. V.*, "And are become unclean," as contrasted with xvii. 4, 10.

Note on vs. 2.—The commentators are not agreed to whom the opening of this speech is addressed. Being in the plural number, it cannot, according to the common forms of Hebrew colloquy, be addressed to Job alone. Le Clerc, however, attempts to prove that, under particular circumstances, such a form may be admitted, and especially when particular respect is intended. Other interpreters conceive that it is addressed to Job and Eliphaz, to whom Job had just been replying. But the greater number concur in supposing that it relates to the family or domestics of Job, in conjunction with himself, who, it may be conceived, were present, and at least tacitly approving his rebukes: *Tu cum tuâ familiâ*," is the explanation of Reiske. It is more probable that it applies to the interlocutors generally.—*Good.*

devising words for the purpose of entrapping us."—*Wordsworth.*

"Words make truth to spangle, and its rays to shine."—*Bunyan.*

4—7. (4) **He,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Thou that tearest thyself." **shall . . thee?** reproof of pride: shall all things give way for thee? **rock . . place?** "to oppose the well-established conclusions of wisdom seems to Bildad like the childish madness which would attempt to overthrow mountains."—*Genung.* (5) **Yea,** truly, behold. **light,** joy, prosperity. **spark . . fire,** the last spark of even the smoldering ashes. (6) **light . . tabernacle,**[a] the lamp that cheers the tent shall go out. The tent—the house—shall be joyless. **his . . him,** his hope and joy shall expire. (7) **The . . straitened,**[b] his mighty strides to prosperity shall be shortened. **and . . down,**[c] the plans in which he trusted shall precipitate his ruin.

The king of terrors.—I. The origin of his empire. II. The characteristics of his reign. III. The overthrow of his dominion.—*T. Barrow.*

Eastern lamps.—I may take the opportunity of stating that the houses of the Arabs are never without lights. They burn lamps, not only all the night long, but in all the inhabited apartments of the house. This custom is so well established in the East that the poorest people would rather retrench part of their food than neglect it. Therefore Jeremiah makes the taking away of the light of the candle, and the total destruction of a house, the same thing. Job describes the destruction of a family among the Arabs, and the rendering of one of their habitations desolate, after the same manner, "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them!" On the other hand, when God promises to give David a lamp always in Jerusalem (1 Kings xi. 36), considered in this point of view, it is an assurance that His house should never become desolate. So Virgil, *Æn.*, ii. line 281, "*O lux Dardaniæ! spes O fidissima Teucrum!*" "O Ilium's light, the Trojan's surest hope!"—*Land of the Messiah.*

the light of the wicked

a Pr. xx. 20; **xxiv** 20.

b "If a man do not keep within the limits of his powers, his wide steps shall be straitened."—*Ibu Doried.*

c Pr. i. 31, 32.

vs. 4. "'Foolish man, why are you so angry? Will your anger pull down the mountain, or take a single hair from the head of your enemy?' 'This evil is only felt in your own heart and house; it is your own destruction.'"—*Roberts.*

8—10. (8) **For . . net,**[d] the moral order of the world is such that wherever he moves or touches upon it it becomes a hidden instrument of destruction that seizes and holds him. (9) **gin,** spring, or trap. **heel,** foot. **robber . . him,** *R. V.*, "And a snare shall lay hold on him," as a robber surprises his unsuspecting victim. (10) **snare,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "A noose is hid for him," not only does he fall into his own snare, but is a prey to others.

Note on vs. 8.—The original implies a snare with pieces of wood, or other substance, put crosswise, or barwise, so as to sustain the deceitful covering of turf, or other soil, put over it to hide the mischief it conceals. The term is used (Exod. xxvii. 4) to express a grating, or network of brass. The same kind of snare or pitfall is still frequently employed throughout India in elephant-hunting.—*Good.*

Proneness to evil.—The sinner sees a fascination in the region of the snare. Perhaps it is set in a bed of flowers, or in an orchard of fruit. It may be that some pleasant shady dell conceals it, or possibly it is hidden by a mossy couch that invites repose. At all events, it is most deceptive and powerful where sin most abounds. A sort of fatality dogs the footsteps of the sinner. Start how he may, he is sure to direct his feet at last straight for the snare. He is like one mesmerized. He can but walk into the net. The hideous explanation of his fascination for ruin is that he is no longer his own master. He has made himself the slave of Satan. Yet even he may find safety in the mighty deliverance of the Christ who came to destroy the works of the devil.—*Pul. Com.*

snares laid for the ungodly

d Ps. ix. 15.

"His light being put out, he wanders ab. in darkness, and falls into the springes which he has set ab. his robber den to catch the unwary."—*Spk. Com.*

There is nothing more pitiful than a life spent in thinking of nothing but self; yes, even in thinking of nothing but one's own soul.—*Farrar.*

11—13. (11) **Terrors,**[e] phantoms of the mind.[f] **drive . . feet,** *R. V.*, "chase him at his heels," like a pack of hounds after a fugitive. (12) **His . .**

the foes of the wicked

e Jer. xx. 4; **Le.** xxvi. 36.

f "Terrors here are represented as

allegorical persons, like the Furies in the Gk. poets."—*Noyes.*

hunger-bitten, "his prosperity shall be changed into famine."—*Merx.* **destruction,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "calamity shall be ready for his halting," ready to take advantage of his stumbling. (13) **strength . . skin,** *R. V.*, "the members of his body." **firstborn,** *etc.*,[a] *i. e.* leprosy, the most dreaded and awful of all diseases. **his strength,** *R. V.*, "his members."

Disease and death.—In the natural world, it only requires a single vital correspondence of the body to be out of order to insure death. It is not necessary to have to have consumption, diabetes and an aneurism to bring the body to the grave if it have heart disease. He who is fatally diseased in one organ, necessarily pays the penalty with his life, though all the others be in perfect health. And such, likewise, are the mysterious unity and correlation of functions in the spiritual organism that the disease of one member may involve the ruin of the whole.—*Drummond.*

[a] "Death has his family; all diseases, sorrows, horrors, wh. come in his train, or go before him to prepare his way."—*Spk. Com.*

14—17. (14) **his . . tabernacle,** *R. V.*, "He shall be rooted out,"[b] *etc.*, a heartless allusion to Job's condition, as a leper, cast out of his tent to the ash-heap! **terrors,**[c] *R. V.*, "And he shall be brought to," *etc.*, *i. e.* he shall die. (15) **It,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "There shall dwell in his tent that which is none of his," *i. e.* not his own family. **brimstone,** the image of desolation suggested by the overthrow of Sodom. (17) **His . . earth,**[d] he shall so utterly perish that not even the remembrance of his name shall survive.

Additional notes (*vs.* 15).—A very singular method of expressing sorrow among the ancients, was by burning brimstone in the house of the deceased. Livy mentions this practice as general among the Romans; and some commentators think it is referred to in these words of Bildad: "Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation." The idea corresponds with the design of the speaker, which is to describe the miserable end of the hypocrite.—*Paxton.* *Verse* 16.—Man is often described as a tree, and his destruction by the cutting off of the branches. "Alas! alas! he is like a tree whose branches have been struck by the lightning." "He is a tree killed by the shepherds;" which alludes to the practice (in dry weather, when the grass is burned up) of climbing the trees to lop off the branches and leaves for the use of the flocks and cattle, "His branches and shoots are destroyed;" which means himself and family. "I know all his branches and bunches;" meaning all his connections.—*Roberts.* *Verse* 17.—"What kind of man is Ramar?" "I will tell you; his name is in every street:" which means, he is a person of great fame. "Ah? my lord, only grant me this favor, and your name shall be in every street." "Who does not wish his name to be in the streets?" "Wretch, where is thy name? What dog of the street will acknowledge thee?" "From generation to generation shall his name be in the streets." "Where is thy name written, in stone? No; it is written in water."—*Roberts.*

[b] Ps. cxii. 10; Pr. x. 28.

[c] "Terror pursues him like a king."—*Noyes.*—"Dissolution shall invade him like a monarch."—*Good.*—"Terror shall seize him as a king."—*Wemyss.*

[d] Mal. iv. 1. Ps. xxxiv. 16.

"The world dares say no more of its devices than '*dum spiro spero*' (whilst I breathe, I hope): but the children of God can add, by virtue of this living hope, *dum expiro spero*, (whilst I expire, I hope)."—*Leighton.*

the doom of the ungodly

18—21. (18) **driven . . darkness,**[e] fr. prosperity to adversity, **and . . world,** and from adversity to death. (19) **neither,** *etc.*,[f] his family shall cease. **nephew,** *R. V.*, "son's son," comp. Ps. cix. 14. He shall leave no offspring. A cruel reminder of Job's bereavement. (20) **They . . astonied,**[g] Posterity will be astonished at his punishment even as his contemporaries were frightened by it. (21) **Surely,** *etc.*,[h] such is the conclusion of the whole matter.

Death of Cardinal Mazarin.—What a terrific picture does the following passage exhibit of the death-bed of a man devoted to the pomp and vanities of the world, and who is at ease in his possessions! A fatal malady had seized on Cardinal Mazarin, whilst engaged in the conferences of the treaty, and worn by mental fatigue. He consulted Guenand, the physician, who told him he had but two months to live. Some days after, Brienne perceived the cardinal in his nightcap and dressing-gown tottering along his gallery, pointing to his pictures, and exclaiming, "Must I quit all these?" He saw Brienne, and seized him: "Look at that Correggio! this Venus of Titian! that incomparable Deluge of Caracci! Ah! my friend, I must quit all these. Farewell, dear pictures, that I love so dearly, and that cost me so much!" A few days before his death he caused himself to be dressed, shaved, rouged and painted. In this state he was carried in his chair to the promenade, where the envious courtiers paid him ironical compliments on his appearance. Cards were the amusement of his death-bed, his hands being held by others; and they were only interrupted by the papal nuncio, who came to give the cardinal that plenary indulgence to which the prelates of the Sacred College are officially entitled. Mazarin expired on the 9th of March, 1661.—*Lardner's Ency.*

[e] They that come after, are perh. the men of the West; those who went before, those of the East.

[f] Je. xxii 30.

[g] Ex. v. 2,

[h] "It is hard to feel the hand of death arrest one's steps, throw a chill blight o'er all one's budding hopes, and hurl one's soul untimely to the shades, lost in the gaping gulf of blank oblivion."—*Kirke White.*

"Leaves have their time to fall,

The death-change comes. —

Death is another life, we bow our heads
At going out, we think, and enter straight
Another golden chamber of the king's
Larger than this we leave, and lovelier.
And then in shadowy glimpses, disconnect,
The story, flower-like, closes thus its leaves.
The will of God is all in all. He makes,
Destroys, remakes, for His own pleasure, all.— *Bailey.*

And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set — but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, oh! Death."
—*Mrs. Hemans.*

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

the answer of Job

1—3. (1) **Job,** "makes a sudden leap out into the light, and rises by an inspiration to the assurance that his innocence shall yet be revealed, that God will yet publicly appear for him, and that he shall see God." — *Cam. Bib.* (2) **vex,**[a] torture, harass. **break,** crush, as in a mortar. (3) **ten times,**[b] *i. e.* many times. **make . . strange,**[c] *R. V.*, "that ye deal hardly with me."

he reproves them for their shamelessness

Unfeeling conduct towards a friend is held base even among the heathen. The light of nature teaches that "he who hath friends, must show himself friendly." The effect of false religious views is to render men cruel and unfeeling towards others. Religious persecutions are especially malignant. True religion is a religion of gentleness and love — the more of it, the more gentle and loving, the more of a false religion, the more cruel and unfeeling. Herod put one or two of Christ's disciples to death because it pleased the Jews; Saul, with more religion, kept "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against them." — *Hom. Com.*

a Pr. xii. 18; xviii. 21.

b Ge. xxxi. 7; Le xxvi. 26.

c *vss.* 2, 3. "Three points are urged; his friends' cruelty, their pertinacity and injustice. — *Spk. Com.*

4—6. (4) **be . . erred,**[d] Job repudiates the offenses insinuated against him. Davidson suggests as a trans. "had I indeed sinned, my error would remain with myself, I should be conscious of it." (5) **magnify . . me,**[e] set themselves up as his judges. (6) **hath overthrown me,** *R. V.*, "hath subverted me in my cause." God is the cause of this suffering. His own feet had not led him into the net.

they should reflect that he suffered at the hands of God

Note on vs. 6. — The allusion here may be to an ancient mode of combat practiced among the Persians, Goths and Romans. The custom among the Romans was this: one of the combatants was armed with a sword and shield, the other with a trident and net: the net he endeavored to cast over the head of his adversary, in which, when he succeeded, the entangled person was soon pulled down by a noose that fastened round his neck, and then despatched. The person who carried the net and trident was called Retiarius, and the other, who carried the sword and shield, Secutor, or the pursuer, because, when Retiarius missed his throw, he was obliged to run about the ground till he got his net in order for a second throw, while the Secutor followed him to prevent, and despatch him. The Persians used a running loop, which horsemen endeavored to cast over the heads of their enemies, that they might pull them off their horses. The Goths used a hoop fastened to a pole. — *Olaus Magnus.*

The erring soul and its God. — The reasons for reserve among men do not apply to our relations with God. As God knows all, so He rightly understands everything. He will never misjudge us. Moreover, His love secures His perfect sympathy with us. Man's prying curiosity subjects the quivering nerves of its victim to a process of vivisection; but God's searching gaze of love and sympathy heals and saves. It is necessary that we should receive this willingly if we are to profit by it. A foolish shyness of God leaves us without the cheering of His presence. It is always a bad thing when one has to say, as a son exclaimed of his lately deceased father, whom everybody was praising, "It may be all true; but I cannot say, as I never knew him." It is not our Father's fault if we do not know Him. He rewards confidence with an exchange of confidence. Now, our first and most necessary duty is to fling aside all reserve before God, to own that "we have erred and strayed from His ways like lost sheep," to confess ourselves utterly helpless and worthless, and, trusting our emptiness to Him, to be ready to welcome the fullness which He always bestows on his trusting children. — *Pul. Com.*

d 2 Co. v. 10; Ez. xviii. 4; Ga. vi. 5.

e Zep. ii. 10.

"He that loses his conscience has nothing left that is worth keeping. Therefore look to that. And in the next place look to your health; value it next to a good conscience; for health is the second blessing that we mortals are capable of; therefore, be thankful for it." — *Izaak Walton.*

"Words indeed are but the signs and counters of knowledge, and their currency should be strictly regulated by the capital which they represent." — *C. C. Colton.*

"Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found."
— *Pope.*

he cried, but could not obtain justice

a Hab. i. 2; Ps. xxii. 2; La. iii. 8.

b La. iii. 7.

c Ps. lxxxix. 44.

"Great trials come at lengthened intervals, and we rise to breast them; but it is the petty friction of our every-day life, with one another — the jar of business or of work, the discord of the domestic circle, the collapse of our ambition, the crossing of our will, or the taking down of our conceit — which makes inward peace impossible." — *Drummond.*

7—9. (7) **wrong,** violence. He does not seem to complain of injustice. **cry . . judgment,**[a] nevertheless he still expects justice eventually. (8) **fenced . . pass,**[b] he was a traveler in a *cul de sac.* **he . . paths,** "Job complains of the want of light. Nothing vexes him so much as his inability to understand *why* he is afflicted." — *Rawlinson.* (9) **glory,**[c] all that contributed to his respectability, and honor.

The fenced way. — We blunder in the darkness. There are precipices over which we may fall, jungles in which we may become victims to prowling enemies, By-path Meadows that may lead us to Doubting Castle. Therefore God shuts us in. We are annoyed at the restraint, but it is for our soul's preservation. Liberty is not always good. God sees when it may be abused; then in His great mercy He withdraws it. Thus the ambitious man fails to reach the giddy height from which he would soon be flung headlong to ruin. Business does not bring one in the wealth that was expected, for God sees that money is becoming an idol. Many delights are shut off, and a man looks over the fence with great envy towards them; but God knows that they would be poison and death to him. We feel ourselves checked and hindered on every side. Our busy activity is stopped. Even our good designs are frustrated. We find it hard to account for such treatment. Possibly it is just the punishment of our sins. This has come not as direct pain and loss, but as hindrance and failure. We feel like the Egyptians when their chariot-wheels stuck in the bed of the sea. But it may be that the cause lies not so much in sin as in a need of wholesome discipline. Perhaps as we can serve God better by patient endurance than by vigorous activity. Then what looks like failure is really the divinely chosen method of success. He fences up our way that we may learn to serve by waiting. — *Pul. Com.*

his hope had departed like a tree

d La. ii. 5.

"Hope is the daughter of faith, but such as is a staff to her aged mother; and will produce a bold and wise profession of the truth before men, as also prayer to God. It is as the cork upon the net; though the lead on the one side sink it down, yet the cork on the other keeps it up." — *J. Trapp.*

10—12. (10) **He . . side,** there is nothing left. **he . . removed,** *R. V.,* plucked up, "Like a great tree, under whose branches many had found shelter, caught by a tempest and torn up, he lies dishonored on the ground." — *Cox.* (11) **He . . wrath,**[d] for some unknown reason God has become his Adversary; this is a more terrible fact than any calamity. (12) **troops,** troubles sent like an army of soldiers. **and . . tabernacle,** as if to lay siege to me.

Discipline and its fruits. — We remember a parable in which a preacher says, "Look at this flute; it was a piece of wood; what has made it a flute? The rifts, the holes in it." What life is there through which affliction does not make some rift? All went well till then; but through that rift in the life came thought and feeling. "So," said the preacher, "I listened to a flute one day, complaining that it was spoiled by having a number of holes bored in it. 'Once,' it said, 'I was a piece of wood, very beautiful to look upon; now I am spoiled by all these rifts and holes;' and it said all this mournfully and musically. 'O thou foolish flute,' I said, 'without these rifts and holes thou wouldst only be a mere stick, a bit of mere hard, black ebony, soon to be thrown away. Those rifts and holes have been the making of thee; they have made thee into a flute; they are thy life, thy character, thy music and melody, and thou wilt not now be cast aside with contempt, but touched by even the fingers of future generations.'" — *Sunday at Home.*

even his own house ceased to sympathise with him

e Ps. lxix. 8; lxxxviii. 8, 18; Ma. xxvi. 56.

f Ps. lv. 12-14; Jo. xiii. 18; Ma. x. 21.

"Your hopes are like happy blossoms fair, and promise timely fruit, if you will stay but the maturing" — *Ben Jonson.*

13—16. (13) **He . . me,** *etc.,*[e] "God removed far from him all human sympathy. And there is something more breaking to the heart in the turning away of men from us than in the severest sufferings. We steel ourselves against it for a time and rise to it in bitterness and resentment, but gradually it breaks us and we are crushed at last." — *Cam. Bib.* (14) **kinsfolk,**[f] those who were *near,* not necessarily relations. (15) **They . . house,** the household. **alien,** *i. e.* a foreigner, with no claim to sympathy. (16) **I . . answer,** his dependents had ceased to respect and obey. **intreated,** *R. V.,* "Though I intreat," commands being unavailing.

A sympathetic jewel.—I heard Dr. Virgin, of New York, say the other day that he visited with a friend Tiffany's great jewelry store. His friend showed him a magnificent diamond with its gleaming yellow light, and many other splendid stones. As they went along he saw one jewel that was perfectly lustreless, and he said, "That has no beauty about it at all." But his friend put it in the hollow of his hand and shut his hand, and then in a few moments opened it, and he said, "What a surprise! There was not a place on it the size of a pin-head that did not gleam with the splendor of the rainbow."

And then he said, "What have you been doing with it?" His friend answered, "This is an opal. It is what we call the sympathetic jewel. It only needs the warmth of the human hand to bring out its wonderful beauty."—*A. E. Dunning.* *Sympathy — a fruit of suffering.* That love is sweetest, divinest, in which there is greatest power of suffering with and for another. If God should say to us: "I will take from your heart the power of pain, and from your eyes all future tears; you shall look on the sorrows of others and not feel them; you shall recognize humanity's heart throb, and your heart shall not throb; you shall behold life's woes, and your eyes shall glisten with no tear, and your heart shall feel no pain," who would not, with clasped hands, cry out to God, "Oh! give me back the blessedness of tears!" Every experience of pain with and for another is one round in the ladder whereby we climb up to the heart of a suffering God. — *Abbott.*

"Prayer does not directly take away a trial or its pain, any more than a sense of duty directly takes away the danger of infection; but it preserves the strength of the whole spiritual fibre, so that the trial does not pass into temptation to sin."—*Stopford Brooke.*

17—20. (17) **My . . wife,** voice unrecognized by her: or, his breath had become loathsome. **though I intreated,** *etc., R. V.*, "And my supplication to the children of my mother's womb," *i. e.*, to my brothers. He is intolerable to those most dear to him. (18) **Yea . . me,**[a] even these did not reverence or fear. **arose . . me,** "they jeer at his painful efforts to walk." (19) **All . . friends,**[b] most intimate friends, such as these who are with him now. (20) **bone . . flesh,**[c] as we say "worn to a skeleton." **escaped . . teeth,** "the only parts unaffected by disease are the teeth with their skin or gums." —*Spk. Com.*

he was escaped with only the skin of his teeth

[a] Is. iii. 5; 2 Ki. ii. 23.

[b] Ps. xli. 9.

[c] Ps. cii. 5; xxii. 14-17.

The aged despised by the young. — Consider the conduct of these children in — I. Its object. An old man, who on that account should have been reverenced. A good man, who should therefore have been loved. A poor man, who should have had kindness shown him. A poor man who had known better days and should have had the more pity therefore. A man whose bodily ailments prevented self-help. II. Its cause. Want of thought: all they despised in Job might come upon them. Want of sensibility: young children should be tender-hearted. Want of manners: they should have known better; you do. III. Its effect. Upon Job: added to his grief; he had enough without this. Upon them: the exercise of this heartlessness would increase it; what would they be as adults, if such their childhood? They would incur the displeasure of God, who pities the unfortunate, and whose servant Job was. IV. Its lessons. Honor all men, more especially such as Job, the good, aged, unhappy. Be especially kind to the tried — those with bodily ailments, as blind, etc., and with mental defects, as the imbecile. Consider the conduct of Jesus to such. Do as you would be done unto. — *Hive.*

"What is to become of us," asks Amiel, "when everything leaves us, health, joy, affection, when the sun seems to have lost its warmth, and life is stripped of all charm? Must we either harden or forget? There is but one answer, Keep close to duty, do what you ought, come what may."

Confidence in God. — Friends often fail in the time of sorest distress; they are summer-birds, and pass away when the colder weather sets in. Men are liars, fickle as the wind. Their alienation is ascribed to God, because He has caused the distress; if He had not caused the distress, they would have remained. Here, again, we are reminded that the child of God may be called to be conformed to the image of the Saviour's sufferings. He knew what it was to be deserted by all men, even His dearest disciples and closest adherents. So we are to learn to build no confidence on man, but on the living God alone, whom faith can hold eternally fast. —*Pul. Com.*

"Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success."—*Bacon.*

Pity. —

Soft pity never leaves the gentle breast
Where love has been received a welcome guest;
As wandering saints poor huts have sacred made,
He hallows every heart He once has swayed,
And, when His presence we no longer share,
Still leaves compassion as a relic there."

— *Sheridan.*

"Where all life dies death lives." — *Milton.*

21, 22. (21) **Have,** *etc.*,[d] "overcome by his sense of the terrible enmity of God, Job piteously cries out for the compassion of men." — *Davidson.* (22) **Why . . God,**[e] heavily and without deigning to give a reason. **are . . flesh?** he comp. them to wild beasts.[f]

he craves pity at the hands of his friends

[d] Ro. xii. 15; He. xiii. 3.

[e] Ps. lxix. 26.

[f] "Eater of flesh," is the Syriac ex-

To a distant friend. —

Why art thou silent? Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?

pression for calumniator."—*Spk. Com.*

"If there be no enemy, no fight; if no fight, no victory; if no victory, no crown."—*Savonarola.*

Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant,
Bound to thy service with unceasing care —
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For naught but what thy happiness could spare.

Speak! — though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's nest filled with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine —
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know!
— *Wordsworth.*

he would that his words were printed in a book.

23—25. (23) **my words,** which I am about to utter (*vss.* 25–27). **written,** plainly, that I might not be misquoted. **printed,** carved, cut in. **book,** tablet, of stone, or metal. (24) **That,** *etc.*,[a] *i. e.* permanently. Referring to the ancient manner of engraving inscriptions on the rocks. After being cut in, the lines were filled with molten lead. — *Genung.* (25) **redeemer,**[b] Heb. *Goel,* one who has the right and duty to vindicate one who suffers wrong. **liveth,** is now living, though judging by my circumstances I seem to be friendless. **at . . day,** hereafter, at some future time. "No longer expecting a justification of his innocence while living, he believes that even over his grave God will appear as his *vindicator,* to retrieve his honor before the world by inflicting judgments upon those who had suspected him, and that he shall behold this divine interposition." — *Oehler.*

the living Redeemer

a Je. xvii. 1; De. xxvii. 2, 3, 8; 2 Co. iii. 1-6.

b Is. liv. 5; lix. 20; Ep. i. 7; Ps. xix. 14; Jo. v. 22-29.

About the tenth century the cross became the only symbol of the Christian faith, to the exclusion of the fish, a previous emblem. From the death of Christ, it had been the symbol of redemption.

My Redeemer. — The word has the general meaning "ransomer," "deliverer," and specially denotes one who takes up a man's cause and vindicates his rights, either by avenging him on his foes, or by restoring him or his heirs to possessions of which he has been defrauded. Job has already expressed a wish that there might be an *umpire* between him and God; then he goes further, and desires an *advocate;* then he declares that he has a *witness,* one who exactly knows his rights, in heaven; then calls upon God Himself to be his advocate. He now takes a stronger position, and declares his certainty that there is One who adds to all these conditions that which gives them solidity, and assures his final triumph: there lives One who will vindicate his righteousness, and clear his cause completely. — *Spk. Com.* *The body, not the man, buried.* — "The disciples came and took up the body and buried it." I like that way of speaking of human burial; it is the true way; it is emphatically the Christian way of speaking of the act. You buried *it,* not Him. "By and by," said Socrates to his friends, "you will be saying, 'Socrates is dead,' but Socrates will not be dead. By and by you will be saying, 'Socrates is in his coffin,' but Socrates will not be in his coffin. By and by you will be saying, 'We are going to bury Socrates,' but you will not bury Socrates; you will only bury something that belonged to him." Well spoken, thou Old World philosopher; the fuller light of Christianity comes to confirm thy conjecture, and to verify thy reasoning. No; there is no burying a man. You cannot bury a soul. — *Bib. Ill. Job's certainty.* — If we are sure about anything, let it be concerning the Redeemer. If we have an indefeasible claim to anything, let it be to our Redeemer. If we cling with tenacity to any truth, let it be our Redeemer's resurrection and life. Everything hangs here; this is the keystone of the gospel, the foundation of our faith, and the pinnacle of our hope — "Because I live ye shall live also." Oh, for more of Job's certainty, even if the cost were Job's afflictions! — *Spurgeon.*

"There are men who imagine they should do well enough if they could throw the Bible overboard, and the ministers after it, and sink the whole church in the sea. It is as if a man with a shattered limb should think to better himself by thrusting the doctor and their instruments out of doors. They did not break his leg, but only propose to set it. Under the hand of the poorest of them, the limb will be better than if the shattered bone were left to heal unsplinted." — *Beecher.*

he possessed the root of the matter

26—29. (26) *R. V.,* "And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God" (more generally translated "*without my flesh.*") "The hope which here flashes for a moment through the darkness of temptation is as yet no mature faith in a happy and eternal life after death." — *Oehler.* **shall . . God,**[c] see Him manifest Himself as his friend and avenger. The connection is, but I know that my Redeemer liveth, and he who shall be after me shall stand upon the dust, and . . . I shall see God. The last words explain who Job's Redeemer or Goel is, and who He is who remaineth or shall come after him, viz. God. After his skin is destroyed and without his flesh he shall see God. Before death he shall not see Him, for he shall die under His afflicting hand (*cf.* ch. xxiii. 14), but he shall yet behold Him. To *see* God

c 1 Co. xiii. 12; xv. 53; Phl. iii. 20, 21; 1 Jo. iii. 2; Re. i. 7.

is to see Him reconciled and in peace, for this is implied in seeing Him at all, because now He hides His face (ch. xxiii. 3, 8 *seq.*). — *Cam. Bib.* (27) **see,** strong assurance.[a] **reins,** kidneys, seat of desires and affections. **consumed,** wasted, pine away. (28) **But . . him,** *R. V.*, "If ye say, how we will persecute him!" *i. e.* if you continue to persecute me by the accusation, that the cause of all these afflictions is in *me*, then beware of Divine vengeance." — *Davidson.* (29) **sword,**[b] of justice and Divine wrath. **that . . judgment,** that God punishes wrong done to character.

True religion. — The root of the matter we refer to Job's goodness — his religion — which is called a good thing in God's book. I. Religion is a reality. II. Religion is a reality in the soul; it must go further than the intellect and the judgment. III. Religion is a vital reality in the soul. "Root." IV. Religion is a vital reality in the soul, ever discernible. It is "found" in man. every principle, good or evil, develops itself. It is progressive in its character, Sufferings strengthen true principles. — *H. P. Bowen.*

The root of the matter. — There are some seasons in which the life of a tree seems to be confined to the root; and thus it is often with the Christian. He may be in such a winter state that there may be little or no appearance of life, no present fruit, no buds and blossoms promising future fruit. There is the being of grace, but the vigor of grace is wanting. He is like a teil tree, or oak, which, through blighting winds or nipping frosts, has cast its leaves; but still there is a prospect, nay, certainty, of a revival, for "their substance is in them."—*B. Beddome.* The root is underground. It hides itself in darkness. Possibly it runs far for its nourishment, like that of the famous Hampton Court vine, which is said to reach to the river Thames. In human affairs it is very hard to find the roots, because men do not generally expose their inmost thoughts. History searches for causes, but it is a very tentative and precarious science. One historian will see, or thinks he sees, the cause of an event in something of which another denies the existence. We cannot even see the roots of the conduct of our daily acquaintances. In particular this difficulty is increased when there is lack of sympathy. A mean and selfish man can never discover the roots of generous action, and a noble-minded man is slow to suspect the roots of the conduct of a person of lower character. We must beware of the attempts of hot-headed philanthropy to cure evils the roots of which have not yet been discovered. Else we may do more harm than good. — *Pul. Com.*

a Job heaps up phrases to express his assurance that *he* shall see God, "I shall see for myself," mine eyes shall behold," "I and not another." The whole of his misery might be expressed in saying that God hid Himself from him, and the whole of his redemption and joy will consist in seeing God. — *Cam. Bib.*

b Ro. xiii. 1-4; Ma. vii. 1, 2.

"Beautiful is the year in its coming and in its going — most beautiful and blessed because it is always the "year of our Lord." — *Lucy Larcom.*

"This life is the climax of divine goodness, as death, the child of sin, is the climax of human badness." — *F. Deems.*

"Life is but the way of dying, death is but the gate of life."— *Isabella Craig.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

the reply of Zophar

he is impelled to speak by his thoughts

1—3. (2) **thoughts . . answer,**[c] my inward persuasion and conviction. **for . . haste,** *R. V.*, "Even by reason of my haste that is in me," hurried by warmth of feeling. (3) **check . . reproach,** *R. V.*, "I have heard the reproof that putteth me to shame." *i. e.* the words by wh. you have sought to check my reproaches. **spirit . . understanding,** *i. e.* my zeal. "Zophar, impelled by indignation draws a picture that is declamatory, intemperate and largely fanciful, having little connection with fact." — *Genung.*

The tongue is a test of the religious state, because it is the easiest and most natural outlet of the feelings and the motives within. It is like the most sensitive balance. A feeling that would not show itself in any other way will move the tongue. So that an ungoverned and unsanctified tongue proves an ungoverned and unsanctified soul. "To make a full and perfect estimate of a man's character, there must not be omitted one single solitary slightest word that ever drops from his life or his pen." The tongue is also one of the means by which the state of the soul is changed. Expressing feeling increases, not the emotion, but the source of the feeling. Angry words cultivate anger, soft words cherish gentleness of spirit, loving words increase love. "It is," says Johnstone, "by restraining the tongue that man obtains and keeps control over the animal nature." "A quarrel," says Dr. Deems, "cannot be carried on in dulcet tone." And again, "An evil tongue reacts upon the speaker, increasing his envy, hatred, jealousy, or whatever evil passion prompted the bad speech." — *Peloubet.*

c Ro. x. 2; Ja. i. 19, 20.

"Every real thought on every real subject, knocks the wind out of somebody or other. As soon as his breath comes back, he very probably begins to expend it in hard words. These are the best evidence a man can have that he has said something it was time to say." — *Holmes.*

the joy of the wicked is transient

4—7. (4) **Knowest . . old,** as an old fact of human observation. **since . . earth,** fr. the beginning of time. (5) **triumphing,**[d] shouting, rejoicing. **joy . . moment,** as his character is disclosed, what is often but not always

d Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36; lxxiii. 18; Ex.

xv. 9, 10; Ju. xvi. 27–30; Est. v. 11, 12; vii. 10.

true. (6) **Though,** *etc.*,[a] even if he attain to the highest honor and prosperity. (7) **Yet . . dung,** as a loathsome thing.

The brief triumph of the wicked. — Titus Oates was for a season, during the reign of Charles II., the idol of many Protestants in England. Wherever he appeared, men uncovered their heads. The lives of the most powerful seemed at his mercy. A clergyman of the church of England, and professedly a determined opponent of the Papacy, his oath was credited, and many were condemned to imprisonment, confiscation, or death. Without doubt the wretch occasioned the execution of several innocent persons, and the grievous punishment of many. But an hour of retribution arrived. His cruel devices were detected, and the miserable man's punishment was terrible. He was sentenced to be stripped of his clerical habit, to stand in the pillory in various places, to be whipped from Aldgate to Newgate, and two days after to be whipped from Newgate to Tyburn. He was then to be imprisoned for life, being placed in the pillory five times every year. The dreadful sentence was carried into effect; except that, after a long period, he obtained his liberty, an impoverished, maimed, and despised man. — *S. S. Mag.*

Consequences of sin. — We are told that in Sierra Leone the white ants will sometimes occupy a house, and eat their way into all the woodwork, until every article in the house is hollow so that it will collapse into dust directly it is touched. It is so with this deceitful character, so honey-combed and eaten through, that though for years it may maintain its plausible appearance in the world, few people even suspecting the extent of the inward decay, on a sudden the end will come; there will be one touch of the finger of God, and the whole ill-compacted, worm-devoured thing will crumble into matchwood; "He shall be broken, and that without remedy." — *R. F. Horton.*

[a] Am. ix. 2; Ma. xi. 23.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial; we should count time by heart throbs. He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."—*Shakespeare.*

"In the ideal we are to see what we may become: in the actual we see what we have to avoid."—*R. F. Horton.*

life is as dream

8—10. (8) **dream,**[b] wh. wholly vanishes. (9) **eye**[c] **. . him,** and was dazed by his greatness. (10) **to please the poor,** *R. V.*, "the favour of the poor," *i. e.* in their low estate they will seek to curry favor even with the poor. **hands,** of his sons. **shall . . goods,**[d] rather, his goods; wealth gotten by unlawful and violent means.

[b] Ps. lxxiii. 20; xc. 5.

[c] Ps. xxxvii. 36; ciii. 16.

[d] Pr. vi. 31.

The dream of life. — I. A dream implies a dormancy in certain faculties of our nature. II. A dream fills the mind with illusive visions. 1. Man's notions as to what his life here will be are illusions; 2. Man's notions as to what constitutes the blessedness and dignities of life are illusions. III. A dream is of very short duration. — *Thomas.*

A dream, alas our life's a dream,
On earth below,
Like shadows on the waves we seem,
And thus we go.
And when our tardy steps are yet
In space and time,
We are, and know it not, we're led
To heaven sublime. — *Herder.*

Traces of life. — The leaves of some trees, when they fall, leave no trace whatever behind; the scar left by their removal heals immediately; and on the smooth naked bark of the bough, in winter, there is no mark to indicate that it was once covered with foliage. There are other trees, however, on which the scars are permanent. The leaf drops off; but it leaves a seal-like impression behind on the stem; and no succeeding growth can obliterate it. Through summer's luxuriance and winter's desolation, the memory of the vanished leaf remains indelibly fixed on the tree, engraved, as if with a pen of iron, upon the bough which it once adorned. The tree may increase in size until it forms a grove by itself; but the signet mark left by the leaf, which fell from it when it was a mere sapling, still cleaves to it in the grandeur of old age. Many of the characteristic marks on the stems of palm trees and tree-ferns are due to the permanence of these scars, when their leaves are decayed and dropped off. And is not the lesson of analogy here very clear and impressive? How many there are who fade, and drop off the tree of humanity, and leave no trace of their existence behind! while others, when they fade and drop off the tree of life, leave behind them an impression which time will only make deeper — an empty space, whose perpetual vacancy reminds the survivors of an irreparable loss. — *Hugh MacMillan.*

the sins of his youth inherited by the wicked

11—14. (11) **full . . youth,**[e] "rather, his bones are full of his youth, but it shall lie down, *etc.*; in the midst of his years, when his bones are full of his youthful strength, like a vigorous marrow, he shall be cut off, and his youth go down to the grave with him." — *Cam. Bib.* (12) **Though . . mouth,**[f] though it be a pleasure to him. **though . . tongue,**[g] as a gourmand prolonging the taste of a sweet morsel. (13) **Though,** *etc.*, see *vs.* 12. (14) **Yet,**[h] *etc.*, sin so enjoyed shall be bitter in its consequences.

Results of sin. — That little sin is, if you would see it, like scratching with a pen through and through a writing on a parchment. What is this writing?

[e] Ps. xxv. 7; Pr. v. 10, 11.

[f] Pr. ix. 16, 17; Ps. x. 7.

[g] Hence we have the saying "to roll sin as a sweet morsel under the tongue," wh. is often quoted as part of Scripture.

[h] Pr. i. 31; Je. ii. 19.

What is this parchment? It is a title-deed to an inheritance, the inheritance of the saints in light. You are quietly erasing your name from it and blotching its fair characters. When you come to the day of account, you will show your claim, and it will be illegible. "What," you will say, "am I to lose this great possession for this trifling scratch of the pen?" "Even so," says the Inexorable; "it is precisely in this way that the inheritance is lost: not, as a rule, by deliberate and reckless destruction of the mighty treasure, but by the thoughtless triviality, the indolent easefulness. See you, it is the work of your own hand. *His own iniquities shall take the wicked.*" He said God would not punish a poor creature like him. God does not punish him. No, there is God making level all his paths now as of old. This punishment is not God's; it is his own. His own iniquities have taken the wicked; he is held with the cords of his sins. Here then is the plain, stern truth, a law not of Nature only, but of the Universe. — *R. F. Horton.*

Spiritual conflict must precede spiritual peace.— *The Sunday School Times.*

He who has no mind to trade with the devil should be so wise as to keep from his shop.— *South.*

ill-gotten wealth shall be reimbursed

15—17. (15) **He . . riches,** glutted with wealth. **he . . again,**[a] ill-gotten wealth shall be disgorged. (16) **He . . asps,**[b] his wealth shall be as a poison corrupting his whole nature. (17) **He,** *etc.*,[c] he shall not enjoy prosperity, of wh. rivers, honey, *etc.*, are emblems.

Zophar's argument. — Zophar's point is the brevity of the wicked man's prosperity, which arises from the fact that wickedness brings about its own retribution — sin, sweet in the mouth, turns into the poison of asps in the belly.

"The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us."

He illustrates this theme by drawing the picture of a rapacious, oppressive man of power suddenly brought to destruction and destitution in the midst of his days, with the hand of every one that is wretched against him, and forced to disgorge that which he had greedily swallowed. Job may understand that the fable is narrated of him. — *Cam. Bib.*

a Pr. xxiii. 8.

b Ro. iii. 13.

c Je. xvii. 6; Is. lviii. 9-11; Ps. lxxxi. 13, 16.

vs. 17. "Is a man about to leave his native place, to reside in another country in hope of becoming rich, people say to him, 'We suppose there are rivers of ghee, and honey and milk, in the town where you are going to live.'"— *Roberts.*

restitution to the poor shall be made

18—20. (18) **That . . restore,**[d] he shall lose the fruit of his toil. **shall . . down,** shall not enjoy it. **according to,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "According to the substance that he hath gotten he shall not rejoice." (19) **oppressed,** plundered. **because . . not,**[e] *R. V.*, "He hath violently taken away an house, and he shall not build it up;" comp. Is. v. 8, 9. (20) *R. V.*, "Because he knew no quietness within him, he shall not save aught of that wherein he delighteth," *i. e.* because his greed was insatiable, he shall lose what he longed for.

Oppressing the poor. — It is not always seen in the bare and open fashion of primitive times. The sheikh exacts more than is due from his tribe, the Eastern landowner grinds down his fellaheen, the baron enslaves and robs his serfs, and we denounce the manifest wrong. But is not the same evil to be seen in the more decorous injustice of modern Western civilization? The great body of workingmen is now emancipated from the tyranny of past ages, and is able to assert itself and claim its rights. But below this powerful class is a mass of unskilled workers, the helpless men and women who crowd the lower quarters of great cities — the really poor. When advantage is taken of the poverty of these miserable people to grind them down, they are being robbed. With us the sweating system takes the place of the old territorial oppression. Is the modern commercial oppression one whit less guilty than the old lordly tyranny? The evil is more disguised with us; it is more difficult to bring it home to its authors; our complicated civilization hushes it up — yet the cruelty and wickedness are as real as ever. — *Pul. Com.*

d Je. li. 44.

e 1 Ki. xxi. 19; Is. lvii. 21.

"Lot hastened to acquire wealth. For a while all seems fair; but soon every worldly prospect is blasted, and he ends his days a degraded tenant of the desolate cave of Zoar. Ahab envied Naboth the enjoyment of his vineyard, and Jehoiakim by unjust means grasped all that came within his reach; but both of them soon ended their career in deep disgrace."— *E. L. Magoon.*

he shall be in straits in the height of his prosperity

21—23. (21) *R. V.*, "There was nothing left that he devoured not; therefore his prosperity shall not endure."[f] (22) **In . . sufficiency,**[g] in his best estate. **he . . straits,** in the moment of his great abundance his straitness comes suddenly upon him. **every . . him,** rather, "of the wretched." All those in destitution, and the lawless shall rise up against him and make him their prey. (23) **When,**[h] *etc.*, in the midst of his desires, and in the moment of their satisfaction.

Riches and discontent. — "I knew a man," says one, "that had health and riches, and several houses, all beautiful and ready furnished, and who would often trouble himself and his family by removing from one house to another. Being asked by a friend why he removed so often, he replied, it was to find

f Pr. xxii 22, 23; Am. iv. 1, 2.

g Ecc. v. 13, 14; Je. xvii. 11.

h Mal. ii. 2; Nu. xi. 33; Ps. lxxviii. 29-31; Lu. xii. 20.

content in some one of them. 'Content,' said his friend, 'ever dwells in a meek and quiet soul.'"— *Whitecross.*

"Temptation in the line of duty God has provided for: but temptation sought and coveted God has made no provision for."—*G. E. Rees.*

Poverty.— A man at a toll-gate who has a million-pound note, is as badly off as the man who has not a single halfpenny: neither of the men can pass through the toll-gate. There may be a poverty of wealth as well as a poverty of destitution. So the wicked man may be in straits of all kinds; he may have plenty of money, and not know how to spend it; he may have an abundance of property, and be without thoughts, impulses of a heavenly kind, aspirations that seek the skies. The bad man may have no explanation of the miseries which torment him; he may be mad with impatience because his spirit has never been chastened by heavenly experience. The good man may have nothing, and yet may abound; he may be hungry, and yet may be satisfied: his affliction is a sanctified sorrow. — *Peop. Bib.*

the fate of the ungodly oppressor

24—26. (24) **He,** *etc.*,[a] "bent on plunder he is suddenly confronted by the sword of his intended victim." He flees, but is transfixed by an arrow, and dies. —*Cox.* (25) **drawn,** *etc.*, vivid picture of the sufferings of the wounded. (26) *R. V.* "All darkness is laid up for his treasurers; a fire not blown by man shall devour him; it shall consume that which is left in his tent."[b] **darkness,** calamity. **laid up,** reserved, destined. **fire . . him,** fire of God, or perhaps an allusion to the self-avenging nature of sin.

a Is. xxiv. 18; Am. v. 19.

b Ps. xxi. 9,

Mistaken criticism of life.— The rich broker or manufacturer, because he washes, dresses, and has twenty servants to wait upon him, is he therefore a fine soul? Nobody will say so. Yet Christianity is so little understood in some quarters, is so much associated with the error of Zophar, that even within the church a score are of his opinion for one who is in Job's perplexity. The moral ideas and philanthropies of our generation are perverted by the notion that no one is succeeding as a man unless he is making money and rising in the social scale. So, independence of mind, freedom, integrity, and the courage by which they are secured, are made of comparatively little account. Outward magnificence is neither a symbol nor an ally of spiritual power. It hinders instead of aiding the soul in the quest of what is eternally excellent, touching the sensuous, not the divine, in man. The spread of His ideas, the manifestation of His Godhead, the coming of His Kingdom, depend not in the least on the countenance of the great and the impression produced on rude minds by the show of wealth.— *Exp. B.*

"Ambition, avarice — the two demons—these which goad through every slough our human herd, hard-traveled from the cradle to the grave; how low the wretches stoop!"—*Young.*

"Satan, the world, and the flesh are the three mighty foes of the child of God."—*D. W. Whittle.*

the emptiness of earthly possessions

27—29. (27) **heaven . . earth,**[c] *etc.*, all nature in arms against him. (28) **The . . depart,**[d] disappear. **and . . away,** like water. (29) **portion,**[e] the lot, fate, end. **heritage . . God,** Job will not admit the imputation that his heritage is from God as the punishment for sin.

c Is. xxvi. 21; Lu. xii. 2; 1 Co. v. 5.

d Zep. i. 18; Re. xviii. 17; Ma. xvi. 26.

e Ps. xi. 6; De. xxix. 18-20.

The emptiness of earthly possessions.— From these words I take occasion to show what a poor creature a mere worldly man is. I. As viewed in himself. 1. As it respects his present enjoyments: 2. As it respects his future prospects. II. As viewed in contrast with the godly man. Such — 1. Enjoy much in possession; 2. In reversion. Application: — (1) Seek not happiness in the way of sin; (2) Be not too intent on the things of this world; (3) Seek your happiness in God alone.— *C. Simeon.*

Cyrus, the Persian king, was accustomed to say, that did men but know the cares he had to sustain, he thought no man would wish to wear his crown

"A slave has but one master; the ambitious man has as many masters as there are persons whose aid may contribute to the advancement of his future."— *La Bruyère.*

Omniscience of God.— Lord Craven lived in London when that sad calamity, the plague, raged. On the plague growing epidemic, his lordship, to avoid the danger, resolved to go to his seat in the country. His coach and six were accordingly at the door, and all things in readiness for the journey. As he was walking through his hall in order to step into his carriage, he overheard his negro, who served him as postillion, saying to another servant, "I suppose, by my lord's quitting London to avoid the plague, that his God lives in the country, and not in town." The speech struck Lord Craven very sensibly, and made him pause. "My God," thought he, "lives everywhere, and can preserve me in town as well as in the country. I will even stay where I am." He immediately ordered his horses to be taken from the coach, and the baggage to be taken in. He continued at London, was remarkably useful among his sick neighbors, and never caught the infection.— *R. T. S.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

Job's reply

he craves leave to speak

1—3. (1) **Job answered,** he vindicates himself fr. the charges of all his friends at once. (2) **diligently,** *lit. hear, O hear.* Serious matters call for double or diligent hearing. **this . . consolations,** an allusion to xvii. when Eliphaz offers the consolations of God. Their speech had failed, let them now "console" him by listening.[a] (3) **Suffer me,** do not interrupt. **mock on,** begin again your mockings.[b]

The speech of the pulpit (*vs.* 3).—I. Suffer me to speak—1. Of human depravity; 2. Of Christ's atonement; 3. Of God's invitations; 4. Of Divine long-sufferance; 5. Of tender mercies; 6. Of God's promises; 7. Of threatenings; 8. Of rewards; 9. Of punishments. II. The liberty granted. "Now I have spoken," *etc.* 1. If your understandings will permit; 2. If you are rejecters of the Bible; 3. If you despise the counsels of heaven. But if you will not "mock on,"—(1) Forget not; (2) Pray for help; (3) Reduce knowledge to practice; (4) Think of the end of life; (5) Persevere to the end; (6) Labor to promote the glory of God. —*W. Stevens.*

Rule for preachers.—I was conversing with one of the first advocates in America. He said, the diffiulty which preachers find in making themselves understood is, that they do not repeat enough. Says he, "In addressing a jury, I always expect that whatever I wish to impress upon their minds, I shall have to repeat at least twice, and often I repeat it three or four times, and even more. Otherwise, I do not carry their minds along with me, so that they can feel the force of what comes afterwards." If a jury, under oath, called to decide on the common affairs of this world, cannot apprehend an argument unless there is so much repetition, how is it to be expected that men will understand the preaching of the gospel without it.—*Finney. Value of arguing.*—Arguing for the sake of victory is of little value. It generally confirms each party in its own opinions, builds impenetrable walls around narrow and imperfect views. The only hope is that some light may flash through the crevices. But arguing for the sake of knowing the whole truth, of seeing from every point of view, of broadening knowledge, is of great value, and will be conducted without passion or bitter words. —*Peloubet.*

a The LXX. trans. "Let *not* such be your consolations."

b Job. xvii. 2.

"Listen attentively, instead of speaking with words, which you intend for consolations, but which are contumelies." —*Wordsworth.*

"The whole of Zophar's last speech must have left the impression on Job of a bitter sarcasm, and has dealt him the freshest, deepest blow." —*Delitzsch.*

If God be our guide He will be our guard. —*Matthew Henry.*

complaining, even to man, he may well be troubled

4—6. (4) **my complaint,** Vulg. *my disputation.*[c] **to man,** *R. V.*, marg. "of man." It is not about *man* that he complains. It is the moral problem of the universe that perplexes him.[d] **why,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "why should I not be impatient?" since wrong seems successful and right suffers. (5) **be astonished,** Job intended to say some intense things. **lay . . mouth,** attitude of silent awe and wonder,[e] for Job is confronted by the terrible mystery of the apparent injustice of God with men. This he is determined to solve. (6) **trembling,**[f] at the task which he has set for himself.

Preaching.—No obstacles in the way of the Christian pulpit and Christian work ought to be named as an apology for omitting to do that work, except the obstacles within the church itself. As well might Gen. Grant have complained of the cannon and sharp-shooting of Lee's army; but for them there would have been no use for him. We are to go on with the conquest set before us.—*Cyrus D. Foss.* To a very large extent, preaching in the pulpit to-day is preaching in defense of the Bible instead of preaching the contents of the Bible. We spend a great deal of time in making clear and clean the approaches to the temple, and a great many of us never get any farther than the vestibule door, and we spend so much time in this way that we do not have time to go inside and worship.—*Francis L. Patton. One reason why preaching is ineffectual.*—In a recent lecture (1893) before the students of the Chicago Theological Institute, Mr. Moody gave the following object lesson: "The Spirit cleanses the believer through the word. People close up their Bibles and then wonder why they do not become holy." He then took a pitcher of water and began to pour it into a bottle filled with a dark fluid. The water drove out the fluid, and was rapidly making the contents look clear. Then he put the cork in the bottle and continued to pour the water. "That," he said, "illustrates the people who stop up their minds with unbelief. The word does not get in, and their minds are poisoned and tainted with evil. Many people sit in church with their minds corked up and the minister pours on the word, but it all goes outside. The people should be

c Comp. Job vii. 13; ix. 27.

d Job xvi. 20.

e Ps. xxxix. 9; Pr. xxx. 32.

f Comp. David, Ps. cxix. 120, and Habakkuk iii. 16.

"He who desires according to Paul to be apt to teach, must first himself be taught of God." —*Erasmus.*

"Let your discourses be neither absolutely without ornament, nor indecently clothed with it." —*Augustine.*

Robert Leighton was once rebuked by his Scotch Presbytery for not "preaching to the times," and he is said to have answered, "while so many brethren are 'preaching to the times' may not

one poor brother preach for eternity?"—*Trumbull.*

he marvels at the prosperity of the wicked

prepared to receive the message as much as the minister to give it."—*Peloubet.*

7—9. (7) **wicked live,**[a] the question scarcely means, How is it, if your principles be true, that the wicked live? Job's mind is engrossed with the great problem itself, and he asks, Why in the government of a righteous God do the wicked live? They not only live, they live to old age, and wax mighty in the earth. This difficulty the friends had shirked, dwelling only on the fact that wickedness was punished in this life, in order to prove that Job must have sinned.[b] (8) **seed is established,** this fact contradicts the statements of all the friends; Comp. xv. 34; xviii. 19; xx. 10. (9) **safe from fear,** *lit. peace from* fear; *i. e.* peace itself, far removed from fear. Job's house had been broken up by calamities. **rod of God,** with which He smites in punishment.

Why the wicked are suffered to live (*vs.* 7).—I. To prolong their opportunity for becoming reconciled to God. II. For the benefit of others. III. That they may contribute to mature the piety, elevate the character, and heighten the future felicity of the saints. IV. That they may exhibit the loveliness of the Divine character. V. That they may furnish evidence of the future state of retribution. VI. That they may furnish decisive evidence of the justice of God in His final disposal of them. — *W. T. Hamilton.*

Treasures of the wicked. — Every man is treasuring up stores for eternity; the good are laying up treasures in heaven, where moth doth not corrupt; the evil and impenitent are "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath." What an idea is this! Treasures of wrath! Whatever the impenitent man is doing, he is treasuring up wrath. He may be getting wealth; but he is treasuring up wrath. He may be getting fame; but he is treasuring up wrath. He may be forming pleasing connections; but he is also treasuring up wrath: every day adds something to the heap. Every oath the swearer utters, there is something gone to the heap of wrath. Every lie the liar tells, every licentious act the lewd man commits, adds something to the treasure of wrath. The sinner has a weightier treasure of wrath to-day than he had yesterday: he will have a weightier to-morrow than he has to-day. When he lies down at night he is richer in vengeance than when he arose in the morning. He is continually deepening and darkening his eternal portion. Every neglected Sabbath increases his store of wrath; every forgotten sermon adds something to the weight of punishment. All the checks of conscience, all the remonstrances of friends, all the advice and prayers of parents, will be taken into the account, and all will tend to increase the treasures of wrath laid up against the day of wrath. — *G. A. James.*

a Comp. Asaph's difficulty, Ps lxxiii. See also Jer. xii. 1-3; Hab. i. 12-17; Mal. iii. 14, 15.

b Job xx. 4-29.

"Patience is that by which God patiently endures the absence of a good that is loved, desired, and hoped for, and the presence of an evil that is hated, and which spares sinners, not only that He may through them execute the judicial acts of His mercy and justice, but that He may likewise lead them to repentance; or may punish with the greater equity and more grievously, the contumacious."—*Arminius.*

"Sure as night follows day,
Death treads in pleasure's footsteps round the world,
When pleasure treads the paths which reason shuns."—*Young.*

they are wealthy and seem to be happy

10—13. (10) **gendereth . . calveth,** these were things beyond the immediate control of man, yet even in these things God blessed the wicked. (11) **They,** the wicked, *vs.* 7. **like a flock,**[c] to their sports, like a joyful flock sent to the pastures. **dance,**[d] the common sign of joyousness and freedom from fear. (12) **They,** the fathers. **take,** *R. V.*, "sing to." **timbrel,** Heb. *toph:*[e] French, *tambourin:* an instrument that is struck. **harp,** Heb. *cinnor,*[f] an instrument having strings. **organ,** *R. V.*, "the pipe." (13) **wealth,** good, or prosperity. **in a moment,** "going straight down into the under-world, without struggle or pain, or any sign of the Divine displeasure." — *Cox.*

Frivolous amusements. — Attending places of vain and fashionable amusement tends to stifle all serious reflection, and cherish a vain and airy temper, and to promote an idle and dissolute life. It tends to make young people forget that they are sinners, and that they must die and come to judgment. It tends to render them deaf to all inward warnings of God's Spirit, and to the checks of their own consciences, and deaf to all the outward calls of the gospel, the counsels of their ministers, their parents and other spiritual friends.—*Bellamy.* *The two boats.* — In many a man's life in that harbor out of which he sails his little boat, two vessels arise. One vessel has the sound of laughter, rich and full, upon it; the sound of music and dancing upon it; gaudy colors float from its mast heads; it is the ship of the "World and its Lusts." Another ship lies in the offing, a good, stanch boat, free from things that are for the pleasures of the flesh, but filled with a royal crew, captained by one who never failed to lead his vessel safely through to the desired haven. Upon one of those two boats you and I must embark. Most of us have already put off our little boats on the sea, with the Brittany fisherman's prayer, "Keep me, O

c Ps. xvii. 14.

d "Not formal dances, but skip, like lambs, in joyous, healthful play."—*Fausset.*

e Trans. *tabret* in Ge. xxxi. 27.

f Ge iv. 21; xxxi. 27; 1 Sa. x. 5.

"Many Christians get cold warming themselves by this world's fires."—*A. J. Gordon.*

"But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed."—*Burns.*

God; the sea is so large, and my boat is so small." But perhaps some are still halting between the choice of the world and the good will of our God. The two boats put out to sea; the sky is blue, the Father's face is sweet and tender, and the sea is sweet and peaceful; and the two vessels sail quickly over the waters. By and by the wind comes, and that rocky cape which every vessel must round before she reaches her haven looms up in the gathering darkness. There, while the clouds surge heavy overhead, and the night-birds sweep, and the waters pitch and toss tempestuously beneath, the "World and its Lusts" has passed away, but the good ship of the "Will of God" rides on. The storms go down and the clear sun shines out lovingly after the rain, and by and by the light breaks upon the hills of the better country, and the "Good Will of God" casts anchor in the haven of my Father's land at the very threshold of my Father's house. — *Robert E. Speer.*

"Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the Present. It is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy Future, without fear, and with a manly heart."—*H. W. Longfellow.*

14–16. (14) **Therefore,** *R. V.*, "Yet they said," these ungodly men. **desire not,** the expression of natural enmity.[a] (15) **What . . Almighty,** what His special claims? The language of pride and independence.[b] **profit,** seeing they have all outward good, what is to be got by religion?[c] **if we pray,** Heb. *if we meet Him: i. e.* in the way of prayer. (16) **their good,** *R. V.*, "their prosperity." **not in their** (own) **hand,** but in God's. They do not make it themselves. Therefore there must be some mystery in God's dealings beyond your comprehension. **far from me,** "or, perhaps, the counsel of the wicked *be* far from me![d] Job cannot refrain from repudiating their principles." — *Cam. Bib.*

they foster pride in their prosperity

a Ps. x. 4; 2 Ti. iv. 3; Ro. i. 28; viii. 7; Jno. iii. 19.

b Ex. v. 2; Mal. iii. 14.

c 1 Ti. iv. 8.

d "Be it far from me that so I should speak, according to their way of thinking, with which, on the contrary, I disavow all fellowship."—*Delitzsch.*

Effects of prayer. — A young man, who was employed in a large manufactory, was frequently made the butt of ridicule by his companions because he would not join in their drinking parties and Sunday frolics. Among these persons, the foreman was most prominent. One day, as the youthful Christian was at prayer, he was overheard by this foreman, who found that he was himself the subject of his supplications. He was presenting to God the darkness and infidelity of his heart, and earnestly imploring for him the blessings of repentance and faith. The foreman, who had never known anything of the true nature of prayer before, was deeply impressed with what he heard, and wondered at the eloquence and fervor with which his own unhappy case had been pleaded before God. "I never," said he to himself, "thus prayed to God for myself." The next day he entreated the instructions of the young man, and earnestly begged his prayers for him. They knelt down together, cried to the God of all grace, and found acceptance with Him. From that day they were bosom friends, went together to the house of God, and frequently united in their prayers and thanksgivings. Their conversation adorned their profession, and the mocker became a confessor of the grace which he had so often abused and turned into ridicule.

A little boy, whose conduct made his mother say that she feared he did not pray, replied, "Yes, I do; I pray every night that God will make you and pa like my ways better."

17, 18. (17) **How oft,**[e] *R. V.*, "How oft is it that," *etc.*, *i. e.* not often. **and how oft,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "That their calamity cometh upon them? That God distributeth sorrows in His anger?" On these words the stress of Job's question lies. He admits that the wicked are punished in this life, but what examples can be produced? **candle,**[f] reverting to Bildad's figure, ch. xviii. 5, 6. (18) **stubble,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "That they are as stubble before the wind and as chaff that the storm carrieth away?"[g] These are all questions; not assertions as in *A. V.*, and to all the implied answer is, "not often."

yet their life is uncertain and frail

e Gesenius supposes that the word (*cammah*) rendered *how oft*, may even be interpreted as equivalent to *seldom*.

f Job xxix. 3; Ps. xviii. 28; Pr. xxiv. 20.

g Is. v. 24; Mat. iii. 12.

The end of the wicked. — Their frail vessels, though built of the best materials, yet corrupted by the worm of sin, being conveyed by the ebb of time down the smooth river of life, are now hurried beyond the bar of death into the fiery and unfathomable sea of Divine wrath. In this most tempestuous ocean, tossed by the furious winds of Almighty indignation upon the raging billows of insupportable torment, they suffer a speedy and eternal shipwreck. Dashed upon the rocks of ruin, or swallowed up in the gulf of despair, they are entirely lost, and not one broken piece of holiness or happiness remains, nor so much as a single plank of hope upon which they may expect, though after millions of ages, to escape to some land of rest. — *J. Benson.* *Wealth not a shield from misery and unhappiness.* — The autocrats who have been most conspicuous for unchecked power and limitless resources have also been the most conspicuous in misery. We have but to recall Tiberius, "*tristissimus ut constat hominum*," who, from the enchanted isle which he had degraded into the stye of his infamies, wrote to his servile

"Though we seem grieved at the shortness of life in general, we are wishing every period of it at an end. The minor longs to be at age; then to be a man of business, then to make up an estate; then arrive at honors, then to retire."—*Addison.*

senate that "all the gods and goddesses were daily destroying him;" or Septimus Severus, who, rising step by step from a Dalmatian peasant and common soldier to be emperor of the world, remarked with pathetic conviction, "*Omnia fui et nihil expedit*"; or Abderrahman the Magnificent, who, in all his life of success and prosperity, could only count fourteen happy days; or Alexander, dying "as a fool dieth;" or Napoleon I. saying, "I regard life with horror." — *Farrar.*

"Our lives are albums written through
With good or ill, with false or true;
And as the blessed angels turn
The pages of our years,
God grant they read the good with smiles,
And blot the ill with tears."
— *Whittier.*

A shipwrecked soul. —

"For sadder sight than eye can know
The shipwreck of a soul."
Than proud bark lost, or seaman's woe,
Or battle fire or tempest cloud,
Or prey-bird's shriek, or ocean shroud,

his wickedness is visited on his children

19—21. (19) *R. V.*, "Ye say God layeth up," *etc.* **layeth up,** reserveth. **iniquity,** the punishment of it. **for his children,** the friends maintained that the punishments of wickedness fell either on the man himself, or on his immediate offspring.[a] **rewardeth,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Let him recompense it unto himself, that he may know it," *i. e.* let the man himself suffer, not his posterity. This is the earliest remonstrance of the kind. Comp. Jer. xxxi. 29, 30, and Ezek. xviii. 20. **know,**[b] in sense of *feel* it. (20) **see,** *R. V.*, "Let his own eyes see his destruction." **drink,** *R. V.*, "let him drink" as out of a cup.[c] (21) **what pleasure,**[d] *etc.*, *i. e.* how can it be punishment to a man for his children to suffer when he is gone? **cut of,** prematurely.

The triumph of the wicked. — How short is the triumph of the wicked! When they begin to crow, God stoppeth their breath; and judgment seizeth upon them when they think no danger near them. So, when Belshazzar was in his mirth with his nobles, the fearful hand wrote his doom upon the wall, and presently his mirth was changed into sadness, that he became as one that was stricken with a palsy; so, while Herod vaunted himself and the people honored him like a God, the angel of God smote him upon his throne, and immediately he was devoured of worms in the face of them which honored him; so, while the Philistines were triumphing and banqueting, Samson pulled the temple upon their heads; so, while the men of Ziklag were feasting and dancing, David came upon them and slew them; when the Israelites were at their manna and quails, even while the meat (saith David) was yet in their mouths, God took away their lives; when Job's children were making merry one with another, the wind came and blew down the house; while the old world was marrying and giving in marriage, the flood came and drowned them; while the steward was recounting with himself and thinking that his master knew not what policy was in his heart, suddenly his lord called him to account; while the churl was musing of his barns full of corn, and saying to himself, Be merry, my soul, that night his soul was taken from him: so, while we sin and think nothing of it, our sins mount up to heaven, and stand at the bar, and call for vengeance against us. How soon Abel's blood called for vengeance of Cain! We cannot sin so quickly but God seeth us as quickly. How many have been stricken while the oath hath been in their mouths, as Jeroboam was stricken while he spoke, that they might see why they were stricken! Though a man sin often, and steal his sins as it were without punishment, yet at last he is taken napping, even while the wickedness is in his hand, and his day is set when he shall pay for all; whether it be after twelve months or twelve years, when it cometh it will seem too soon. — *H. Smith.*

[a] Job v. 4, xx. 10; see also Ex. xx. 5; Is. xiv. 21.

[b] Hos. ix. 7.

[c] Ps. xi. 6; lxxv. 8; Je. xxv. 15, 16; Oba. 16; Re. xiv. 10.

[d] "If the godless receives the reward of his deeds, he should receive it not in his children, but in his own body, during life."—*Delitzsch.*

Comp. Eccl. iii. 22. Secretary Walsingham wrote to Lord Burleigh: "We have lived long enough to our fortunes, to our country, to our sovereign; it is high time that we began to live for ourselves and to God."

Do you want to know a prescription suitable for every pardoned sinner? It is contained in the words of the Great Physician: "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."

God is just though men's affairs are unequal

22—26. (22) **teach God,** whose ways may well be inscrutable. He reproves the attempt to decide what God *must* do. **high,** either the angels, heavenly spirits (*Delitzsch*); or the *proud*, who presume to read His secrets. (23) **full strength,** *lit.* in his perfection; that is, in the full enjoyment of everything he could desire. (24) **His breasts.** Some trans. "His resting places (*i. e.* of his flocks) are full of milk:" having reference to the milk-pails provided; or troughs for the store of milk. **and his bones,** *R. V.*, "And the marrow of his bones is moistened," *i. e.* watered; made fresh and strong. (25) **in the bitterness,** having a life full of sorrow, while the other has a life full of joy. **never eateth with pleasure,** *R. V.*, "never tasteth of good." (26) **alike,** Eccl. ix. 2.

"The ancient versions specify some part of the body as the meaning of the word (*atin*), and this is con-

The mental independence of God (*vs.* 22). — From this fact we infer — I. That all His operations must emanate from pure sovereignty. II. That all His laws must be the transcript of His own mind III. That all His dispensations should be cordially acquiesced in. This is dictated by — 1. Rectitude; 2. Expediency. IV. That all His revelations should be properly studied. 1. With an expectation of difficulties; 2. With the profoundest reverence. — *D. Thomas.*

Uncertainty of life. — One Lord's day, the Rev. Mr. Button of London, preached at Harlington. After a variety of pertinent remarks on the mortality of man, and the state of the soul after death, Mr. B. suggested that it was possible some one or other in the congregation might be removed by death that day; and that being the case, it became each one to put the question to himself — "Where am I likely to be? In heaven or in hell?" Returning to the afternoon service, Mr. B. was met at the meeting-house door by one of the members of the church, who said, "An affecting providence, sir, has just taken place! The congregation is assembled, and a man in the gallery is now fallen down, apparently dead; he is carried into the vestry." A medical gentleman was immediately sent for, who said that the person had died of an apoplectic fit. The awakening providence produced a deep solemnity in the congregation. "Be ye also ready; for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." — *Whitecross. Dying words of an unbeliever.* — The dying words of the late Harriet Martineau were: "I have no reason to believe in another world. I have had enough of life in one, and can see no good reason why Harriet Martineau should be perpetuated." What gloom and sadness! Now listen to St. Paul: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Who, in the light of such experiences, can refrain from exclaiming, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?" — *Old Test. Anec.*

firmed by the parallelism."—*Wordsworth.*

vs. 4. "The margin has, for breasts, 'milkpails.' Of a man who is very rich, it is common to say, 'His chattels (vessels) are full of milk.' But of a good king or governor it is said, He nourishes like the king whose breasts are full of milk. 'Yes; he so rules, that the breasts of the goddess of the earth are full of milk.'"—*Roberts.*

"We know God easily, provided we do not constrain ourselves to define Him."—*Joubert.*

27, 28. (27) **thoughts,** which they had not expressed. They made general observations, but they intended personal application to Job; they had insinuated his guilt. **devices,**[a] *stratagems,* malicious intrigues. (28) **prince,** rich or munificent chief. Job knew they meant himself by this term. **dwelling . . wicked,** assuming Job's were tents of wickedness bec. they had been destroyed.

God knows the thoughts of men

God's plan in life. — A crystal is sometimes formed in the embrace of a boulder of granite. To clear it of its rough enclosure, and to bring its beautiful facets to the light, nature submerges it in deep waters, shatters it by tempests, and abrades it by contact with stones and mud, and the rubbish of the sea. Thus a redeemed soul is by the plan of God immersed in the cares and toils and enticements and usefulness of a world of sin, so that by sheer resistance to evil, and abrasion with depravity, it may be polished to the transparent image of Him who made it. . . . We are like the Cologne Cathedral wh. was begun about 1250, according to plans of M. Gerard. After a time the building stopped, on account of wars and political changes. For several centuries the plans were lost. But in 1830 they were discovered, and the building is completed according to them. God has a plan for the temple of our souls. We sometimes lose sight of it, but if we are His children, every day, every experience, every opportunity, will aid in the building, till we become perfect temples, wherein God shall dwell by His Spirit. — *Peloubet.*

[a] "The word is carefully chosen, as ambiguous. It may mean simply ingenious devices, or, more commonly, crafty, and disingenuous ones." — *Spk. Com.*

1 Pe. ii. 19.

A child instructed in a Sabbath school, on being asked by his teacher if he could mention a place where God was not, made the following striking and unexpected reply: "Not in the thoughts of the wicked."

29, 30. (29) **go by the way,** *i. e.* travelers, all men of wide experience and observation tell the same story.[b] **tokens,** *i. e.* the account they give of what they have seen in various lands. (30) *vss.* 30–34 give the travelers, testimony, which universally declares the prosperity of the wicked and the despot. **reserved to,**[c] *R. V.*, margin, "spared in," *i. e.* when others suffer they escape. **brought forth to,** *R. V.*, marg. "led away in," *i. e.* in safety.

the prosperous wicked reserved to destruction

Freedom of the wicked. — All the freedom that wicked men have is but like that of banished men — to wander up and down in the wilderness of this world from one den and cave to another. Plato hath long since concluded concerning the condition of sensual men, that they live "like a shellfish;" and can never move up and down but in their own prison, which they ever carry about with them. Wicked men are most narrow and confined spirits; they are so contracted by the pinching particularities of earthly and created

[b] In this appeal Job meets Bildad's appeal (Job viii. 8); and Zophar's (Job xx. 4).

[c] "At the time when streams of wrath go forth, they remain un-

touched; they escape them as if under a special, higher protection." — *Delitzsch.*

things, so imprisoned in a dark dungeon of sensuality and selfishness, so straitened through their carnal designs and ends, that they cannot stretch themselves, nor look beyond the horizon of time and sense. — *J. Smith.*

thus Job rebuts all partial statements

31—34. (31) **Who,** *etc.*,[a] "the godless despot is secure in life, they say, for no man dare accuse him to his face or is able to requite him as he deserves." — *Cox.* **brought to the grave,**[b] in pomp and honor. **remain,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "keep watch over,"[c] "refers to Arab custom of building a mound over the grave of a dead but honored chieftain, that he may be surrounded by his clan, who zealously keep watch over his tomb." — *Cox.* (33) **sweet unto him,** he thinks even of the grave with complacency, knowing that his memory will be cherished. **every man,** *etc.*, "the prosperous wicked man has innumerable successors and imitators." (34) **falsehood,** *R. V.*, "only falsehood." When Job's proofs to the contrary are subtracted from the answers of his friends, there is left in them only the wrongful, false disposition they show towards him.[d]

Temporal and spiritual. — It is not true that joy and wealth are the rewards of virtuous life. It is not always the case that the evil-doer is overcome by temporal disaster. It is true that to good and bad alike death is appointed, and together they lie down in the dust. It is true that even then the good man's grave may be forsaken in the desert, while the impious may have a stately sepulchre. A new way is made for human thought in the exposure of the old illusions and the opening up of the facts of existence. Hebrew religion has a fresh point of departure, a clearer view of the nature and end of all things. The thought of the world receives a spiritual germ; there is a making ready for Him who said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," and "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life?" When we know what the earthly cannot do for us we are prepared for the gospel of the spiritual and for the living word. — *Exp. Bib. Sin and punishment.* — The state of the world as to sin and punishment is still a vexed problem to many. How can God suffer such injustice to remain in His world? "Why does He not kill the devil?" Why does He not send His lightnings to blast those who are corrupting and destroying men? Why are so many good men unfortunate, and poor, and sick, and lonely? Still, "facing the problem" is one step towards its solution, even though we seem, in Carlyle's words, to be "shouting question after question into the Sibyl-cave of destiny, and receiving no answer but an echo." Only those are hopeless who will not see and feel. — *Peloubet.*

a "Apparently, neither God nor man brings the wicked man's sins home to him.

b "The word *brought* implies burial in state with a procession of mourners." — *Spk. Com.*

Ecc. viii. 8; He. ix. 27.

c "He keeps watch over his tomb, he continues to watch, although asleep, since he is continually brought to remembrance by the monument built over his tomb." — *Delitzsch.*

d "Job distinctly charges them with evil intent, and wilful opposition to the truth." — *Robinson.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

the answer of Eliphaz

God is not affected by human character

This chapt. begins the third circle of speeches. 1—4. (1) **answered,** Eliphaz names the sins of Job; traces these sins to Job's impiety; entreats him to repent.[e] (2) *R. V.*, "Can . . . . unto God? surely he that is wise is profitable unto himself." A man's actions cannot affect God:[f] his wisdom can only benefit himself. (3) **any pleasure,** "or advantage. *Vss.* 2, 3 go together, and express this single conception that God's treatment of men is not due to any respect He has to Himself, but is strictly according to the character of men." — *Cam. Bib.* Suggesting to Job the reason for his affliction. (4) *R. V.* "Is it for thy fear of Him that he reproveth thee, that He entereth with thee into judgment?" *i. e.* God cannot chastise a pious man.

God's independence of man (*vs.* 2). — We learn — I. That God is perfectly independent of man's character, whether right or wrong. 1. He is not affected by it: 2. He will not condescend to explain His treatment of it. II. Man's character is of the utmost importance to himself. "He that is wise," *etc.* — *Thomas.*

Personality of God. — Any presentation of God as an official personage, who sits, as it is sometimes said, in the chair of state — as a mere governor of the universe — is a false presentation. God governs the universe, but He is not a mere governor. I may control men by my personal influence, but I am not a captain. I am not elected to anything. I do not act under any written law or constitution. So far as I control them, I do it by the play of my mind on theirs. I touch their interests, their sympathies, their enthusiasm. God governs the universe, not by His laws so called, but by Himself — by the

e "Eli. shows that man's goodness does not add to, or man's badness take from, the happiness of God; therefore it cannot be that God sends prosperities to some, and calamities on others, for His own advantage. The cause of the goods and ills sent must lie *in the men themselves*" — *Fausset.*

f Job xv. 3; see Ps. xvi. 2; Lu. xvii. 10.

direct throb of His soul. And, I repeat, any view of God which presents Him as an official personage, or in any way that leaves out personality, heart sympathy, soul — is false! — *H. W. Beecher. Religion our advantage.* — Men must recognize that religion is greater than they are, patriotism is greater than they are, and neither church nor country ought to be under such obligation to any man as to be unable to do without him. We are honored by the church; but honor, how little we can give! We are honored by living in the country; if we can give any little honor in return, God be praised! There are also some men who occasionally threaten to give up the ministry. Would God they would! If a man can ever threaten to leave the ministry, let him go! It is recorded that in an early Wesleyan conference Mr. Charles Wesley said that if such and such things were done he would leave the conference. His elder and greater brother said, "will some brother be kind enough to give him his hat?" That is not the way to treat great organizations, and sublime policies, and holy altars. What! a man leave the ministry, except through old age, failure of faculty, exhaustion of power? He cannot, if ever he gave himself to it at the cross, under the baptism of blood. We are not called to this ministry by men, nor by men can we be dismissed from it. Let us live in the spirit of humility, true, genuine spiritual modesty, knowing that all the advantage of religion is upon our side, and that it is not in our power to add to God's dignity. — *Peop. Bib. God the true environment.* — The true environment of the moral life is God. Here conscience wakes. Here kindles love. Duty here becomes heroic, and that righteousness begins to live wh. alone is to live for men. But if this atmosphere is not the dwarfed soul must perish for mere want of its native air. And its death is a strictly natural death. It is not an exceptional judgment upon Atheism. In the same circumstances, in the same averted relation to their environment, the poet, the musician, the artist, would alike perish to poetry, to music and to art. Every environment is a cause. Its effect upon me is exactly proportionate to my correspondence with it. If I correspond with the world, I become worldly; if with God, I become Divine. — *Drummond.*

"The Omnipotent has sown His name on the heavens in glittering stars, but upon earth He planteth His name by tender flowers." — *Richter.*

"It has never been as clear to us that without God the soul will die as that without food the body will perish." — *Drummond.*

"As night and shadows are good for flowers, so is Christ's absence of special use, and it hath rare nourishing virtue in it, and putteth an edge on hunger, and furnisheth a fair field to faith to put forth itself." — *Rutherford.*

5–8. (5) **great,** judged by the severity of the punishment. **and thine,** *etc., R. V.,* "neither is there any end to thine iniquities." Regarding Job's sufferings as severe humiliations, Eliphaz plainly accuses him of the "sins which a powerful Oriental ruler naturally falls into; inhumanity, avarice, and the abuse of power." (6) **for nought,** comp. the Heb. laws. Ex. xxii. 26. Deut. xxiv. 10, also Neh. v. 2–11. He has taken security when perfectly able to help his brother. **naked,** in Script. means *thinly clad.*[a] (7) **withholden bread,** sinning against the Eastern laws of hospitality, which were held as peculiarly sacred.[b] Comp. Job's denial, xxxi. 16–22. (8) **the mighty man,** *i. e.* Job himself. He grasped the earth. **honourable,** spoken in satire of Job, who so thought himself.

he accuses Job of divers sins

a Is. xx. 2; Jno. xxi. 7; Ja. ii. 15.

b Ge. xviii. 4, 5; xix. 2; xxi. 14, 15; xxviii. 11; Ex. ii. 15.

Food to the hungry. — An Indian, who had not met with his usual success in hunting, wandered down to a plantation, among the back settlements of Virginia, and seeing a planter at his door, asked him for a morsel of bread, for he was very hungry. The planter bid him "Begone, for he would give him none." "Will you give me, then, a cup of your beer?" said the Indian, "No; you shall have none here," replied the planter. "But I am very faint," said the savage, "will you give me only a draught of cold water?" "Get you gone, you Indian dog, you shall have nothing here," said the planter. It happened some time after, that the planter went on a shooting party up into the woods, where, intent upon his game, he missed his company, and lost his way, and night coming on, he wandered through the forest, till he espied an Indian wigwam. He approached the savage's habitation, and asked him to show him the way to a plantation on that side of the country. "It is too late for you to go there this evening, sir," said the Indian, "but if you will accept of my homely fare, you are welcome." He then offered him some venison, and such other refreshments as his store afforded; and, having laid some bear-skins for his bed, he desired that he would repose himself for the night, and he would awake him early in the morning, and conduct him on his way. Accordingly in the morning they set off, and the Indian led him out of the forest, and put him on the road he was to go. But just as they were taking leave, he stepped before the planter, and turning around, stared full in his face, and bade him say "whether he recollected his features." The planter was now struck with horror, when he beheld in

"It is one of the thirty-two charities of the Hindoos 'to have water ready for the traveler to drink.' Hence, on the public roads, in front of the houses of charitable people, may be seen vessels filled with water, for the use of all who pass that way. But respectable men do not drink there; they go inside, and say, '*Conjum taneer*, a little water; and it is given to them." — *Roberts.*

Christ's provision is more than enough for a hungry world, and they who share it out among their

fellows, have their own possession of it increased. There is no surer way to receive the full sweetness and blessing of the gospel, than to carry it to some hungry soul.—*Maclaren.*

his kind protector the Indian whom he had so harshly treated. He confessed that he knew him, and was full of excuses for his brutal behavior; to which the Indian replied, "When you see poor Indians fainting for a cup of cold water, don't say again 'Get you gone, you Indian dog!'" The Indian then wished him well on his journey, and left him. It is not difficult to say which of these had the best claim to the name of Christian.— *Whitecross. Giving a stimulus to spiritual life.* — A venerable colored minister, who had been pleading earnestly for foreign missions, closed his exhortation with these words: "Bredren, I've heard of churches dat's dying of 'spectability, I've heard of a church where de souls of de people is all shriveled up with selfishness, and I've heard of lots of churches, like a great barren desert, with no living waters, no waters of 'freshment running in 'em 'cause dey refuse to do de Lord's will. But, bredren, who ever heard of a church dat was killed 'cause it gave money to foreign missions? Whoever heard of a church that died 'cause it did what de Lord said? Neber! neber! Bredren, ef anybody would tell me of such a church in all dis wide univarse, I'd make a pilgrimage to dat church. I would climb up its ivy-mantled walls, and up to de top of de steeple, and lay dis great black hand on de topmost stone of dat temple, and say, 'Bressed are the dead that die in de Lord.'"— *Advance.*

Earthly arithmetic says, "Give, and want." Heavenly arithmetic says, "give, and grow rich."—*Schauffler.*

he is accused of oppressing the poor

9—11. (9) **widows,** peculiarly helpless and dependent class in the East.[a] Comp. xxix. 13. These are the very things Job has not done. **arms,** supports, helps, that on which one leans. This may refer to Job's supposed violent ways as a magistrate.[b] (10) **snares,** ch. xix. 6. **sudden fear,** on account of such evil things, fearfulness of sudden calamity has taken hold of Job. (11) **canst not see,** or "seest thou not the darkness and the deluge that cover thee?" Do you not comprehend their meaning? **abundance of waters,** a common scriptural figure for affliction.[c]

Consecrated possessions. — There is no truly Christian man who keeps an unconverted pocketbook. God's universal law of unselfish service is as supreme in the domain of material possessions — in the realm of that wealth wh. extends a man's power "to bring things to pass" — as it is in any other department of man's possible efforts. The unvarying law of God wh. attaches an obligation to every opportunity and places a duty over against every right, makes no exception of wealth with its vast powers of service. God has so ordered the social life of our race that no man can make the most of his powers of mind and heart and will, until he employs those powers in the service of his fellow-men. This is an accepted law in the realm of mind and spirit. It is no less binding upon the power wh. material wealth places at a man's disposal. No man has the slightest right to say of his wealth, "It is mine; I may use it selfishly if I will." No man has arrived at a true conception of the responsibility that attaches to the possession of property until his relations through it to his fellow-men fill a larger place in his views of life than does his ability by his wealth to serve his own selfish ends. — *Merrill E. Gates.*

a See Ex. xxii. 22; Is. i. 17.

b Comp. Job's defense of himself in each particular, ch. xxix. 7–17.

c Comp. La. iii. 54.

"This proverbial form of speech is used when a man drags from another that which is his last resource. 'Why do you take this tax from the naked?' 'What! take a cloth from the naked? Is there no shame?' *Roberts.*

"Be favorable unto the poor, which may be little; if thou wilt be aided of God against them that be mighty."—*Sir Thomas Smith.*

and of regarding God as indifferent

12—14. (12) **in the height of heaven,** "Eliphaz claims that under this feeling of His infinite distance from the earth Job said, How doth God know? Men's conduct was not observed by Him; the thick clouds obscured His vision."— *Cam. Bib.* (13) **How,** or what, of human affairs.[d] (14) **circuit,** or vault. Concerned with the higher things of heaven, and practically heedless of man.

Fatherhood of God. — The nature of God, as taught and exemplified by our Saviour, was certainly a large addition to the spiritual truth of the world. While men were yet comparatively rude, the Divine idea presented itself to them under the symbols of the state and the government, and justice and mercy were learned only in the rude ways by which men could comprehend them, through state and government; but in the hands and under the teaching of our Saviour, God is advanced, and He becomes more glorious in the fulness of the representations that are given of Him: not as any less the God of justice, and not as any less the God that administers the affairs of this world, but as seen from the standpoint of the household, and as clothed with the authority and the attributes of fatherhood in distinction from monarchy. This truth has relations that reach far beyond what we suspect. — *H. W. Beecher.*

d "Eliphaz imputes to Job a scepticism like that of the Epicureans. See Ps. x. 5; lxxiii. 11; xciv. 7; Is. xxix. 15; Jer. xxiii. 23; Eze. viii 12; ix. 9."—*Wordsworth.*

The rest of Christ is not refusing the struggle, but conquering in it; not resting from duty, but finding rest in duty.—*New York Observer.*

15—18. (15) **marked,** *R. V.*, "Wilt thou keep?" *etc.*, is it your intention to cast in your lot with wicked men? **old way,** ref. to the sinners before the Flood, who, by disregard for God, filled the earth with violence;[a] Eliphaz asks Job whether he will go the length of accepting the principles and following the conduct of such men. — *Cam. Bib.* (16) **out of time,** by an untimely end. **whose,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Whose foundation was poured out as a stream," Job is "compared to that evil generation which by crimes like his had provoked the wrath of Heaven, and perished in the Flood." (17) **do for them,** *R. V.*, "do for us." The scornful boast of the atheistic. (18) **their houses,** gave them prosperity, but only for a time; the punishment at last came.[b] **counsel,** *etc.*, Elip. uses Job's words (xxi. 16), and applies them to Job himself.[c]

although He was merciful to those who denied Him

[a] Ge. vi. 5, 7, 11, 12, 17.

[b] Ps. lxxiii. 18-20.

[c] "Eliphaz persists in the misconception that Job had denied God's moral government of the world." — *Wordsworth.*

Marking the ways of men (*vss.* 15–17). — I. The way of wickedness an old way, but not the oldest. II. The way of God to sinners has always been the same. III. None are so high as to be out of God's reach. IV. The judgments of God are often sudden. V. Fancied security is often violently and completely overthrown. VI. The presence of God is a trouble to the wicked. From these things learn—(1) That it is a great advantage to mark the way; (2) To observe needful directions.

"God is everywhere! the God who framed mankind to be one mighty family, Himself, our Father, and the world our home." — *Coleridge.*

Passableness of God. There must be some kind of passableness in God, else there could be no genuine character in Him. If He could not be pained by anything, could not suffer any kind of wound, had no violable sympathy, He could be anything but a perfect character. A cast-iron deity could not command our love and reverence. The beauty of God is that He has feelings, and feels appropriately toward everything done; that He feels badness as badness, and goodness as goodness — pained by one, pleased by the other. There must be so much, or such kind of possibility in Him, that He will feel toward everything as it is, and will be diversely affected by diverse things, according to their quality. If wickedness and wrong stirred nothing in Him different from what is stirred by a prayer, if He felt no disaffection toward a thief, which He does not feel toward a martyr, no pleasure in a martyr, faithful unto death, which He does not in his persecutors, He would be a kind of no-character. We can hardly conceive such a being. — *Bushnell. God's view of wealth.* — Dr. Arbuthnot, after commenting on the great riches, and unparalleled iniquities of the the infamous Charties, concludes; "O, indignant reader! think not his life useless to mankind. Providence connived at his execrable designs, to give to after ages a conspicuous proof and example of how small estimation is exorbitant wealth in the sight of God, by His bestowing it on the most unworthy of mortals!" — *Whitecross.*

Open evil at all events does this good; it keeps good on the alert. When there is no likelihood of an enemy's approaching, the garrison slumber at their post.

Lord, with what courage and delight I do each thing,
When thy least breath sustains my wing. — *H. Vaughan.*

19, 20. (19) **The righteous,** those really righteous, wh. you vainly boast yourself to be. **see it,** the proof of God's working in punishment of ungodly. **laugh,**[d] when the vanity of their boasting is shown by their calamities. (20) **Whereas,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Saying, surely they that did rise up against us are cut off, and the remnant of them the fire hath consumed. This is what the innocent are supposed to say.

the righteous rejoice in the justice of God

[d] Pr. xi. 10.

The righteous saving the country. — The one deadly enemy to a country is unrighteousness. The ancient civilizations have perished by this poison. Greece and Rome did not fall till they were permeated with unrighteousness. And if ever Macaulay's vision of "some traveler from New Zealand" who "shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, stand on a broken arch of London bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's," or on Brooklyn bridge to sketch the ruins of New York, it will be because of unrighteousness alone. The righteous save the city by the hope that the leaven of righteousness will permeate the whole people. I have heard that Robert Ingersoll said that if he had made the world he would have made health catching and not disease. But it is true now that in a wide view health is more contagious; that goodness has more power to change a people than evil has. A few earnest, determined, righteous men can leaven the city. — *Peloubet. Wickedness brings punishment.* — The malefactor who is to be crucified carries his cross with his own body; and in like manner wickedness creates fr. itself, to be borne by itself, each several form of chastisement. But some persons are like children, who after seeing in the theatres, malefactors in gold and broidered tunics and purple mantles, crowned and dancing, admire and applaud them as happy beings, until they appear upon the stage, goaded and scourged, and with fire streaming from their gay and finely wrought apparel. — *Plutarch.*

vs. 20. "There can be little doubt that the reference is to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; and as all men are often spoken of as constituting one family or community, so the abandoned inhabitants of these cities are poetically represented as descendants or remnants of the wicked that perished in the flood." — *Good.*

"A foe to God was never true to man." — *Young.*

Job exhorted to that knowledge of God of which the fruit is peace

21—23. (21) **Acquaint,**[a] by thinking better thoughts of God come to better feelings. **be at peace,**[b] *i. e.* "from the obstinate questionings and restless doubts with which he was wearying himself in vain." — *Cox.* **good,** *i. e.* good fortune. (22) **the law,** not the Mosaic law, but, generally, *instruction.* **his mouth,** by humility and penitence drawing near to Him.[c] (23) **return,** as a penitent. **put away,** *R. V.*, "If thou put away unrighteousness far from thy tents;"[d] "assuming that Job's tents were filled with secret spoils." — *Spk. Com.*

Acquaintance with God (*vs.* 21). — I. What this acquaintance with God is. It implies — 1. Knowledge; 2. Access; 3. Converse; 4. Love. II. That it is the duty of man to acquaint himself with God. 1. He is naturally estranged; 2. It is the highest improvement of existence; 3. It is the greatest of mercies; 4. God acquaints Himself with man. III. Motives to enforce this exhortation. 1. Character of God: 2. Effects of this acquaintance; 3. Danger of refusing; 4. Examples of the holy; 5. Promises of the text. IV. Directions to obtain acquaintance with God. 1. Get a sense of estrangement; 2. Get a humble heart; 3. Visit God often; 4. Take Christ with you; 5. Make acquaintance with friends of God; 6. Seek it earnestly, speedily; 7. Beware of all that places distance between you and God. — *Janeway.*

Note on vs. 23. — The monks of St. Catherine, who have a monastery on the top of Mount Sinai, dared not even have a door in their monastery; they are literally built up, and everything that is received from below comes in a basket, let down from the top of the wall by means of a rope and pulley. Both persons and goods come and go in this way. To this kind of building up, Eliphaz seems to refer. And as this was considered a sufficient protection in a general way, yet God's building up alone can be universally safe and sufficient. His providence is the grand fortification; it is not only protection, but a source of support. The inhabitants shall dwell in safety: his bread shall not fail, and his water shall be sure. From such a tabernacle the wicked, the practicers of iniquity, aggression, and wrong, shall be put far away. In such a country, and in such circumstances, what a support must such a promise be, when the words were known to be spoken by Him who cannot lie! To the case of Job these things strongly apply. He lived in Uz, in Idumea; and he himself, as well as his friends, were Edomite Arabs. His oxen and asses had already been carried away by a marauding company of Sabeans, a people that dwelt in Arabia Deserta, on the east of Uz. The Chaldeans, who carried away his camels, were banditti of the same kind. — *A. Clarke.* *Nests in the rock.* — Men who stand on any other foundation than the rock Christ Jesus are like birds who build their nests in trees by the side of rivers. The bird sings in the branches, and the river sings below: but all the while the waters are undermining the soil about the roots, 'til in some unsuspected hour the tree falls with a crash into the stream and then the nest is sunk, the home is gone, and the bird is a wanderer. But birds that hide their young in the clefts of the rocks are undisturbed, and after every winter, coming again, they find their nests awaiting them, and all their life long, brood in the same places, undisturbed by stream or storm. — *H. W. Beecher.*

in that case his comfort and happiness should be great

24—27. (24) *R. V.*, "And lay thou thy treasure in the dust, and the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks." **as dust,** *lit. lay it on the dust, i. e.* regard it as of little value as the dust.[e] **Ophir,** 1 Ki. ix. 28.[f] (25) *R. V.*, "And the Almighty shall be thy treasure, and precious silver unto thee."[g] (26) **lift . . face,** *see* ch. xi. 15; in confidence, no more ashamed by affliction. (27) **hear thee,** when thus thou seekest with clean hands, and a penitent heart.[h]

Delight in the Lord (*vss.* 26, 27). — I. The sublimity of its nature. 1. Saving knowledge of God; 2. Present enjoyment of God; 3. Future anticipation of God. II. The Divinity of its origin. The Almighty is — 1. Suited to our capacities; 2. Adequate to our necessities; 3. Durable as our existence. III. The tendency of its influence. 1. Promotes confidence; 2. Communion; 3. Obedience to God.

Preciousness of the Father's presence. — As little children will frolic and play, and talk to themselves, and sing and be happy, if every time they look up they can see their mother's form or shadow, or hear her voice, so we are, in God's greater household, to have such a consciousness of our Father's presence as shall make us happy, cheerful, contented in our sports and duties. We are dear to God. He will not forget us, nor cease to take care of us. We

a Ecc. ii. 3.

From the old F. *accointer*, from L. *accognitare*, to make known.

b Ps. xxxvii 27; Is. xxvii. 5.

c This is good advice, but it offends, because it assumes that Job is *out of* communion with God.

d Zec. i. 3; 2 Ti. ii. 19.

Consider it to be the greatest of infamy to prefer life to honor, and for the sake of living to lose the object of living. — *Juvenal.*

The higher and more consecrated the individual life, the clearer will probably be its recognition of its dependence upon and guidance by the God who is acknowledged in all its ways. — *The Cumberland Presbyterian.*

O, how compassionate and comforting God is to those who go to him with hearty confidence in their troubles! — *Fénélon.*

e "The meaning is, put away from thee the idol of precious metal with contempt; lay the Ophir under the rubble of the brooks, after it has lost for thee a previous bewitching spell." — *Delitzsch.*

f "The natives of Malacca still call their mines *Ophirs.*"—*Fausset.*

g "Silver of treasures."—*Gesenius.* "Silver of excellencies." — *Ewald.*

h Ps. lxvi. 19, 20; Ecc. v. 4, 5; 1 Jno. v. 14, 15.

are so much more precious than many things which He never forgets, that we stultify ourselves if we refuse to be serene, as they are serene. — *Beecher.*

Delight in God. — When Madame Guyon was imprisoned in the Castle of Vincennes in 1695, she not only sang but wrote songs of praise to her God. "It sometimes seems to me," she said, "as if I were a little bird whom the Lord had placed in a cage, and that I had nothing now to do but to sing. The joy of my heart gave brightness to the objects around me. The stones of my prison looked to my eyes like rubies."

"There is a play upon the words in the original between *betser* (gold), and *betsur* (a stone) Eliphaz insinuates that gold has been Job's chief god." — *Wordsworth.*

28—30. (28) **be established,** "the promise of immediate success on all enterprises has a touch of audacity." **light,** success. (29) **When . . down,** reference is to Job himself. In time of temporary distress Job shall have hope. **humble,**[a] Heb. *him that hath low eyes, i. e.* Job himself. When he is humble God will hear his prayer. (30) *R. V.*, "He shall deliver even him that is not innocent; yea, he shall be delivered through the cleanness of thine hands."[b] These concluding words are conciliatory and humane, and not unworthy of the very aged and very devout speaker. — *Cam. Bib.*

and other good results shall follow

a Ps. cxxxviii. 6; Is. lvii. 15; lxvi. 2; Eze. xxi. 26; Lu. xiv. 11; Ja. iv. 6.

Jesus the sun, the light of the world. — Every tree, plant and flower grows and flourishes by the grace and bounty of the sun. Leaving out of account the eruptions of volcanoes and the ebb and flow of the tides, every mechanical action on the earth's surface, every manifestation of power, organic and inorganic, vital and physical, is produced by the sun. Every fire that burns, and every flame that glows, dispenses light and heat which originally belong to the sun. The sun digs the ore from our mines, he rolls the iron, he rivets the plates, he boils the water, he draws the train. Thunder and lightning are also his transmuted strength. And remember this is not poetry, but rigid mechanical truth. Look at the integrated energies of our world. What are they? They are all generated by a portion of the sun's energy which does not amount to one two-thousand-three-hundred-millionth of the whole." — *Prof. Tyndall.*

b "The irony is strikingly exhibited in Eliphaz unconsciously uttering words wh. exactly answer to what happened at last; he and the other two were delivered by God accepting the intercession of Job for them." — *Fausset.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

1—3. (1) **answered,** "this chapter is inspired by a sublime and inalienable confidence in the equity of the Supreme Judge." — *Cox.* **bitter,** *R. V.*, "rebellious," *i. e.* you still think it so. **my stroke,** lit. *my hand*, the hand of God on me.[c] **than my groaning,** "but in truth the hand of God upon me is heavier than my groaning."[d] (3) **him,** *i. e.* God. Job no longer fears the effect of being admitted to God's presence; but longs now to see Him face to face. **seat,** tribunal, judgment-seat.[e]

Job's answer — he longs to appear before God

c Job xix 21; Ps. xxii. 4.

d "The meaning may more simply be, True my complaint is very bitter, but it is justified by my affliction." — *Spk. Com.*

e Ps. ix. 7, 8.

Job's desire after God, and his doctrine of prayer (*vss.* 3, 4). — I. The desire expressed. It may spring from — 1. Imperfection of evangelical knowledge; 2. Providential obscurity; 3. Darkness and desertion of soul; 4. Spirit of contrition; 5. Desire after communion. II. The resolution formed. These words describe the construction of a well-ordered prayer. 1. Why does God require argument in prayer? 2. Some efficacious arguments.

Prayer found in the heart. — There is good reason to cry "Eureka!" when we find prayer in our heart. Holy Bradford would never cease praying or praising till he found his heart thoroughly engaged in the holy exercise. If it be not in my heart to pray, I must pray till it is. But oh, the delight of pleading with God when the heart casts forth mighty jets of supplication, like a geyser in full action! How mighty is supplication when the whole soul becomes one living, hungering, expecting desire. — *Spurgeon.* It is not the gilded paper and good writing of a petition that prevails with a king, but the moving sense of it. As to that King who discerns the heart, heart sense is the sense of all, and that which He only regards; He listens to hear what that speaks, and takes all as nothing where that is silent. All other excellence in prayer is but the outside and fashion of it; this is the life of it — *Leighton.*

If only a little way ahead
Shine the print of the Master's feet,
There is glory o er all the path I tread,
And the following wondrous sweet! — *Mrs. L. F. Baker.*

4, 5. (4) **order,** lay out in order; fully present. **arguments,**[f] questionings, and explanations. These may be presented before God with all due humility. (5) **he would answer,** Job feels confident that they would not be such words as he had heard from the friends.

he would then frame his plea carefully

f Is. i. 18, xliii. 26; Da. ix. 18, 19.

Sighing for God (*vss.* 3, 4). — I. The speaker. 1. The awakened sinner; 2. The despairing saint; 3. The penitent backslider. II. His state of mind.

A man at his wits end, is not at his faith's end.—*Matthew Henry.*

Four things which are not in thy treasury,
I lay before Thee, Lord, with this petition,
My nothingness, my wants,
My sins, and my contrition.
—*Southey.*

1. A sense of distance; 2. A knowledge of a way of access; 3. An ardent desire of communion in that way; 4. A humble hope of acceptance. III. The sources of his arguments. From—1. The character of God; 2. His promise; 3. His past kindness to ourselves; 4. The work of His Son. — *G. Brooks.*

Man's extremity — God's opportunity.— The church in New Park street was sadly reduced in numbers, and from the position of its meeting house there seemed no prospect before it but ultimate dissolution; but there were a few in its midst who never ceased to pray for a gracious revival. The congregation became smaller and smaller, but they hoped on, hoped ever. Let it never be forgotten that when they were at their worst the Lord remembered them, and gave to them such a tide of prosperity that they have had no mourning or doubting, but more than thirty years of continued rejoicing. — *Spurgeon.*

he has confidence in the great mercy of God

6, 7. (6) *R. V.*, "Would He contend with me in the greatness of His power? Nay, but he would give heed unto me." *i. e.*, would He crush me with His omnipotence. Nay, He would listen to my plea.[a] (7) **There,** the words run literally, *then a righteous man would be pleading with Him, i. e.*, then it would appear that the man who pleads with Him (*i. e.* Job) is righteous."—*Cam. Bib.* **delivered,** acquitted at once, so clear is my case.[b]

The question of fear and the answer of faith (*vs.* 6).—I. The inquiry of fear. 1. A true penitent has a right idea of many of God's attributes; 2. He feels that every attribute of God is against him as a sinner. 3. He feels that the exercise of power against Him would be just. II. The reply of faith. 1. The faithful soul has a right view of God in all respects; 2. He does not tremble at the thought of God's power; he now sees it exercised in his behalf.— *Spurgeon.*

Power with God. — A stern father has been conquered by a tear in the eye of his daughter. An unwilling heart has relented and bestowed an alms at the sight of the disappointment caused by a refusal. Sorrow constrains to pity. When importunity takes the hand of grief, and the two go together to the gate of mercy, it opens of its own accord. Sincerity, earnestness, perseverance, confidence, and expectancy are all potent instruments of power with God. — *Spurgeon.* How often have I seen a little child throw its arms around its father's neck, and win, by kisses and importunities and tears, what had else been refused. Who has not yielded to importunity, even when a dumb animal looked up in our face with suppliant eyes for food? Is God less pitiful than we? — *Guthrie.*

a "Job appeals fr. their rash censure to the justice and omniscience of the Most High."—*Wordsworth.*

b "There is too much self-confidence in these assertions, as Job afterwards owns, ch. xl. 4, xlii. 6."—*Wordsworth.*

Humble we must be, if to heaven we go;
High is the roof there, but the gate is low.
—*Herrick.*

the invisible God observes our ways

8—10. (8) "God, everywhere present, everywhere eludes him; he feels His omnipotent power, but in vain seeks to see His face." **forward,** to the east.[c] **not there,** in such sense that Job could trace and apprehend His dealings. **backward,** to the west. (9) **left hand,** to the north. **work,** "God's glorious *works* are esp. seen in the N. region of the sky by one in the N. hemisphere." — *Fausset.* **hideth himself,**[d] in the unexplored South, "then regarded as uninhabitable through great heat." (10) **the way,** marg. *that is with me; i. e.* which I walk in;[e] all my experience and conduct in this affliction. **as gold,** from the refiner's fire.[f]

The upright man's vindication. —Intro. by refer. to trials of Job. Among the most painful were the suspicions of men. They thought him very sinful because he suffered so much. Job's faith did not fail. He knew the root of the matter was found in him. Earthly friends might blame: he thought of God. Job was sure that God knew His way. So is every Christian. I. What are his reasons for this belief? 1. God had permitted it: "good men's steps ordered;" 2. Although greatly tried, he had Divine comfort in his heart; 3. God knows and sees the whole way; 4. The promises are His, and God's faithfulness not dependent on his faith: "though we believe not," *etc.* II. What are the lessons he draws from all this belief? 1. Not to mind the ruggedness of the road; 2. The end — heaven — must be safely reached. Learn — (1) If you are good, prayerful, *etc.*, and have trials, never fear: God knows. Let your thought be "Even so, Father;" (2) If you are still in the broad road, God knows the way: "Thou God seest me." He is willing to lead you out of the wrong way into the right, and save you.— *Hive.*

He knoweth. —

I know not the way I am going,
But well do I know my guide;
With a childlike trust I give my hand
To the mighty Friend at my side.

c In describing locality, the Hebrews always imagined themselves to be looking eastward, facing the rising sun. Hence the same word is used for "forwards," and "the east;" for "backwards" and "the west;" for "the left hand" and "the north;" for "the right hand" and "the south."

d Job xxxiv. 29; Is. xlv. 15.

e "Though I know not the way that He takes, yet He knows the way that I take."—*Matt. Henry.*

f Ps. xii. 6; Pr. xxvii. 21; Mal. iii. 3; Jer. i. 12.

The only thing that I say to Him
As He takes it is, "Hold it fast;
Suffer me not to lose my way,
But bring me home at last."

As when some helpless wanderer,
Alone in an unknown land,
Tells the guide his destined place of rest,
And leaves all else in his hand—

'Tis home, 'tis home that we wish to reach;
He who guides us may choose the way,
Little we heed the path we tread,
If nearer home each day.

"This is the first hint we have of any suspicion on Job's part that suffering, instead of being the punishment of sin, may be a discipline of righteousness." — *Cox.*

11, 12. (11) **foot hath held,**[a] kept to; followed faithfully. **his way,** the way of His will. **not declined,** turned aside.[b] (12) **gone back,** in wilful neglect, or disobedience. Job asserts sincerity, but not perfection. **esteemed,** *lit. hid, laid up, R. V.,*[c] "treasured up." **necessary food,** Heb. *chók,* a statute, or decree. "That which is appointed for me." Prob. meaning *my own law,*[d] the will of the natural man.

The course of the good man (*vs.* 12).—I. As to its direction, it is straight onward. He does not go back. Some turn aside. Job xviii. 7; Ps. cxxv. 5; Pr. iv. 18. Others cease to walk on. Heb. x. 38. II. As to its rule. The Word of God. *Job's love of the Word of God.* We regard these words—I. As an honor to Job. We know not what sacred records Job possessed. In respect to what he had he esteemed them more than his daily food. 1. His desire after them was more ardent; 2. His delight in them was more exquisite; 3. His refreshment from them was more abiding. II. As a reproach to us. 1. How much fuller a revelation of God's will do we possess? 2. How low is the esteem in which it is held by us? Application: Redeem, then the time which you have lost for the attainment of Divine knowledge. — *C. Simeon.*

God's word. — A poor Italian woman, a fruit-seller, had received the Word of God in her heart, and became persuaded of the truth of it. Seated at her modest stall at the head of a bridge, she made use of every moment in which she was unoccupied in her small traffic, in order to study the sacred volume. "What are you reading there, my good woman?" said a gentleman, one day, as he came up to the stall to purchase some fruit. "It is the Word of God," replied the fruit vendor. "The Word of God! Who told you that?" "He told me so Himself." "Have you ever spoken with Him, then?" The poor woman felt a little embarrassed, more especially as the gentleman insisted on her giving him some proof of what she believed. Unused to discussion, and feeling greatly at a loss for arguments, she at length exclaimed, looking upward, "Can you prove to me sir, that there is a sun up in the sky?" "Prove it," he replied; "Why, the best proof is that it warms me, and that I can see its light." "So it is with me," she replied, joyously; "the proof of this Book's being the Word of God is that it warms and lights my soul." — *Bertram's Hom. Ency. Obedience.* — Nothing can be love to God wh. does not shape itself into obedience. We remember the anecdote of the Roman commander who forbade an engagement with the enemy, and the first transgressor against whose prohibition was his son. He accepted the challenge of the leader of the other host, met, slew, spoiled him, and then, in triumphant feeling, carried the spoils to his father's tents. But the Roman father refused to recognize the instinct which prompted this as deserving the name of love. Disobedience contradicted it and deserved death. — *Robertson.*

Job asserts his innocence

a "The feet of Easterns, not being covered with shoes in early childhood, are very tenacious of their hold."— *Carey.*

b Ps. xliv. 18; cxxv. 5; 1 Th. ii. 10.

c Ps. cxix. 11.

d Job's own natural desires, as contrasted with God's law — *Delitzsch.* Ro vii. 23.

"The carpenter's gimlet makes but a small hole, but it enables him to drive a great nail. May we not here see a representation of those minor departures from the truth which prepare the minds of men for grievous errors, and of those thoughts of sin which open a way for the worst of crimes! Beware, then, of Satan's gimlet." — *Spurgeon.*

There may be "an ocean round our words which overflows and drowns them," the encircling influences of God, turning even our faultiest speech to good account, neutralizing all our falterings and blunderings, and silencing our follies and perversities.— *Horton.*

13, 14. (13) **in one,** omit the inserted word *mind.* Unchangeable. "Or it may mean that God stands aloof, supreme by Himself, and will not admit me or any one else to debate with Him."— *Wordsworth.* **soul desireth,** altogether beyond man's understanding. (14) **thing . . appointed,** he will surely accomplish whatever he has decreed for me. This is the profound enigma to Job; but it is far from being a solitary one: **many such things are with him,** the instance is but one out of many similar ones that happen under God's rule of the world of mankind.

Benevolence of God in creation. — The benevolence of our great Creator is chanted even by things unpleasant to the ear. "The nuptial song of reptiles,"

God's decree is immutable

"In the ocean we see the wisdom of God in providing such a purifying and preserving element in nature, and the goodness

of God in providing such an article as salt for the healthful use of his creatures."—*John Bate.*

says Kirby, "is not, like that of birds, the delight of every heart; but it is rather calculated to disturb and horrify than to still the soul. The hiss of serpents, the croaking of frogs and toads, the moaning of turtles, the bellowing of crocodiles and alligators, form their gamut of discords." Here also, we may read beneficent design. Birds are the companions of man in the lawn and forest, in his solitary walks, amidst his rural labors, and around the home of his domestic enjoyments. They are, therefore, framed beautiful to the eye, and pleasing to the ear; but of the reptile tribes some are his formidable enemies, and none were ever intended to be his associates. They shun cultivation, and inhabit unfrequented marshes or gloomy wilds. Their harsh notes and ungainly or disgusting forms serve therefore to warn him of danger, or to turn his steps to places more fit for his habitation. — *Duncan.*

the thought of God's greatness inspires fear

15—17. (15) **his presence,**[a] manifestly with him, but so little understood. (16) **maketh . . soft,**[b] *R. V.*, "hath made my heart faint." Weak, crushed; unnerves me; soft with fear and dismay. **troubleth,** fills me with terror. (17) **darkness,**[c] of these woes: *see* ch. iii. 10. "Job complains of two things: 1. That he was not cut off (*i. e.* removed from the earth) before the great darkness fell upon his life. 2. That he was not **covered,** *i. e.* sheltered and protected, by the love and care of God when the dark days came."—*Rawlinson.*

God's power over the heart (*vs.* 16). — I. As the God of nature. 1. Literally; 2. Figuratively. II. As the God of providence. 1. By pecuniary losses; 2. Bereavements; 3. Personal afflictions. III. As the God of grace. 1. The means employed to effect it; 2. Its various stages and degrees: sense of fear, of sorrow, of mercy, of love; 3. Its effects. IV. As the God of justice. — *Delta.*

God's mysterious leading. — Mammoth Cave is a labyrinth of winding paths, 200 miles in length, in different stories, one below another. On every side there are dangers and pitfalls, — here the Bottomless Pit, there the Maelstrom, here Scylla, and there Charybdis, there "the black hole," and the Dead Sea. The darkness is absolute; it can almost be felt. No one can find his way without a guide. If left behind it is not safe to move. A friend once got left behind, and was alone in the dark, and the 20 minutes seemed an eternity. Some of our party lingered behind, and then we heard them calling to us that they had lost their way. We could see their lights, and hear their voices, but they did not know their way to us. After we had gone some little distance into its depths, we came to a hall called the Methodist Ch. Here one of the guides mounted a high rock and called our attention to a short sermon he wished to preach. The sermon was "Keep close to your guide." And we soon found that the only safety was in giving careful heed to the guide's sermon. Jesus is our guide. He never leads us into bad places. Sometimes He guides in strange ways, but always the best ways in the end. — *Peloubet.*

a "God's decrees, imposs. to be resisted, and leaving us in the dark as to what may come next, are calculated to fill the mind with holy awe." — *Barnes.*

b Ps. xxii. 14.

c *Ewald, etc.*, propose another rendering of this verse, "I am not reduced to silence by the darkness of my affliction, or by my own countenance. wh. darkness covereth, but it is God who is my adversary, and confounds me."

"Not more certain is it that it is something outside of the thermometer that produces a change in the thermometer, than that it is something outside the soul of man that produces a moral change upon him"—*Drummond.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

the wicked conduct of some who profess to know God

1—4. (1) **not hidden,** *R. V.*, "Why are times not laid up by the Almighty? And why do not they which know Him see his days?"[d] *i. e.* "Why are not stated seasons reserved by the Almighty for the punishment of the wicked?" (2) **Some,** of the wicked. Job gives instances of the wicked doing the worst deeds with seeming impunity. **landmarks,**[e] boundaries, often only large stones, marking off different pastures. **feed thereof,** *R. V.*, "feed them." *i. e.* men appropriate the land and the flocks of others, and do this openly. (3) **for a pledge,** they distrain the ass of the orphan and the ox of the widow for debt. (4) **the poor . . together,** "seems to sum up the general effect of the preceding wrongs. The poor, violently dispossessed of their fields, are forced to hide themselves away from men, among whom they had formerly lived in respect, and huddle together in obscure haunts."—*Cam. Bib.*

The ass in the East (*vs.* 3). — How various and important are the services which this humble creature renders to his master! He serves him for riding, for bearing his burdens, drawing the plough, treading the grain into the flooded soil, turning the millstone; and to all these services the female adds the nutritious beverage of her milk. To the poor man, therefore, a single ass might prove an invaluable treasure. In many cases it was the principal

d "'Days of the Lord invariably mean the occasions on wh. God manifests Himself in righteousness.'"—*Spk. Com.*

Is. ii. 12; xiii. 6; Joel i. 15; Am. v. 18.

e De. xix. 14; xxvii 17; Pr. xxii. 28; xxiii. 10.

means of support to himself and his family; a circumstance which accounts for the energetic language respecting this animal in some passages of Scripture. To "drive away the ass of the fatherless," Job denounces as a deed of atrocity which none but a proud and unfeeling oppressor could be guilty of perpetrating. — *Paxton.*

5—8. wild asses,[a] *onagri*, difficult to break in; living free on the *steppe*, and in the desert; they resemble the poor who are driven from their homes by violence. **rising,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "seeking diligently for me at," hard to find in the wilderness whither they have fled. **yieldeth food,** "the roots and herbage of the desert." (6) **corn,** *R. V.*, "provender."[b] **in the field,** into the tilled land they make incursions. **gather,** *glean.* **of the wicked,** of their oppressors; not allowed to share in the vintage, they can only glean the refuse. (7) **cause,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "They lie all night naked without clothing," *etc.*[c] Some think that these are all references to the Bedouins, robbers of the desert. But the context implies rather that they are the poor who are driven to this condition, without food or clothing, by their oppressors. (8) **embrace,** *etc.*, take refuge under a projecting rock.

Poverty.— This is the first visible cause of the misery. The poor regard London as an Eldorado. It seems as though they must get some employment in the vast, busy city. So they pour into it in shoals. There individually they are lost sight of. The very multitude of them drowns their separate claims and appeals. A huge mass of poverty does not touch personal sympathies. It is a horror of misery, but it does not call for the aid that the distress of one person whose exact circumstances and history are known elicits. It leads to much overcrowding, which evil means more than wretchedness. It is a distinct cause of moral deterioration, a direct source of dark vices. Herded like beasts, is it wonderful that men live like beasts? The decencies of life are impossible. All the finer feelings are crushed by coarse surroundings. The gracious influences of silence and privacy are unknown. People are forced to live and move and have their being in the midst of a noisy mob. The certain result is a break-down of civilization, and a corrupt civilization is worse than barbarism. The savagery of city slums is of a more degraded type than that of African forests.— *Pulp. Com.*

they are wilful as wild asses

a Comp. Job xxx. 5-7. Also this sentence taken fr. Ecclus. xiii. 19. "As the wild ass is the lions' prey, so the rich eat up the poor."

b "Mixed provender, made up of various kinds of grain, as of barley, vetches, *etc.*, prepared for cattle." — *Barnes.*

c "All Bedouins sleep naked at night: when asked why they do this, since at night they are often attacked by enemies, they answer, that it is an old custom. Many perish in cold seasons." — *Wetzstein.*

9—12. (9) **They,** reverting to the violent man and usurer, whose wickedness seems unrecognized (*vs.* 4). **pluck,** *etc.*, seize the very infants to sell, or make slaves of.[d] **a pledge,** everything he has for a pledge, or himself;[e] the next *vs.* indicates that special reference is to the poor man's *garment.* (10) **They cause,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "So that they go about naked without clothing, and being an-hungred they carry the sheaves."[f] (11) **suffer thirst,** while making abundance of oil and wine for their oppressors. (12) **groan,** under this violent and wicked treatment. **city,** *R. V.*, "the populous city," *i. e.* not only in the country but in the large city is this oppression. It is everywhere. **folly,** or wickedness. God seems to take no notice of the wrong.

Gospel blessings do not always enrich.— The church is criticised and by many in these days condemned as worthless because it is not banishing poverty. Perhaps it might be more in the way of duty and more likely to succeed if it sought to banish excessive wealth. Are we of the twentieth Christian century to hold still by the error of Eliphaz and the rest of Job's friends? Are we to imagine that those whom the gospel blesses it must of necessity enrich, so that in their turn they may be tempted to act the Pharisee? Let us be sure God knows how to govern His world. Let us not doubt His justice because many are very poor who have been guilty of no crimes and many very rich who have been distinguished by no virtues. It is our mistake to think that all would be well if no bitter cries were heard in the midnight streets and every one were secured against penury. While the church is partly to blame for the state of things, the salvation of society will not be found in any earthly socialism. On that side lies a slough as deep as the other from which it professes to save. The large Divine justice and humanity which the world needs are those which Christ alone has taught. Christ to whom property was only something to deal with on the way to spiritual good,— humility, holiness, love and faith.— *Exp. Bib.*

they oppress the orphan and the poor with impunity

d "These *vss.* describe the miseries of another class, those who have allowed themselves to be subjected, and become serfs and bondmen attached to the estates of the rich."— *Cam. Bib.*

e Le. xxv. 39, 40.

f "Their masters deny them what according to De. xxv. 4, should not be withheld even from the beasts." — *Delitzsch.*

13—15. (13) **rebel,**[g] *etc.*, a yet more wicked class, whose wrong-doing seems to go unpunished. Such as wilfully ignore God's claims, and oppose

such men love the darkness rather than the light

g Pr. iv. 19; Jno. iii. 19, 20; Ja. iv. 17.

"He that hides a dark soul, and foul thoughts, benighted walks under the mid-day sun; himself is his own dungeon." — *Milton.*

"Truth is as impossible to be soiled by any outward touch as the sunbeam." — *Milton.*

"God loveth the cheerful giver,
Though the gift be poor or small
What doth he think of his children
When they never give at all?"

themselves to His will. (14) **with the light,** *i. e.* at early dawn, while still dark; the time when travelers set out, and the poor man goes to his work. (15) **twilight,** deep gloom of eventide. **disguiseth,** by covering it with a thick veil.

Rebelling against the light. — Off the coast of New Zealand, a captain lost his vessel by steering in the face of the warning light, till he dashed upon the rock immediately beneath the lighthouse. He said that he was asleep; but this did not restore the wreck, nor save him from condemnation. It is a terrible thing for rays of gospel light to guide a man to his doom. Sins of ignorance are truly sins, for every lawgiver takes it for granted that his subjects seek to know his laws. But the deliberate commission of known trespass, and the wilful neglect of known duty, have in them elements of great disloyalty. He who knew his Lord's will and did it not was beaten with many stripes. If a man puts his hand into the fire knowing that it burns, no one will pity him; if he wantonly enters a pesthouse, no one can wonder that he is smitten with disease. When the ice is marked "Dangerous," the warning should be sufficient for any reasonable man, and when the notice is repeated at every corner, and set up in great capital letters, he who ventures on the rotten ice will be not only a fool, but a suicide, should he perish in his rashness. — *Spurgeon.*

the light of day fills the violent with fear

16, 17. (16) **dig through,** this could be done bec. the house walls are made of clay or rubble.[a] **marked,**[b] *etc., R. V.*, "They shut themselves up in the daytime," doing their evil deeds at night. (17) **as the shadow,** because of thier fear of being discovered.[c] **know,** *etc., R. V.*, "For they know the terror of the shadow of death," *i. e.* midnight is familiar to them. Only the day they dread.

Housebreaking in India. — Early one morning I heard that there had been a robbery in the Indian village where I had slept. I went to the house to inquire about it, expecting to see a picked lock or broken shutter; but instead of this, I saw a hole which had been dug through the wall of the house, which strikingly reminded me of the expression in the above passage. I suppose that every Sunday-school child knows that bricks are made of clay, and in this country are burnt with fire; but in very hot countries they are often made of common earth, not clay, and dried by the sun. This is done to save expense. I built a house with bricks of this kind, and lived in it for several years. Such a house does very well when the roof is tight, and no water is allowed to get to the walls, which are easily destroyed if allowed to get wet. The thieves know that very well, and so, when they determine to break into a house of that kind, they just soften part of the wall with water, and then, with any piece of stick, they can dig a hole through large enough to get in, and so quietly as not to disturb the sleepers. — *Journal of a Missionary.*

the wicked shall pass away and be forgotten

18—20. (18) **swift,** *etc., R. V.*, "He is swift upon the face of the waters,"[d] *i. e.* he disappears like a bubble on the stream without sign of judicial sentence. **their portion,** that of his descendants; but this does not hurt him who is peacefully in the grave. **cursed . . he beholdeth not,** his place knows him no more. He feels nothing of it. (19) **snow waters,** wh. are quickly licked up by burning heat; they just fade away.[e] **the grave,** *Sheol,* like a burning sun. (20) **womb,** fig. for his mother. **broken as a tree,** fig. of sudden death; tree struck by lightning, or broken by wind.[f]

Note on vs. 19. — Literally, "ransack or plunder them." The reference is to those dykes, tanks, or reservoirs of water, which, in Eastern countries, are always carefully filled during the periodical exudations of the large rivers as the Nile, Indus, and Ganges, and preserved to fertilize the soil by occasional irrigations through the rest of the year, and without which there can be no harvest. So Isa. xxxvi. 16. These exudations were uniformly ascribed, and with great reason, to heavy periodical rains, and sudden thawings of the immense masses of snow deposited in the colder months on the summits of the loftier mountains, and especially of that vast and winding chain of rocks which, under the name of Caucasus and Imaus, runs, in almost every direction from the eastern verge of Europe, to the southern extremity of India. The two physical evils here adverted to, therefore, are among the severest scourges ever inflicted upon man — the failure of the vintage and of the harvest. — *Good.*

a "In the East, nearly all the houses are made of unburnt brick, and there is little difficulty in making a hole in the wall large enough to admit the human body." — *Barnes.*

b The word used means *to seal,* to *seal up,* hence the idea of shutting up, of making fast.

c Je. ii. 26.

d Some think Job here ironically takes up the language of the friends: but it is better to keep the idea running through Job's speech, that the wicked live and die peacefully, without evidently coming under Divine judgments. Job ix. 24; Ho. x. 7.

e "Melted snow, as contrasted with the living fountain, quickly dries up in the sunburnt sand, not leaving a trace behind." — *Barnes.*

f Pr. x. 7; Ecc. viii. 10; Is. xxvi. 14.

21—23. (21) **He evil,** *etc.*, a review of the most painful feature of the oppressor's life. Or a further description of the violent man of high rank.[a] (22) **draweth,** *etc.*, he draws to his side and makes his helpers. **sure of life,** *lit. when he no longer believed in life; i. e.* despaired of it; though he was on the brink of the grave. (23) *R. V.*, "God giveth them to be in security, and they rest thereon, and his eyes are upon their ways." **him,** the oppressor. **his eyes,** the eyes of God.[b]

Homiletic hints (vss. 21–24). — I. Injury done to a fellow-creature; sin marked by God; that sin aggravated when the injury is done to one already in any way afflicted. II. A sin in the sight of God, not only to injure the afflicted and the destitute, but even to withhold our sympathy and aid. III. A high aggravation of sin when we not only do wrong ourselves, but endeavor by our influence to draw others into the same practice. IV. An aggravated sin to abuse God's goodness and forbearance to the practice of evil. V. Sin, though passed over for the present, yet marked for future visitation. VI. The power and pride of the ungodly but of short continuance. VII. Sinners often cut off when their prosperity has reached its highest pitch, like the tops of the ears of corn. VIII. Men spared to ripen either for mercy or judgment. — *Robinson.*

he omits to do good even to the widow

a "Instead of doing justice to the defenceless, he scoffs at their entreaties; his one object is to raise men of might to power, to surround himself with strong and unscrupulous partisans."—*Spk. Com.*

b Ps. x. 14; Je. xvi. 17, xxxii. 19; Re. ii. 1, 2.

24, 25. (24) **but are gone,** *R. V.*, "They are exalted; yet a little while and they are gone; yea, they are brought low," *etc.*, *i. e.* right from their exalted positions the wicked pass away without suffering any special calamities. **as all other,**[c] like all mankind. **as the tops,** the natural end of the harvest field is to have the ears cut off and gathered in: so the death of the wicked is not premature or violent, but orderly and natural. (25) **liar,** in sense of giving a false description of the life, the lot, and the death of the wicked.

Lying. — As I am writing I take up a notice of a book on Persia, and read the author's views of Persian lying. "With one gift only can they be credited on a truly heroic scale. . . . I allude to their faculty for what a Puritan might call mendacious, but what I prefer to style imaginative utterance. This is inconceivable and enormous, . . . and it divests nine-tenths of a Persian's assurance of the smallest value." "I am convinced that a true son of Iran would sooner lie than tell the truth, and that he feels twinges of desperate remorse when, upon occasions, he has thoughtlessly strayed into veracity."— *Geo. N. Curzon.*

Truth.—

"But if a word could save me, and that word
Were not the Truth: nay, if it did but swerve
A hair's breadth from the truth, I would not say it."

— *Longfellow.*

Job challenges a refutation of his words

c "Gathered up and carried off; tied together like a sheaf, and carried away."—*Wordsworth.*

"The truth cannot be burned, beheaded or crucified. A lie on the throne is a lie still, and truth in a dungeon is truth still; and the lie on the throne is on the way to defeat, and the truth in the dungeon is on the way to victory."— *McKinley*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

1—3. (1) **Bildad,**[d] utters a protest against the spirit of his adversary and in behalf of reverential thought concerning God. (2) **Dominion and fear,** power and terror, or terror inspiring power. **high places,**[e] heaven. He who makes peace in heaven by His power, surely will not permit man to contend with Him. (3) **armies,** those who wait to do His will. Applies to all Div. agencies. God *can* punish the wicked. Fig. is taken from the *stars,* which shine in the light of the sun.[f]

The light. — Light is mysterious in nature, ineffably bright and glorious, everywhere present, swift-winged, undefiled, and undefilable. Light is the source of life, of beauty, of manifested reality, of warmth, comfort, and joy, of health, and of power. It destroys all darkness; it unites in itself purity and clearness. Without it the world would be but a mass of coldness and death. Now, what light does for the natural world, Jesus does for the world of men, for mind, soul, and spirit. He reveals God, and heaven, and truth; He shows the way; He cheers, comforts, vivifies, renews.— *Peloubet. Light of revelation.* — Did you ever see that electrical experiment which consists in passing a flash through letters of gold-leaf in a darkened room, whereupon some name or legend springs out of the darkness in characters of fire? There are songs all written out in my soul, which I could read, if the flash might pass through them, but the fire must come down from heaven.— *Holmes.*

Bildad's Reply

man cannot be justified before God

d God is omnipotent. Man is naturally unclean."—*Spk. Com.*

e Eph. i. 20, 21.

f Is. xl. 26; Je. xxxi. 35; Mat. xxvi. 53.

As the mother takes the newborn babe, that can do nothing but cry, and folds it in her bosom, there to find its food, its warmth, its raiment, its every-

thing; so God takes needy souls that can only cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and wraps them up, not in official arms, but in the bosom of His love, there to find their food, raiment, their all.

Light.—

O diviner Light
Through the cloud that roofs our noon with night,
Through the blotting mist, the blinding showers,
Far from out a sky forever bright
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,
Over all the meadows drowning flowers,
Over all this ruined world of ours,
Break, diviner Light! — *Tennyson.*

all are impure in the sight of God

a Job iv. 17, 18; xv. 14, 16.

b "There is a vast distance between God and His highest and most glorious creatures — how much more between Him and man, the worm of the dust!" — *Delitzsch.*

c Ps. xxii. 6; Is. xli. 14.

"God is a spirit as man is a spirit. There is no difference as to what may be termed the popular characters of spirit, between the spirit of man, and God, considered as a spirit; for God made man in His own image But there is one great and radical difference. Human and angelic spirits are finite; God, whom we worship, is Infinite." — *R. Watson.*

"When a person considers that he is growing little in the sight of the Lord, in reality he is finding the true grace and goodness of the God of mankind." — *D. L. Moody.*

4—6. (4) **can man,** *etc.*, this is only the repetition of truth dwelt on before.[a] Bildad has nothing fresh to say. **clean,** maintain a moral character faultless, and therefore absolutely free from condemnation. (5) *R. V.*, "Behold even the moon hath no brightness." **shineth not,** with absolute perfection in God's sight.[b] (6) **worm,** ch. vii. 5.[c]

Note on vs. 6. — This brief ode has a certain dignity raising it above the level of Bildad's previous utterances. He desires to show that Job has been too bold in his criticism of providence. God has sole dominion and claims universal adoration. Where He dwells in the lofty place of unapproachable glory His presence and rule create peace. He is the Lord of innumerable armies (the stars and their inhabitants perhaps), and His light fills the breadth of interminable space, revealing and illuminating every life. Upon this assertion of the majesty of God is based the idea of His holiness. Before so great and glorious a Being how can man be righteous? — *Watson.*

God's holiness. — We must put God to the front, and then remember that the standard of holiness wh. we are to attain must never be lowered to meet the necessity of man's circumstances, but must remain the same, the absolutely true and perfect standard of God Himself. If God were ever to lower His standard to meet my requirements there could never be satisfaction thro' eternity for us creatures, because we hope to rise higher, to be nearer and nearer to God. If I found that God had lowered His standard of holiness to meet my ideas down here in my imperfection, how could I reverence him as the absolute and all-perfect One? — *H. W. Webb Peploe. The incomparable holiness of God.* — This is a thought that cannot be described in human language. When conscience is aroused, some thrill of the awe of it may open our minds to its sublime meaning. We start from the conception of the absolute sinlessness of God. Not a spot of evil can be found on all He is or does. But holiness is more than negative freedom from sin. It is a real excellence, and on its positive side it expands into infinity. We do not know how far goodness may go. It is like light. No one can conceive how intense this may be; after a short time it becomes too brilliant for our eyes, and we are only blinded when we look at it; but it is conceivable that its intensity may be increased a thousandfold beyond the highest degree that we are capable of perceiving. There may be a brilliancy of light compared with which the glare of a tropical noon is as dull and gloomy as an English November. So there may be a holiness which in its positive character rises above all we can conceive or imagine of goodness into infinite regions of perfection. We can see no limit to the strength and depth of love. Human love may be strong as death. Yet compared to God's love it is but as a feeble, flickering flame lost in the full sunlight. No one can conceive how full and rich God's love is. All the attributes of the Divine holiness expand into infinity. Their greatness is immeasurable and inconceivable. — *Pul. Com.*

Job's answer

he reproves Bildad's want of charity

d "Job intimates that he can go beyond them in the glorification of God. He extends his views to the *future* and *unseen*." — *Wordsworth.*

e Job iv. 17–19; xv. 14–16.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1—4. Job pours out the vials of his sarcasm on Bildad's statements. He knows God's greatness not less than Bildad; the dispute, moreover was not concerning the greatness of God, but concerning His justice. — *Cam. Bib.* (2) **without power,** they had sought to make Job feel his weakness, but they had not helped him in it. (3) **counselled,** since they had assumed to be his teachers. **thing as it is,** *R. V.*, "sound knowledge," what sound knowledge concerning my case have you shown?[d] (4) **To whom . . words,** for whom is your instruction intended? evidently not for me! **spirit,** or breath. Intimating that Bildad had only repeated the sentiments of Eliphaz;[e] not his own, and not inspired by God.

Sympathy. — With the words of inspiriting brotherly love the truly afflicted one has borne the heaviest calamity and remained calm under the severest trials. Pain has lost its power in presence of sympathy. To lay the aching head upon the shoulder of a strong friend gives might to the weak. The truest succor for the wounded is tender sympathy, whether the wounds pierce the flesh or the spirit. But sympathy knows nothing of severity or harsh accusation. It hides offense and soothes the self-accused spirit until it has gained strength to bear the weight of condemnation. But no sign of this is present in the words of Job's friends; no sympathy is expressed by cruel reproof: "How hast thou helped him that is without power?" — *Pul. Com.*

admits the power of God to be unsearchable

5–8. (5) *R. V.*, "They that are deceased tremble beneath the waters and the inhabitants thereof." **Dead,** *etc.*, Job gives a description of God's rule, tracing it through every department of creation, so showing that he is not wanting either in a recognition or reverence of God the Almighty Ruler." — *Delitzsch.* Not *dead things*, but the dead. **under the waters,** Sheol being conceived as under the ocean. Yet God's power reaches them. (6) **Hell,** Ge. xxxvii. 35. **naked,** *i. e.* fully revealed. **destruction,** *R. V.*, "Abaddon."[a] The abode of the dead who subsist but do not live. This dark and dreary abode is naked to the eyes of Jehovah. (7) **north,**[b] northern part of the heavens.[c] (8) **not rent,** without the clouds being rent.[d]

Notes on vs. 6. — God at any time can tell thee what plots are hatching there against thee. Consider Satan as he is God's creature, so God cannot but know him. He that makes the watch cannot but know every pin in it. He formed this crooked serpent, though not the crookedness of this serpent; and though Satan's way in tempting be as wonderful as the way of a serpent upon a rock, yet God traceth him, yea, knows all his thoughts together. "Hell itself is naked before Him," and the destroyer hath no covering. — *Gurnall.* These words may admonish us to labor for humility, to think basely of ourselves, and to be lowly in our own eyes, and so shall we be more acceptable to God. Our Saviour Christ hath ever been lovingly affected towards those that were of a humble mind. When the good centurion had such a base conceit of himself that he thought not himself worthy that Christ should come under his roof, oh! how highly our Saviour commendeth him! The deeper the well is, the sweeter the water; so the more humble any man is in his own conceit, the more acceptable he is to God. And as the sun, the higher he is in the firmament, the shorter shadows he maketh, so virtue and grace, the higher and more eminent it is, the less ostentation it maketh. — *C. Richardson.*

a Re. ix. 11.

b Some think the highest part of the earth is meant. — So *Ewald.* Is xl. 22.

c Ps. xxiv. 1, 2.

d Pr. xxx. 4; Ps. cxxxv. 7; Je. x. 13.

The doorstep to wisdom is a knowledge of our own ignorance. — *Spurgeon.*

Leigh Richmond's dying message to his son: "Tell him, his father learnt his most valuable lessons for the ministry, and his most useful experience, in the poor man's cottage."

he gives instances of that power

9–11. (9) **holdeth back,** *R. V.*, "closeth in,"[e] (Ps. xviii. 11). (10) **day . . end,** *R. V.*, "He hath described a boundary upon the face of the waters, unto the confines of light and darkness."[f] (11) **pillars of heaven,** mountains, poetically are so called.[g] **reproof,** such the poet regards the *tempest* as being.[h]

Ancient cosmical theories. — Although it was left for later times and the perfection of scientific calculation to prove this statement, yet ages prior to Thales the Chaldean, or Ptolemy the Alexandrian, this fact was as above declared by revelation to the patriarch Job. The cosmical theory of ancient astronomers generally was that the earth had a discoid form, and either floated upon the ocean or was upheld by a definite support. A similar belief, with a little variation in the arrangement of the animals, was also entertained by the Buddhists of Japan and China. Traces of the myth exist in the Talmud, and its descendant the Koran. The Scandinavian Sagas repeated and modified still the same idea. Despite these opinions there yet exist indications that when once the actual condition of the Cosmos was revealed it became a scientific fact too wonderful to be wholly obscured or lost sight of; and hence it is that, like the sudden flashes of sunlight during an eclipse, here and there, among the traditions of all the ancient mythologies, glimpses of physical truth shine forth amidst metaphysical absurdities by which they are enclouded. — *W. R. C. God's goodness in nature and grace.* — We learn from what God does in nature, what He is doing in grace. The natural world is a great feast. It contains blessings, enjoyments, powers freely offered to all men beyond their highest dreams. All that has been given to this generation, in their highest civilization, in steam, lights, electricity, knowledge, music, art, literature has been freely offered to all ages; all these but show how many greater and better things God has waiting for us, to wh. all that has yet been received is but as the spray to the ocean, a handful of wheat to a broad harvest field.

e "Like a mighty monarch God withdraws His throne into a deep recess; and a curtain of mysterious darkness hangs before it."—*Wordsworth.* Ex. xx. 21, xxxiii. 20-23; Ps. xcvii. 2.

f "He hath drawn a circular boundary upon the waters with exact proportion of light and darkness."—*Robinson.*

See Ge. i 1-10.

g Na. i. 5; Hab. iii. 10.

h "To the poet's ear the prolonged echoes of the thunder are the voices of the mountains expressing their consternation at the rebuke of God."—*Spk. Com.*

and these are only parts of God's ways

12—14. (12) **divideth,**[a] *R. V.*, "stirreth up," **proud,** *R. V.*, "Rahab," comp. ix. 13. "The power of evil represented by the monsters of the deep, huge saurian forms destroyed in some age of cosmic convulsions." (13) **spirit,** breath, putting forth of His power. **garnished,** *etc.*, with blue, with cloud, with stars. Reference here, however, is to *calm*, succeeding storm. **crooked serpent,** a northern constellation was known as Draco, the dragon.[b] (14) **parts,** *R. V.*, "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways: and how small a whisper do we hear of Him!" *i. e.* if what is seen and heard of God in natural phenomena is but the very infinitesimal part of His power, who is able to understand the full unfolding.

The depths of God's ways (*vs.* 14).— Proofs of the doctrine that God's ways are deep. In — 1 Works of nature; 2. Conduct of providence; 3. Mysteries of religion; 4. Dealings with the church. II. Reasons why so small a part of His ways are revealed. 1. His sovereignty and our dependence; 2. Disproportion between His knowledge and ours; 3. Prejudices which obscure our sight; 4. We walk by faith; 5. Contrast between present and future economy. Application: — (1) Ignorance should inspire reverence; (2) We should be cautious in judging of God's works; (3) We should acquiesce in the mysteries of revelation. — *Henri Chatelaine.*

Silent progress of nature. — God showed Elijah his method of progress by silent, invisible, but mighty forces, not easily measured (1 Kings xix. 11, 12). "It used to be thought that the upheaval of the continents and the rearing of the great mountains was due to cataclysms, and conflagrations, and vast explosions of volcanic force," but geologists now believe that while earthquakes and storms have done their work, the changes in the earth's surface, the lofty mountains, the movements of continents, are wrought largely by forces that work almost imperceptibly. The coral insects have slowly built up great islands and enlarged continents. The air does infinitely more for the world than tornadoes and whirlwinds. Electricity is a vastly greater power than lightning. — *Peloubet.*

a "By His power He scourgeth the sea. By His wisdom He bindeth up its pride."—*Herder.*

"By His power the sea suddenly becomes tempestuous."—*Luther*

b "The Zodiac, with its twelve signs or constellations, was anciently represented as a serpent with its tail in its mouth."—*Robinson.*

"Were I fully able to describe God," says 'Epictetus,' "I should be God myself, or God must cease to be what He is."

The bread of life is love; the salt of life is work; the sweetness of life, poetry, the water of life, faith. — *Anon.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

Job's protestation of sincerity

1—4. "The third speaker, Zophar, fails to come forward and Job, after a pause, resumes his discourse." — *Cam. Bib.* (1) **parable,**[c] poetic discourse, in wh. truth is concisely and figuratively expressed. (2) **As God liveth,** "this oath is the first we hear from Job, and appropriately introduces the most rich and elevated movement of this high strain." — *Cox.* **judgment,** *R. V.*, "right," hath denied me justice. **vexed,** Heb. *made my soul bitter;*[d] sorely saddened me. (3) **All the while,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "(For my life is yet whole in me, and . . . nostrils.)" the *vs.* is parenthetical, intended to emphasize what follows. (3) **spirit of God,** breath of God, as Ge. ii. 7; he is in possession of all his powers. (4) **wickedness,** which a mere feigned utterance of penitence would be. Job would honor God by *integrity.*[f]

Sincerity. — All the inducements that may be brought to urge a person to insincerity are just temptations to sin. They are attacks upon the conscience. To yield to them is a sign of weakness. The important point is that insincerity is always wrong, even when it is in the direction of self-humiliation. There may be a hypocritical penitence as well as a hypocritical pride. We cannot be too deeply humble; when the thought of our sin dawns upon us we cannot grieve over the guilt and shame of it too intensely. But if we do not feel this profound penitence it is nothing but falsehood and empty pretense to make a confession of it with our lips. For the language of penitence to exceed the feeling of it is not a mark of real humility. Any insincerity is injurious to the conscience and wrong in the sight of God, and the fact that it tends to self-depreciation rather than to self-exaltation does not alter its essential character. — *Pul. Com.*

c "Applied in E. to a figurative sententious embodiment of wisdom in poetic form." — *Fausset.*

d Ru. i. 20.

e "In falsely, and contrary to my conscience, admitting myself to have been a secret and guilty transgressor."— *Robinson.*

f Ps. xxv. 21.

"Sincerity of purpose endeavors to see things as they are, and rejoices to find them better than suspicion feared or calumny denounced."— *Drummond.*

asserts that he will hold fast his integrity

5, 6. (5) **justify you,** by admitting that your assumptions are correct. **integrity,** I will not deny my blamelessness.[g] (6) **righteousness,** innocence of the charges you make.

Self-reproach. — Let us consider. — I. The proper office of conscience. It is twofold. 1. To judge of what is past; 2. To direct what is to come. II. Our duty in respect to it. 1. To consult its record; 2. To venerate its testimony; 3. To obey its dictates; 4. To get it enlightened and rectified. Then — (1)

g Ac. xxiv. 16; 1 Jno. iii. 21.

Guard against a guilty conscience; (2) A partial and deluded conscience; (3) An over-confident and unfeeling conscience. — *Bonar.*

Duty of resoluteness. — No one can be neglectful of this without doing great wrong to himself. To stand firm, entrenched by a strong will, guards the soul from the delusions that are rife enough; but that the will may be well supported, it is needful to encourage the spirit of resolute, unyielding determination. Then, with a high sense of the preciousness of conscious integrity, and with a mind adjusted to an attitude of purposed resistance against whatever would threaten to impair that integrity, the faithful one holds fast to his possession, and gains, in addition to his own quiet approval, that of all observers, and above all, that of the great Judge of human conduct. In this Job succeeds, and becomes a pattern to all tempted ones. From the depth of his acute and prolonged suffering arises the cry of holy resolve: "Till I die will I not remove my integrity from me." So that from his inmost heart cometh no reproach upon his days. — *Pul. Com.* — *Conscience.*— Man's conscience, like a ship's compass, should be corrected according to a divine standard. It must be set right by comparison with the true standard of the Sun of Righteousness, rated frequently by the Bible record, and guarded watchfully, lest by careless usage its accuracy be lost, and the soul in mid-ocean be without a guide. Unless you know how much your conscience chronometer slows or quickens in the various latitudes where you sail, you will never be able to learn your bearing accurately or to lay your course correctly.— *Henry Clay Trumbull.*

"Religion cannot pass away. Be not disturbed by infidelity. Religion cannot pass away. The burning of a little straw may hide the stars, but the stars are there and will reappear." —*Thomas Carlyle.*

"Truth and reason are common to every one, and are no more his who spake them first, than his who spake them after." — *Montaigne.*

7—10. (7) **be . . wicked,** "he who opposes my asseveration of innocence must be regarded as actuated by criminal hostility."—*Fausset.* It is not Job but his enemies and gainsayers who are wicked. (8) **hypocrite,** *R. V.*, "godless," Job viii. 13. **God taketh away,**[a] "when God shall unsheath his soul?"— *Cox.* (9) **his cry,**[b] that of the godless one who must be an offense to the holy God. (10) **Will he,** *etc.*, Job implies that he was himself no godless one.

the hope of the hypocrite is vain

Gain and loss for eternity.— The word hypocrite here means properly the ungodly. He loses such things as the following: — I. His soul. II. Heaven. III. Christ. This loss is great — (1) Because of what Christ is in Himself; (2) Of what He has done on the cross; (3) Of His love; (4) Of His sympathy, fellowship, and consolation; (5) Of His reward.— *H. Bonar.*

Neglecting God. — King Henry the Fourth asked the Duke of Alva if he had observed the great eclipse of the sun wh. had lately happened. "No," said the Duke, "I have so much to do on earth, that I have no leisure to look up to heaven." It is sad to think how hearts and time are so taken up with earthly things that they have no leisure to look after Christ and the things that belong to their everlasting peace.— *Thomas Brooks.—Hopelessness of the wicked.*— A dying nobleman exclaimed, "Good God, how have I employed myself! In what delirium has my life been passed! What have I been doing while the sun in its race, and the stars in their courses, have lent their beams, perhaps only to light me to perdition! I have pursued shadows, and entertained myself with dreams. I have been treasuring up dust, and sporting myself with the wind. I might have grazed with the beasts of the field, or sung with the birds of the woods, to much better purpose than any for which I have lived." — *Anon.*

a "One of the strongest passages to prove Job's instinctive and ineradicable faith in the immortality of the living principle."—*Spk. Com.*

b Pr. xxviii. 9; Je. xi. 11; xiv. 12; Eze. viii. 18; Zec. vii. 13; Ja. iv. 3.

"How shocking must thy summons be, O death,
To him who is at ease in his possession!
Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,
Is quite unfurnish'd for that world to come."

11—13. (11) **by,** *R. V.*, "concerning" the hand or handiwork of God. Job proposes to state his belief concerning the Div. dispensation.[c] **that . . conceal,** *i. e.* "God's actual treatment of the wicked man, apart from all limitation." (12) **have seen it,** Job recognizes much of truth in what the friends had said, and some of the same things he repeats. **altogether vain,** in making so unworthy application of your arguments. "Why do ye cherish foolish notions?" — *Delitzsch.* (13) *vss.* 13-23 "contain Job's formal and final statement of the doom and heritage of the wicked man." — *Cox.* **This,** which he is about to detail, Job goes on to say, granting it is all true, you ought not to make of it an argument to criminate me.— *Barnes.*

he proposes to teach the work of God

The speculative difficulties of an inquiring intellect solved by the heart of practical piety (*vss.* 12–28). — I. Every inquiring intellect has difficulties which it is anxious to remove. II. The principle which removes those difficulties can neither be purchased by wealth, nor attained by investigation. III. The heart of practical piety yields a satisfactory solution of all painful intellectual difficulties. 1. This is asserted by one who understands what

c "This prepares us for a modification of statements wh. had been wrung fr. him, when his words flowed over fr. a spirit drunk with the poison of God's arrows. See ch. vi. 4."—*Spk. Com.*

"He who is not a missionary Christian will be a missing Christian

when the great day comes for bestowing the rewards of service." —*A. J. Gordon.*

"I had rather be fully understood by ten than admired by ten thousand."—*J. Edwards.*

"Aim at pricking the heart, not at stroking the skin." —*Jerome.*

wisdom is; 2. It is proved by the nature of the case. Piety, then, is the "wisdom" — the solvent principle. — *Thomas.*

Blessedness of teaching. — Jesus is called "the Teacher," a blessed name. He loved to teach. It is a great blessing to be a teacher. Of few things is it more true that "it is more blessed to give than receive." The teacher learns more accurately, deeply, harmoniously, completely, by his teaching. He has new motives for learning and for obeying the truth. He has the life and inspiration which comes from living contact with other souls. He has the blessing of doing good. If people realized the greatness of the privilege of teaching, then "seven women would lay hold on one man," — the superintendent, — and ask for the opportunity to teach. Men would go to the highways and hedges to obtain a class. They would do as Dr. Payson says that ministers would do, — shout for joy, exclaiming, "I, too, am a teacher!" The ideal school is not one of few teachers and large classes, but of many teachers for the sake of the training of the church. — *Anon.*

he declares the portion of the wicked

14—17. (14) **for the sword,** they are slain in war. **with bread,** or they die in famine. (15) **in death,** *i. e.* of pestilence,[a] *comp.* Jer. xv. 2; xviii. 21. **not weep,** not buried with customary lamentations and funeral rites. For in pestilence these are omitted.[b] (16) **he,** the ungodly man. **as the clay,** in such abundance that it shall be common as clay. In *raiment* the wealth of the ancients greatly consisted.[c] (17) **the just,** bec. in righteousness is stability and continuance. As we say, *in the long run,* goodness pays.

Treasures of raiment (*vs.* 16). — According to D'Herbelot, Bokteri, an illustrious poet of Cufah, in the ninth century, had so many presents made him in the course of his life, that when he died he was found possessed of a hundred complete suits of clothes, two hundred shirts, and five hundred turbans. This anecdote proves how frequently presents of this kind are made to persons of consideration in the Levant; and at the same time furnishes a beautiful illustration of that passage in the Book of Job where the afflicted patriarch describes the treasures of the East, in his time, as consisting of clothes and money: "Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver." — *Paxton.*

a His survivors shall be buried by the pestilence."—*Delitzsch.*

b Ps. lxxviii. 64; Je. xxii. 18.

c Is. xxiii. 18.

"'Moments seize: Heaven's on their wing; a moment we may wish, When worlds want wealth to buy." —*Young.*

the terror of the wicked, though rich

18—21. (18) **as a moth,** Job iv. 19, "the symbol of fragility, weakness and decay." **booth,** hastily put up as a temporary shelter fr. the sun. Always a very fragile construction.[d] (19) **lie down,** *R. V.*, "He lieth down rich;" *i. e.* to sleep. **not be gathered,** "He shall have no funeral solemnities, but shall be carried away by a sudden destruction." — *Davidson.* **openeth . . not,** surprised by murderers, he only awakes to die. (20) **take hold on,** *R. V.*, "overtake him." **as waters,** like a suddenly loosened flood. (21) **east wind,** the most vehement and destructive in Eastern countries. **his place,** where he made sure long to remain.

Terror of the ungodly. — Volney, a French infidel, was on board a vessel during a violent storm at sea, when the ship was in imminent danger of being lost; he threw himself on the deck crying in agony, "O, my God! my God!" "There is a God, then, Monsieur Volney?" said one of the passengers to him. "O, yes," exclaimed the terrified infidel, "there is, there is! God save me." The ship, however, got safely into port. Volney was extremely disconcerted when his confession was publicly related; but excused it by saying he was so frightened by the storm that he did not know what he said, and immediately returned to his atheistical sentiments. — *Selected.*

d Is. i. 8.

"The house of the ungodly man, though a palace, is as brittle and perishable a thing, and can be as easily destroyed, as the fine spinning of a moth, or even the small case wh. it makes fr. remnants of gnawed articles, and drags about with it."—*Delitzsch.*

men shall treat him with scorn

22, 23. (22) **cast,** His thunderbolts of wrath. **his hand,** God's hand. "Before His hand he fleeth hither and thither." (23) **clap their hands,** in abhorrence of his character and joy at his fall. **hiss,** as at an object of execration. In all of these verses Job "meets the accusations of his friends, not by denying the truth of their descriptions but by showing that they are *not true of him.* He draws the lot of the wicked in more terrible hues than theirs, and defies them to trace the resemblance to his own fate. His children had not been destroyed by sword, famine and pestilence, but by the immediate hand of God. His wealth had not been transferred to the righteous. He had not been surprised out of life by flood or whirlwind, and, above all, instead of fleeing from God he had fled to God." — *Cox.*

The east wind is gendered on the dreary steppes of Russia. Arid plains suck out of it all its exhilarating properties. Cold regions lend it cruel barbs of

"God makes of us the best that is possible; if we will not help others to be good, by our example, He will compel us to help them by being a warning."

"There is a dark and also a bright side to every pro-

ice. Even in beautiful, smiling England the east wind comes as a blast from Siberia, and the desolation of the land of exile accompanies it. Spiritual influence is like its origin. Cruel natures can only spread an atmosphere of cruelty and distress about them. No man can influence others excepting through what he possesses. We cannot permanently disguise our characters. As we are in our hearts and homes, so shall we be ultimately in our work and in the outcome of our lives. — *Pul. Com.* — *Retribution.* — If it makes no impression on a man to know that God will visit his iniquities upon him, he cannot blind himself to the fact that nature will. Do we not all know what it is to be punished by nature for disobeying her? We have looked around the wards of a hospital, a prison, or a madhouse, and seen there Nature at work squaring her accounts with sin. And we knew as we looked that if no judge sat on the throne of heaven at all, there was a judgment throne, where an inexorable Nature was crying aloud for justice and carrying out her heavy sentences for violated laws. — *Drummond.*

vidence, as there was to the fiery, cloudy pillar that guided God's people of old in the desert. Nature looks on the dark side and calls it sorrow and sadness; but faith sees the sun dispersing the darkness and calls it by the name of joy." — *H. Bonar.*

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

"Having portrayed the extreme of unwisdom, the life that has not the future nor is built therefor, it is natural that Job should next speak of its contrasts, the true wisdom and foresight, whereby to build human life and character. Man cannot see as God sees, cannot reach absolute truth. But there is a wisdom for him which points to the absolute good as the needle points to the pole." — *Genung.*

the knowledge of natural things, as silver, iron, etc.

1, 2. (1) **a vein,** *R. V.,* "mine." **fine it,** *R. V.,* "which they refine." The precious ores may be discovered, no matter how carefully hidden. Men find them and bring them forth. Heb. word used means, refine by washing.[a] The ancients also refined by smelting. (2) **the earth,** or dust. Iron is smelted from ironstone, *i. e.* the metal is encompassed with earth or dust. **brass,** should be *copper;* brass is a mixed metal. **stone,** *i. e.* stone-ore.

Mining.—The poet has seen, perhaps in Idumæa or in Midian, where mines of copper and gold were wrought by the Egyptians, the various operations here described. Digging or quarrying, driving tunnels horizontally into the hills or sinking shafts in the valleys, letting themselves down by ropes from the edge of a cliff to reach the vein; then, suspended in mid air, hewing at the ore, the miners variously ply their craft. Away in remote gorges of the hills the pits they have dug remain abandoned, forgotten. The long, winding passages they make seem to track to the utmost limit the stones of darkness, stones that are black with the richness of the ore. On the earth's surface men till their fields, but the hidden treasures that lie below are more valuable than the harvest of maize or wheat. — *Exp. Bib.* — *Gold* has no value in heaven. They use it there to pave the streets with — better gold than we have down here — transparent gold. God can make gold as easily as He can make dirt, but He knows that man has set his heart on it, and what He wants, is what your heart is set on. — *Moody.*

a This would apply both to gold and to argentiferous lead.

"What *ought* I to do? It makes great men and women to ask that question and live up to the answer." — *J. L. Kilbon.*

"The knowledge of God without that of our wretchedness creates pride. The knowledge of our wretchedness without that of God creates despair. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the middle way, because in Him we find both God and our wretchedness." — *Pascal.*

the darkness, the flood, the earth and the stones of it

3–6. (3) **He,** *R. V.,* "*Man,*" the miner, whose work is now vividly described. **end to darkness,** by opening a shaft, or carrying his lantern into the bowels of the earth. **all perfection,** *R. V.,* "to the furthest bound the stones of thick darkness and of, *etc.*,"[b] for signs of valuable metal. **shadow of death,** in a darkness like death. (4) **flood,**[c] *etc., R. V.,* "He breaketh open a shaft away from where men sojourn: they are forgotten of the foot that passeth by: they hang afar from men, they swing to and fro." The first clause describes how the miners sink their shaft deep down below and away from the abode of men above. There they are forgotten by the foot of those overhead, who walk oblivious of them. And the last clause describes how they "hang and swing," *i, e.* swing suspended in cages or from ropes as they pursue their unnatural operations.— *Cam. Bib.* (5) **bread,** thro' man's industrious agriculture. **fire,** "blasting of rocks was practiced on a large scale by the ancients." — *Spk. Com.* (6) **sapphires,** Ex. xxiv. 10.[d] **dust of gold,** gold ore.

The place of sapphires (*vs.* 6).— The stones which form and bind together the mounds and hills are taken from the very places where sapphires are found. For Jameson informs us that "the geognostic situation of the

b "The stones hidden in the deepest darkness, far beneath the surface of the earth." — *Delitzsch.*

c "Man cutteth a channel or pierceth a mine road." — *Wordsworth.*

d Is. liv. 11; Re. xxi. 19.

It was customary for ancient miner to hang suspende at their work. In

some parts of England we walk little thinking of the toilers beneath our feet.

sapphire is in alluvial soil, in the vicinity of rocks, belonging to the secondary floetz trap formation and imbedded in gneiss." In reference to its geographic situation, the same writer says it is found particularly beautiful in Asia, in the Capelan mountains, in Persia, and the Island of Ceylon. Dr. Davey states that "the sapphire occurs in considerable abundance in the granitic alluvion of Matura and Saffragam (in Ceylon)." Thus, the stones of which the mound is formed are the true geognostic situation where the sapphire is found; and there can be no doubt that the workmen, in hewing and detaching the masses from the rocks, and in joining them to the mountains, did, by this secondary kind of mining, often find the precious sapphire. *And it hath dust of gold.*— The same mineralogist states, "that in Asia the sand of many rivers affords gold;" and it is washed down in great quantities from the mountains on the west coast of Sumatra, where it is afterwards found in the beds of rivers. — *Roberts.*

"Live while you do live: to some purpose; fearlessly; follow your convictions without regard to the criticism of the world." — *Henry Sherwood.*

the hidden ways of man in the world

7—11. (7) **a path,** that of the miner. His is a path wh. none but man could make.[a] **fowl,** bird of prey. **vulture,** hawk or kite. This class of birds is remarkable for length and keenness of sight. (8) **lion's whelps,** *R. V.*, "the proud beasts," who raven in the most dangerous places for prey. **passed by it,** as inaccessible to him. (9) **rock,** flint, or quartz; hard stone.[b] **overturneth,** by blasting. (10) **rivers,** *R. V.*, "channels," for draining the mine. **eye . . thing,** when the water is drained off. (11) **floods from overflowing,** *R. V.*, "streams that they trickle not."

The triumph of energy. — The miner knows his secret path and climbs it, because he is determined to search out the precious metals, no matter where he may have to go in pursuit of them. Here is manly vigor. Now, it is just this vigor joined to intelligence that gives man success in the battle of life. No one deserves to be prosperous without it. It is only an artificial state of society that allows the idle to be pampered in luxury. The healthy rule is that of St. Paul, "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. iii. 10). In the miner's path we have an evidence of what effort can do. This same effort is needed in every branch of life. Industry is healthy and fruitful, and the old-fashioned duty can never be lessened by any change of circumstances. If men shrink from work they proclaim that their better nature is conquered in them. It will be a bad day for England when her old spirit of enterprise is given up. In the Christian life there is a call for the miner's daring and energy. Here, too, heroic enterprises are undertaken by the nobler spirits. There are paths in spiritual experience that no one with a merely animal nature can ever see; but the brave sons of God walk thereon and find rare treasures by the way. — *Pul. Com.* — *Result of industry.* — One of Napoleon's favorite maxims was "The truest wisdom is a resolute determination." He threw his whole force of body and mind direct upon his work. Imbecile rulers and the nations they governed went down before him in succession. He was told that the Alps stood in the way of his armies, — "There shall be no Alps," he said, and the road across the Simplon was constructed, thro' a district formerly almost inaccessible. "Impossible," said he, "is a word only to be found in the dictionary of fools." — *Smiles.*

[a] "The ingenuity of man is thus contrasted with the instinctive sagacity of animals, the far-reaching and keen vision of the eagle and hawk, the strength and force of the lion." —*Spk. Com.*

[b] Pliny describes the use of iron hammers and wedges in splitting and breaking through the rocks in the search of gold: and also the process of blasting.

"Life is—to wake, not sleep;
Rise, and not rest; but press
From earth's level, where blindly creep
Things perfected, more or less,
To heaven's height, far and steep."
— *Browning.*

the place and the price of wisdom

12, 13. (12) **wisdom,** true wisdom; knowledge of the great principles and plans of God. Practical skill is recognized, but man cannot reach to sound the Div. mysteries. (13) **land of the living,** or among men.[c]

The search for wisdom. — It is like the treasures of deep mines, and therefore it is not seen by the superficial. God does not cast His pearls before swine. There are blessings that all men — even the most heedless — have a share in. But the greatest blessings are not stumbled on unawares. These are for all who will seek them; but they must be sought. Hidden treasures are sometimes dug up from beneath ancient ruins — vessels of gold and silver that have lain for ages buried under heaps of rubbish. So Divine treasures have been hidden beneath piles of earthly and comparatively worthless things. Sin and worldliness have buried them. They need to be rediscovered. Thus man has both to recover lost spiritual riches and to mine in virgin soil for new wisdom.— *Pul. Com.*—*Knowledge of God.*— No one can understand a machine unless he knows the maker's object. No one can understand a building unless he knows the builder's purpose, — whether it was intended for cathedral or a station, a factory or a house. Much more is this true of spiritual things No one can understand life and its meaning without a knowledge of God. — *Peloubet.*

[c] "Job implies both its invaluable worth and the impossibility of buying it at any price." — *Fausset.*

"It is reported of one of the kings of India, he wore a ruby of that bigness and splendor that he might be seen by it in the dark; but wisdom casts a more sparkling color than the ruby; it makes us shine as angels."— *J. Watson.*

14—16. (14) **depth,** or abyss (Gen. xlix. 25). "Three great regions are mentioned, none of which is the 'place' of Wisdom, the land of the living, the deep, and the sea. The 'deep' is the primeval abyss, out of which perhaps the sea is fed,[a] lying under the earth, an almost mythological conception." — *Cam. Bib.* (15) **gold,** *marg.* fine gold. The ordinary word for gold is not used here, but one from a Heb. root, meaning "to shut up with care,"[b] as a precious thing. "Men cannot buy wisdom." **weighed,** "the precious metals were weighed out before coining was known." (16) **gold of Ophir,**[c] ch. xxii. 24. **onyx,** Ge. ii. 12; Ex. xxviii. 20.[d] **sapphire,** Ex. xxiv. 10.

Providence of God in creation. — I. The remarkable provision of Divine goodness and wisdom in making the earth itself a storehouse of substance that should contribute so largely to the comfort, gratification, and improvement of the human race. II. Man's art and industry necessary to the acquisition and use of those materials which God has stored up in the earth for his benefit. III. Remarkable adaptation between the productions and contents of the earth, and the faculties given to man for their discovery and use. IV. Man's industry in searching for the precious metals an example of the earnestness and perseverance with which he should seek for the better and more enduring riches. — *Robinson.*

The value of wisdom. — How impossible it is to estimate the value of wisdom. It has no material equivalent. Gold can be balanced by gold, so that the one scale shall be as valuable as the other; estates may be brought into equipoise by gold; so that men shall be as willing to accept the one as the other, for the one is equal to the other in value; but put wisdom in the scale and try to find a counter-weight. How haughty is Wisdom! To gold and silver, and jewel and crystal, and onyx and sapphire, she says, Go back: ye may not touch this holy ground! They have gone far, but she will not allow them in her presence; they have been in palaces, but they shall not go in the sanctuaries: all these precious, fair-faced, sweet-voiced things have gone almost wherever they pleased to go, and they have been welcomed by standing men; but when they have gone up to the angel Wisdom, that angel has said — Back, rude vulgarity! She has no price in the market-place. — *Peop. Bib.* — *Knowledge and wisdom.* — If there is anything that may well occasion surprise, it is the thoughtlessness of dying men — their thoughtlessness with regard to their spiritual and eternal interests. They traverse seas; they explore continents; they pry into the secrets of the wilderness; they decipher old inscriptions, and scrutinize Egyptian hieroglyphs; they study the fossil autographs of dead ages on the rocky pages of the earth, till the globe becomes their library, and cataracts and currents cut the leaves of long-sealed volumes that they may be read; they question the microscope for the minute wonders of creative skill in the structure of a sand-grain, an animalcule, or a snow-flake; they dissolve air and water into their original elements, and unfold the laws that govern the combination of these elements; they track the lightning to its lair, tame it, and teach it, charged with messages, to leap along their iron wires; they penetrate the invisible realm of mind, search out its constitution, the order of its faculties, the methods of their operation, and the laws by which they are governed; they give wing to fancy, and revel in the strange, weird domain of imaginary existence, surrendering their being almost to the spell of fiction and romance; and yet — while the mind is thus roused to intense activity, while the waves of the sea of human thought roll on, and cover almost everything tangible or conceivable — the one great theme which towers above others, like the Alps above their valleys, is left, like a mountain island of the ocean, neglected and unexplored. Men are intent to study the world around, but not the world within them. They read the doom of nations, and forget their own. They decipher old crumbling monuments of stone, but translate not the inscriptions on the living tablets of the heart. They linger spellbound over the poet's page; they sit at the feet of the philosopher; they listen to the sagacity of statesmen; they are kindled to enthusiasm by the creations of the artist, or by the magnificent span of cathedral domes; and yet when a "greater than the temple," a "greater than Solomon," He that "spake as never man spake," opens His lips to reveal the secrets of the life eternal, they turn away with stolid indifference or cold contempt.— *Gillett.*

17—19. (17) **crystal,**[e] *R. V.*, "glass," the word occurs nowhere else in the Bible. **jewels,** *lit.* "vessels." (18) **coral,**[f] comp. Eze. xxvii. 16. Coral was

wisdom not to be purchased

a Ge. vii. 11; De. viii. 7; Ps. xxxvi. 6.

b Heb. *segor*, shut up.
Comp. 1 Ki. vi. 20; marg., vii. 49; x. 21; 2 Chr. iv. 20; ix. 20.

c Heb. *cethem*, what is hidden.

d Heb. *shoham*.

"Experience gathered from books, though often valuable, is but of the nature of *learning*; whereas the experience gained from actual life is of the nature of *wisdom*; and a small store of the latter is worth vastly more than any stock of the former."— *Smiles.*

"Knowledge is the treasure of the mind, but discretion is the key to it, without which it is useless."

"There are no such safeguards as virtue and wisdom. The one secures the soul, the other the estate and body."

Fortune first fools the man she means to foil.

"Head-knowledge is our own, and can polish only the outside, heart-knowledge is the spirit's work, and makes all glorious within." —*Adam.*

"Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man."—*Bacon.*

"Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous." — *Confucius.*

wisdom more valuable than gold or gems

e "Heb *zecucith*, fr. *zacac*, to be pure, transparent.

f LXX. and *Jerome*, trans., ex-

alted or valuable things. The Rabbins refer it to the red coral.

obtained in the Red Sea. **pearls,** *lit.* what is frozen, ice; so prob. crystals are meant. (19) **topaz,**[a] Ex. xxviii. 17. Job refuses to admit the common idea that if a man only has wealth he can lay superior claim to wisdom. Though he be willing to give all that he has for it, wisdom is not thus to be obtained.

The supreme value and excellence of true wisdom. — The superiority of Divine wisdom or true piety over all earthly treasures evidenced — I. In its intrinsic excellence. II. In its ability to afford true and solid happiness. III. In its endless durability. — *Robinson.*

Wise men.— Homer was called all-wise, and said to know all things human. Aristotle, for his soaring wisdom, was called an eagle fallen from the clouds. Yet the greatest of Grecian sages professed they wanted other lights, and took it for granted the time would come when God would impart a further revelation of His will to mankind.

> "The first and wisest of them all (Socrates) profess'd
> To know this only, that he nothing knew;
> The next (Plato) to fabling fell and smooth conceits;
> A third sort (Pyrrho) doubted all things, though plain sense;
> Others (Aristotle) in virtue placed felicity,
> But virtue joined with riches and long life;
> In corporal pleasures he (Epicurus), and careless ease;
> The Stoic (Epictetus) last, in philosophic pride,
> By him called virtue; and his virtuous man,
> Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
> Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
> As fearing God, nor man." — *Paradise Regained, Book iv.*

[a] According to Pliny there was an island named *Topazos*, on the western coast of the Red Sea, and another called *Cytis*, at the entrance of the sea, both noted for topazes.

"The ancient Egyp. excelled in the manufacture of glass. They had the secret of introducing gold between layers of glass; and in their bottles a gold band alternates in a series of blue, green, and other colors." — *Wordsworth.*

Jerome is said to have known all that was knowable, yet was one of the most devoted students of revelation. The greatest philosophers in our own or any other country, as Newton, Faraday, and Brewster, have loved to sit with the humility of a child at the feet of Jesus, to learn wisdom out of the scriptures of truth. — *Hom. Com. Advantage of knowledge.* — In England a man of small fortune may cast his regards around him, and say, with truth and exultation, "I am lodged in a house that affords me conveniences and comforts which even a king could not command some centuries ago. There are ships crossing the seas in every direction, to bring me what is useful to me from all parts of the earth. In China men are gathering the tea-leaf for me; in America they are planting cotton for me; in the West India Islands they are preparing my sugar and coffee; in Italy they are feeding silkworms for me: in Saxony they are shearing the sheep to make me clothing; at home powerful steam-engines are spinning and weaving for me, and making cutlery for me, and pumping the mines, that the materials useful to me may be procured. My patrimony was small, yet I have post-coaches running day and night, on all the roads, to carry my correspondence; I have roads, and canals, and bridges, to bear the coal for my winter fire; nay, I have protecting fleets and armies around my happy country, to secure my enjoyments and repose. Then I have editors and printers, who daily send me an account of what is going on throughout the world, among all these people who serve me. And in a corner of my house I have books, the miracle of all my possessions, for they transport me instantly, not only to all places, but to all times. By my books I can conjure up before me, to vivid existence, all the great and good men of antiquity; and, for my individual satisfaction, I can make them act over again the most renowned of their exploits; the orators declaim for me; the historians recite; the poets sing; in a word, from the equator to the pole, and from the beginning of time until now, by my books, I can be where I please." — *Gillett.*

"Knowledge is the knowing that we cannot know."— *Emerson.*

"The first step to a self-knowledge is self-distrust. Nor can we attain to any kind of knowledge except by a like process." — *Hare.*

"Prices mount high in times of scarcity. Famine may make corn more precious than rubies. When the world had fallen far from God down into the night of sin and ignorance, true wisdom became scarce."—*Pul. Com.*

whence cometh wisdom?

20—22. (20) **Whence,** *etc.*, repeating the question (*vs.* 12), which nature cannot solve. (21) **hid,** because it is immaterial. **fowls,** whose keenness of vision is remarkable; "to them the eastern wind ascribed a supreme gift of divination, so that what is hidden from them is hidden indeed." (22) **Destruction,** realm of Abaddon. "Death, which unlocks so many secrets, and Abaddon, the unfathomed under-world into which men sink at death, and in which so much becomes plain to them, can only repeat the dubious 'rumor' of it which they have heard." — *Cox.*

"Ignorance is the curse of God; knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven." — *Shakespeare.*

How to be wise. — How, then, shall we become more wise? By becoming more humble. How shall we grow in knowledge? By growing in grace.

How shall we become mighty men, giants, and princes? By becoming little children, trustful because helpless, confiding because self-deficient, upward-looking because made in the likeness of God. Christ will have no proud men about him. The proud He sends empty away, because they are rich in their own esteem and their hands are buried in plentifulness; but those who come humbly, broken-heartedly, contritely, without self-help or self-hope, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," He will send away with all heaven at their command for all possible exigencies. —*Peop. Bib.* — *The Holy Spirit a guide to learning.* — The Bible is a burglar-proof against unsanctified learning that seeks to penetrate unto its mysteries. The violent have attempted to take it by force, but the Holy Spirit alone has the key to this treasure-house, and He only knows the combination of prayer and faith by which it can be unlocked and all the treasures of wisdom and righteousness therein stored, to be found out and appropriated. God forbid that I should despise any kind of learning. On the contrary, I put my strong emphasis on the importance of it. Modifying Augustine's phrase, let us remember that the sufficiency of learning is to discover that learning is insufficient. Your responsibility is that you make the Spirit of God your private tutor and then you cannot be led very far astray.— *A. J. Gordon.*

"He who binds his soul to knowledge, steals the key of heaven." — *Willis.*

Comp. Eccl x. 20. "I would rather confess my ignorance, than falsely profess knowledge. It is no shame not to know all things; but it is a just shame to overreach in anything."— *Bp. Hall.*

23—25. (23) **God,** set out distinctly as the only centre of true wisdom.[a] "Wisdom can nowhere be found either by man or by any creatures, only by the Creator. God knoweth the place of it and is in possession of it, for He is the maker and upholder of the universe with all its agencies. And He has assigned to man as his wisdom the fear of the Lord." — *Cam. Bib.* (24) **looketh,** *etc.*, seeing and knowing everything. (25) **weight . . winds,** affixing quantity to the thing that seemed to have no weight. **weigheth,**[b] *R. V.*, "meteth out."

God knows the source of wisdom

a "Wisdom belongs to His omniscience, and is declared by His omnipotence." *Spk. Com.*

b Is. xl. 15.

God's wisdom a ground of faith. — If God has true wisdom, we can be content to leave with Him those issues of life which we cannot understand ourselves. To us many of the processes of nature are unintelligible. Not only cannot we understand the "how," but we are also perplexed about the "why." Apparently aimless and seemingly hurtful processes fill nature with dark mysteries. But these mysteries are all open to God. Of His works we can say, "In wisdom hast Thou made them all." The world was not created by a blundering Demiurge, but by an all-wise God. Our own lives are enigmas to us. We cannot understand why our plans are broken, our hopes scattered, our joys turned to bitterness. It all looks wild, chaotic, aimless, sometimes even cruel. We can but rest in the thought that God is higher and wiser than we are. — *Pul. Com.* "Knowledge, in truth, is the great sun in the firmament. Life and power are scattered with all its beams." — *Daniel Webster.*

"In order to love mankind, expect but little from them; in order to view their faults without bitterness we must accustom ourselves to pardon, and to perceive that indulgence is a justice which frail humanity has a right to demand from wisdom. Now, nothing tends more to dispose us to indulgence, to close our hearts against hatred, to open them to the principles of a humane and soft morality, than a profound knowledge of the human heart. Accordingly, the wisest men have always been the most indulgent."

The angel of wisdom. —

Be thou our queen, O lofty angel fair!
Worthy the sole and unobstructed rule
Of every sphere and every spirit race;
Heart-honored — heaven-ordained — predestined heir
Of the bright line of ages numberless!
Since God, creating atoms, first began
And ended with the universal world,
Thou hast beheld no equal, nay, no like.
Thee only we acknowledge, and for this
Hold our arrival blessed. Empress, hail! —*Bailey.*

26—28. (26) **degree,** controlling the falling of the rain. **way,** or course. Such mastery of the great natural forces assured God's sole claim to have the secret of wisdom.[c] (27) **prepared it,** *R. V.*, "established it." He caused the fullness of the Divine plan to come forth and be developed in the world. **searched,** *etc.*, "alludes to the depths of the ideal contents of this wisdom." (28) **fear,** *etc.*, comp. Pr. i. 7. **Lord,** *Adonai.* **depart from evil,** *see* Job's own character, ch. i. 1.

the fear of the Lord is wisdom

c "Job is looking back to the time of creation; and he declares that though the winds, and clouds and waters may seem to be agitated and move capricl-

Wisdom and the fear of God. — Some are thought the wisest who have the least of this principle of true wisdom. We shall show — I. What it is to fear God. This is not — 1. The fear of despondency; 2. Nor the fear of terror; 3. Nor the fear of reverence; 4. Nor the fear of caution; but — (1) A

ously, and at random, yet every movement of theirs is balanced in the scales of omnipotence."— *Wordsworth.*

Adonai is the Maker and Governor of the whole creation.

"No man of the human race has been in circumstances to become absolutely wise, but every one of the human family possessed of sufficient wisdom to be responsible can be good. Jesus did not say, 'Blessed are the wise in head,' but, 'The pure in heart shall see God.'"— *Driver.*

fear which arises from a deep and true sense of the being of God; and (2) From a knowledge and consideration of the attributes of God. We shall — II. Show how it appears that this fear of God is the true wisdom. 1. It is a true principle by which to govern our reason; 2. And by which to order our administration of justice; and by which to regulate the exercise of the duties and relations of life; 4. And to promote sincerity, uprightness, integrity, and honesty; 5. And as a principle of self-government; 6. And to save from overhaste in speech and action; 7. It preserves the mind calm in all states and conditions. — *M. Hale.*

True wisdom — fear of the Lord. — Mr. Hervey, in a letter to a friend, gives the following account of his views and feelings, when brought to the gates of death by a severe illness: — "Were I," says he, "to enjoy Hezekiah's grant, and have fifteen years added to my life, I would be much more frequent in my applications to a throne of grace. We sustain a mighty loss by reading so much, and praying so little. Were I to renew my studies, I would take my leave of these accomplished trifles — the historians, the orators, the poets of antiquity — and devote my attention to the Scriptures of truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my Divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This wisdom, whose fruits are peace in life, consolation in death, and everlasting salvation after death — this I would trace, this I would seek, this I would explore through the spacious and delightful fields of the Old and New Testaments."

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

Job sighs for the joys, etc., of the past

1—3. (1) **continued,** having paused to see if the friends had any reply. It was Zophar's turn to speak, but he was silenced. This chapter contains "a sorrowful retrospect of his past happiness." **parable,**[a] term is here used generally for a figurative speech, poss. with intimation that deep mysteries would be in it. (2) **months past,** or *months of yore.* **preserved me,** *R. V.*, "watched over me," this was the secret of his former happiness. Now God has deserted him. Job could see God had preserved him *from* trouble, he could not feel sure that God was preserving him *in* trouble. (3) **candle;** lamp,[b] ch. xviii. 6. **light . . darkness,** referring fig. of lamp to his former circumstances.[c]

Spiritual declension considered (*vs.* 2).—I. The sources of it. 1. A remissness in secret duties; 2. An indulgence in some secret sin; 3. An undue and unnecessary entanglement of ourselves in the affairs of this life. II. The evidence of it. 1. In the spirituality of our minds; 2. In the tenderness of our conscience; 3. In the vigor of our exertion of God. III. The remedies of it. 1. By a renewed and more solemn repentance; 2. By getting a sense of redeeming love upon the soul; 3. By keeping eternity in view. Address those — (1) Who are conscious that they have occasion for this heart-rending complaint; (2) Those who are making progress in the Divine life. — *C. Simeon.*

Reflection grows with years. — It has been remarked upon as a misfortune that so many of the best things in life seem to be lavished upon an age that is carelessly negligent of them. Strength, energy, health, happiness, in abundance are enjoyed in youth without a thought. When these treasures are more scarce they are carefully economized and highly valued. In later years the habit of looking backward grows upon us, and reflection takes the place of heedless activity. Thus we consider and appreciate with regret in the later years of life what we disregarded in the earlier times of possession. — *Pul. Com.*

The past. —

Thoughts, like a loud and sudden rush of wings,
Regrets and recollections of things past,
With hints and prophecies of things to be,
And inspirations, which, could they be things,
And stay with us, and we could hold them fast,
Were our good angels, — these I owe to Thee.

— *Longfellow*

The echoes of the past. —

O there are voices of the past,
Links of a broken chain,

[a] Comp. Nu. xxiii 7.

"The Easterns, when they sleep, have lamps hanging near their beds, and often over their heads."— *Kitto.*

[b] Ps. xviii. 28; xxvii. 1.

[c] "Of all his losses that which touches him most deeply is the loss of that habitual and intimate communion with God which had been his chief good."— *Cox*

"Happy who walks with Him! whom what he finds,
Of flavor or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God
His presence who made all so fair, perceiv'd,
Makes all still fairer. As with Him no scene

Wings that can bear me back to times
Which cannot come again,
Yet God forbid that I should lose
The echoes that remain! — *A. A. Proctor.*

Past days. —

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean.
Tears from the depths of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking on the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail
That brings our friends up from the under-world,
Sad as the last which reddens over me.
That sinks with all we love below the verge,
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more. — *Tennyson.*

Is dreary, so with Him all seasons please."

"That *summum bonum* which is only able to make thee happy, as well in thy death as in thy life: I mean the true knowledge and worship of the Creator and Redeemer, without which all other things are vain and miserable." — *Ld. Burleigh.*

"The rarest attainment is to grow old happily and gracefully." — *L. M. Child.*

4—7. (4) **youth,** *R. V.*, "in the ripeness of my days," that is in his mature manhood, then most of all he had felt the Divine presence and favor.[a] **secret of God,**[b] or intimate friendship: the counsel, or converse of God. Ps. xxv. 14; Pr. iii. 22. (5) **with me,** in granting me prosperities: when I could apprehend His presence. **my children,** their sudden death was the depth of Job's trouble, and the midnight of his darkness. (6) **butter,** Ge. xviii. 8. "Fig. for abundance of the simple luxuries of pastoral life." **rock . . oil,** De. xxiii. 13. "Olives flourish in stony soils." (7) **to the gate,** as prince and judge. **street,** broad place, space within the city gate. Ru. iv. 1. "Here justice was administered and even the prophets delivered their testimony to the people." — *Oehler.*

Job describes the occasions of past joy

Job's past happiness. — It embraced — I. His enjoyment of the Divine favor and fellowship. Observe — 1. No blessing so great, or enjoyment so sweet, as that of communion with God and the friendship of our Maker; 2. The favor of God the fountain of all real blessing and true happiness; 3. Intimate fellowship and personal friendship with God to be enjoyed in this life; 4. God's presence and favor sweeten every blessing. II. His enjoyment of outward mercies. These were — 1. Domestic comfort; 2. Outward prosperity; 3. Public honor and respect. — *Robinson.*

The happy past. — Job was reverting to the time of his prosperity, as is seen in the preceding verse, "when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness;" "when my children were about me, when I washed my steps with butter." To say the secret of the king is with such a person, is a strong way of describing the intimacy which exists between them. "Take care how you accuse him to the great man, because his secret is with him." "Alas! alas! his secret is no longer with me; his lamp no longer shines in my heart." — *Roberts.* — *The past.* — Think of it! the past is not only focused there, in a man's soul: it is there. All things that he has ever seen, known, felt, believed, of the surrounding world are now within him, have become part of him, in part are him; he has been changed into their image. He may deny it, he may resent it, but they are there. They do not adhere to him; they are transfused through him. He cannot alter or rub them out. They are not in his memory; they are in *him.* His soul is as they have filled it, made it, left it. — *Drummond.*

The past. —

When midnight o'er the moonless skies
Her pall of transient death hath spread;
When mortals sleep, when spectres rise,
And none are wakeful but the dead;
No bloodless shape my way pursues,
No sheeted ghost my couch annoys,
Visions more sad my fancy views,—
Visions of long-departed joys. — *Spenser.*

[a] The time of the ripe fruits of Job's prosperity.

"Job's wish is, that he might be restored to the vigor of mature life, and to the influence and honors wh. he had then." — *Barnes.*

[b] "*Lit.* the couch, or cushion, in an Eastern divan. Hence also the society, conference, and deliberation." — *Wordsworth.*

"When God remained cordially in my tent." — *Umbreit.*

"When God took counsel with me in my tent." — *Herder.*

"It is with youth, as with plants; from the first fruits they bear we learn what may be expected in future." *Demophilus.*

"Oh! if in afterlife we could but gather the very refuse of our youthful hours." — *C. Ll d.*

8—10. (8) **hid,**[c] retired back, in reverence for dignity and age. **arose,** as a token of respect. They remained standing until Job had taken his seat. (9) **refrained,** *etc.*, stopped talking. Comp. entrance of men of honor into any assembly now. At once all would keep a reverent silence. **hand . . mouth,**

Job an object of respect in the past

[c] "Illus. by following from the

Talmud: 'R. Jochanan was walking and leaning on R. Chijabar-Abba. R. Eliezer perceived him and hid himself fr. him. Then said R. Jochanan, This Babylonian insulted him (R. Chija) by two things, first that he did not salute him, and then that he hid himself. But R. Jacob-bar-Idi answered him. It is the custom with them for the less not to salute the greater.'"—*Delitzsch.*

ch. xxi. 5. (10) **nobles,** this term, which *princes,* indicates civilized and settled, rather than patriarchal, conditions of society. These nobles were men of rank, and would now be called *Emirs* or *Sheiks.* **tongue cleaved,**[a] *i. e.* all conversation on the important matters under consideration ceased in his presence, for his wisdom was recognized, and all waited to hear him speak.

Goodness and greatness.—I. Goodness often the shortest as well as the safest way to greatness. II. A good man sure, sooner or later, to gain the esteem and confidence of his fellows. III. A man's noblest ambition—1. To excel others in virtue, piety and benevolence; 2. To act as the counselor and guide of his fellows; 3. To comfort the mourners which command the multitude.—*Robinson.*

The hand on the mouth.—When the Easterns wish to be silent they place their hand upon their mouth, to express their intentions by action, and their sentiments by attitude. Many instances of this practice are to be found. "In one of the subterranean vaults in Egypt, where the mummies lie buried, they found in the coffin an embalmed body of a woman, before which was placed a figure of wood, representing a youth on his knees, laying a finger on his mouth, and holding in his other hand a sort of chafing-dish, which was placed on his head, and in which, without doubt, had been some perfumes."—*Maillet.*—*The worship of mammon* may be less visibly cruel than the worship of Mars, and yet in some respects it is more degrading, for it calls out no heroic qualities. The deference shown to the rich simply because they are rich is one of the most unworthy characteristics of human weakness. It is not peculiar to our own age; this miserable sycophantic spirit was ridiculed by Roman satirists and reprobated by New Testament writers (*e. g.* Jas. ii. 2). Its sordid meanness humiliates all who are enslaved by it.—*Pul. Com.*

[a] Ps. cxxxvii. 6.

Job describes the reason of that past respect

11—13. (11) **ear heard me,** decide causes, and deliver sentences, as judge. **blessed me,** because sure of careful consideration, and a just decision.[b] **gave witness,**[c] by its fixed attention to the respect in which he was held. (12) **poor,** who had a just cause, but no counsel to plead it for him. **fatherless,** Job acted as protector to such as had lost their natural protectors. (13) **ready to perish,** in danger of being falsely condemned. **widow's,** *etc.*, by saving her from unjust treatment. "One of the most beautiful ancient portrayals of virtue, founded on a Christian ideal of love and mercy, rather than on the ideal of mere justice and law-keeping, such as afterward obtained among the Scribes and Pharisees."—*Genung.*

The character of Job (*vss.* 11–16).—I. We propose to show the excellence of this character. Notice—1. The character itself, diffusive benevolence, unblemished integrity; 2. The excellence of it; its aspect on society; true of all that are in private life. II. The importance of cultivating it in ourselves and of encouraging it in others.—*O. Simeon.*

Helping the poor.—A gentleman from the country, passing through the streets of the metropolis, saw a poor man who had formerly been employed by him as a laborer, and his circumstances were those of extreme poverty and distress. He had come up to London to seek employment; but, failing to obtain it was reduced to a state of extreme destitution. The gentleman gave him a shilling and passed on, perhaps scarcely recollecting the circumstance, till it was recalled to his mind by the man himself, whom, about twelve months afterwards, he met again, and whose decent clothing and cheerful looks indicated a favorable change in his circumstances. "Sir," said the poor fellow, "I am bound to bless you, and pray for you as long as I live; that shilling you gave me has been the making of me: bad enough, I wanted it for food; but I was resolved first to turn it round: so I went up and down one of the principal streets, and collected as many hare-skins as it would purchase; these I disposed of, and contented myself with such food as the profits would afford, still reserving the shilling as my stock in trade. By degrees I saved a little more, and to you, sir, I am indebted for the foundation of it all. But for your timely aid I might have perished. May a blessing attend you as long as you live."

Mercy.—

I hold that Christian grace abounds
Where charity is seen; then, when
We climb to heaven, 'tis on the rounds
Of love to men.

[b] Pr. xxix. 2.

[c] Lu. iv. 22.

Jas. i. 27.

"The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."
—*Shakespeare.*

A respectable merchant in London, having been embarrassed in his circumstances, and his misfortunes having been one day the subject of conversation in the Royal Exchange, several persons expressed great sorrow; when a foreigner who was present, said, "I feel five hundred pounds for him, what do you feel?"

"There are times when it would be very bad fortune not to have had bad fortune. Peter

This I moreover hold, and dare
Affirm, where'er my rhyme may go:
Whatever things be sweet and fair,
Love makes them so.
'Tis not the wide phylactery,
Nor stubborn fast nor stated prayers,
That makes us saints ; we judge the tree
By what it bears.— *Alice Cary.*

Cooper used to say that he began his career with a famous stroke of luck; he bought a lottery ticket with one of his first dollars, and, in the drawing, got a blank."

14—17. (14) **put on,** as if it were a robe.[a] "As a man he was lost in the justice that clothed him ; and justice clothed itself in him — he was justice become a person." — *Cam. Bib.* **diadem,** or turban.[b] (15) **eyes,** *etc.*, forcible refutation of the charge of hard-hearted uncharitableness brought against him by Eliphaz.[c] (16) **father,** father-like in tender consideration for them. **the cause,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "because of him that I knew not," *etc.* Not only those who had claims on him, but strangers, any unfortunate man, he aided by his counsel and power. (17) **plucked,**[d] *etc.*, severity with the wicked is as essential a part of public justice as consideration for the poor.

Job's character (*vss.* 11–17). — I. His benevolence and compassion as a private individual. II. His faithfulness and justice as a magistrate. III. His boldness in opposing the wicked and oppressive. Note : — 1. A truly good man a comfort to the oppressed and a terror to the oppressor ; 2. A good man not deterred from duty by the fear of consequences. — *Robinson.*

Kindness to the poor. — The benevolent Dr. Wilson once discovered a clergyman at Bath, who, he was informed, was sick, poor, and had a numerous family. In the evening he gave a friend fifty pounds, requesting him to deliver it in the most delicate manner, and as from an unknown person. The friend said, "I will wait upon him early in the morning." "You will oblige me, sir, by calling directly. Think of what importance a good night's rest may be to that poor man."

Eyes to the blind. — No man is at liberty to say, when there is a blind man to be helped, that his eyes are wholly his own, and that he must devote them to his own occupations and interests. In this way it lies within the power of every man to do good : without money, without genius, without influence, he can yet conduct a blind child across a thoroughfare, or speak a kind word to the dispirited traveler, or offer to do some deed of love to the friendless man. Beneficence does not confine itself to one line. Unhappily, in many instances, it is so confined, and thus it is in danger of falling into a mere trick or habit. Some men will give money largely who will not give any time to the promotion of good causes ; others do not grudge their time, but it is next to impossible to persuade them to contribute of their substance. Each man will be judged according to his faculty and opportunity. All that some men can do is to lead the blind, cheer the lonely, advise the perplexed ; these services to humanity are never set down in the subscription-lists of society ; it would seem as if it was only money that could be recorded, and not service of a still richer kind.—*Peop. Bib.*—*The gentleman.* —Carlyle said of Robert Burns that there was no truer gentleman in Europe than the ploughman-poet. It was because he loved everything — the mouse, and the daisy, and all the things great and small, that God had made. So with this simple passport he could mingle with any society, and enter courts and palaces from his little cottage on the banks of the Ayr. You know the meaning of the word "gentleman." It means a gentle man — a man who does things gently with love, and that is the whole art and mystery of it. The gentleman cannot in the nature of things do an ungentlemanly thing. The ungentle soul, the inconsiderate, unsympathetic nature, cannot do anything else. "Love doth not behave itself unseemly." — *Drummond.*

Job had been a public benefactor

a Ro. xiii. 14; 1 Pe. v. 5.

b Heb. *tsaniph*, fr. *tsanaph*, to bind round.

c Job xxii

d "Job is advocate judge, sheriff, and executioner ; a necessary and effective combination of offices in an imperfectly organized community"—*Spk. Com*

" John Baptist Joseph Languet, vicar of St. Sulpice, at Paris, sometimes disbursed the sum of a million of livres in charities in a single year. When there was a general dearth in 1725, he sold, in order to relieve the poor, his household goods, his pictures, and some curious pieces of furniture that he had procured with great difficulty."

his past hopes

18—21. (18) **die in my nest,** continue right to the end of life my comfortable circumstances.[e] *Nest* is figure for secure dwelling. **as the sand,** common fig. for boundless extent. Abundance of days compared to the multitude of the grains of sand.[f] (19) **root,** *etc.*, read to "the waters."[g] So th. the waters nourished it. Job likens himself to a palm tree. **dew,** copious and refreshing in that land. (20) **glory,** honor in wh. I was held was constantly renewed. **renewed,**[h] gained ever new strength and elasticity.

The phœnix, "according to the Egyptian legend, lived five hundred years, and then, setting fire to its nest, renewed its youth in the funeral pyre."

e "I shall die surrounded by my family and friends, and encompassed with honors."—*Barnes.*

f LXX., Vulg., and Jew interp. think ref. is to the phœnix bird, which was supposed to reappear out of its own ashes.

g Ps. i. 3; Je. xvii. 8; Ho. xiv. 5–7.

h Ge. xlix. 24.

"The myth was, that the phœnix sprung fr. a nest of myrrh made by his father before death, and that he then came fr. Arabia (Job's country) to Heliopolis, in Egypt, once in every 500 years, and there burnt his father" — *Fausset.*

Clement of Rome appealed to the phœnix as a witness for the resurrection. We smile at his credulity. But may we not appeal to the legend of the phœnix as an evidence of the instinct of immortality? Why is it so natural to us to believe that life will go on forever? Shall we put this idea down entirely to the delusion of circumstances and of our own vitality? Does it not spring from something deeper in our nature? Be that as it may, however, Christ has come to satisfy the desire and to confirm the hope. Job confessed the foolishness of his youthful dreams, yet even he in those old-world days had occasional glimpses of the life beyond the grave, and we have a grand assurance of that life in Christ and His resurrection. The mistake is to dream of an earthly immortality. The old man who cherishes fond hopes of living a little longer is not much better off than the drowning man catching at a straw. But he who has a hold on the life eternal can afford to see the years rushing away swifter than a weaver's shuttle. He must make the best of them while he has them; for *this* life is with him but once, and he will have to give an account of it hereafter; for there is a hereafter — a great day of God's eternity that knows no sunset. — *W. F. Adeney.*—*The dew.* — It is well known that in the hot eastern countries, where it rarely rains during the summer months, the copious dews which fall there during the night contribute greatly to the nourishment of vegetables in general. "This dew," says Hasselquist, speaking of the excessively hot weather in Egypt, "is particularly serviceable to the trees, which would otherwise never be able to resist the heat; but with this assistance they thrive well, and blossom and ripen their fruit" — *Burder.*

"The good opinion of honest men, friends to freedom and well-wishers to mankind, is the only reputation a wise man would ever desire."— *Washington.*

his past influence

22—25. (22) **my words,**[a] given as counsel. **dropped,**[b] "like a refreshing, quickening rain," fig. for eloquence, esp. in oriental poetry. (23) **waited,** as does a parched and thirsty land for the rain. **latter rain,** those wh. fall in the month of March; necess. to bring forward the harvest. (24) **laughed,** "I laughed on them, when they had no confidence, and the light of my countenance they cast not down."[c] "Job smiled on those who were perplexed and despondent; what seemed insurmountable difficulty or threatened disaster to them, seemed to him a thing easy to overcome and nothing to create alarm; while on the other hand the despondency of others was never able to cloud the cheerfulness of his countenance, so full was his mind of resource."— *Cam. Bib.* (25) **way,** *i. e.* their companionship. I delighted in the company of men and chose to walk with them. **as a king,** surrounded by every sign of state. **army,** or "in the host," *i. e.* among the people. **comforteth,** *etc.*, a side-thrust at the friends whose intended comfortings had proved so great a failure.

a "This passage introduces a new theme, viz., Job's position among his countrymen as a statesman and leader."— *Spk. Com.*

b De. xxxii. 2.

c "Some read, 'I smiled kindly on those who trusted not,' *i. e.* in times of danger I cheered those in despondency."— *Umbreit.*

Review of the chapter. — I. Evidence of the statement that the fear of the Lord is wisdom. II. Proof that true piety towards God is accompanied with the purest morality and love to men. III. An example afforded of what grace can effect in restoring and renewing fallen humanity. IV. A pattern for Christians both in public and private life. V. The retrospect of a holy and useful life a source of pure and elevated comfort in sickness and adversity. VI. Example of the uncertainty of earthly comforts and riches. VII. The experience of believers in respect to the sensible enjoyment of the Divine presence and fellowship liable to fluctuation. VIII. An exemplification of the requirements of the moral law in respect to our neighbor. IX. Job exhibited in this chapter as a type of Jesus Christ the righteous.— *Robinson.*

A good man's influence.— Of all the good things in this world, the best are good people. These give added value to all other good things, and do much to make up for the lack of them. The influence which goes out from the life of a good man is one of the most subtle and pervasive things in the world. Men can weigh the moon, but they cannot weigh the influence of a good man. They can tell the distance of one star from another, but they cannot tell how far the influence of a good man's life will reach, nor how long it will last.— *Calvin Cutler. Unconscious influence.*— If you are abiding in Christ you are reproducing yourself in thousands of instances when you are wholly unaware of it. Out of the personal relationship between the soul and Christ come the fruits of holy living. The vine does not bear fruit of itself, it bears its fruit through the branches. Our unconscious influence thus becomes far more fruitful than our conscious influence. In the last great day many will bewail that they have accomplished so little, and, looking at the scanty results will say, "When saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and

vs. 22. "Of a man who speaks with great euphony, it is said, 'His words come *tule tule yāka*,' *i. e.* drop by drop."—*Roberts.*

"To religion, then, we must hold in every circumstance of our life for our truest comforts; for if we are already happy, it is a pleasure to think that we can make that happiness unending; and if we are miserable, it is very consoling to think there is a place of rest. Thus to the fortunate religion holds out a continuance of bliss, to the wretched a change from pain."— *Oliver Goldsmith.*

gave thee drink?" to find that unconsciously their lives had abounded in fruits well pleasing in the Master's sight. It is from such holy lives as this that is derived our Master's highest joy.— *Bp. Hendrix*

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

1—4. (1) **But now,** painful contrast of present circumstances. **younger than I,** the expression is a general one.[a] **fathers,** intimating that those who insulted him in his distress were the children of the lowest and most degraded of the community. (2) **strength . . me,** they could not work, they are enervated, good-for-nothing fellows. **in whom,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Men in whom ripe age is perished," *i. e.* a weak and effete race. (3) *R. V.*, "They are gaunt with want and famine: They gnaw the dry ground in the gloom of wasteness and desolation." (4) **mallows,** *R. V.*, "Saltwort," a salt herb of the desert. **juniper,**[b] *R. V.*, "roots of the broom." The root would only be eaten in extremity.

Friends tested by adversity. — Circumstances develop men, reveal character, and show us the real quality of things all around. Let us remember, then, that there is an inner quality of things, and that not until we have pierced to that innermost quality, do we know any man, faith, church, family, or institution. We must count our friends in the storm; we shall know what they are worth when we need them. What do you know about the man you praise so much? Let us hear all you know. Do you answer, He is so pleasant, so agreeable, so friendly, so social, so condescending; there are no airs about him or sign of superior claims? Have you ever been in real distress and invoked his aid? Have you ever attempted, honorably, to borrow money of him? Have you ever sent for him when all the winds of heaven had seized the tower of your life and shaken it? Have you ever been in a position to say to him—I am no longer popular, or esteemed by my fellow-men: you now find me solitary and wo-begone, and if you can put your hand in mine and let me feel a friend's strong grip I shall be glad? If in that hour he answered bravely, with an affirmative generosity, with a self-surrendering liberality, then grapple him to thyself with hooks of steel; he is a child of truth and of God. Men are tested by opposition. The man you find so agreeable has a piety exactly skin-deep. Refuse him his requests, oppose him in his notions, separate yourself from him in his most ardent thinking, forget to answer his letter, and the revelation will surprise you. If otherwise, then esteem him highly; write him down in the record you prize most, and which you will read in your latter days as a kind of second Bible, chronicling things that were good amongst men and helpful along all the school-road of life. — *Peop. Bib.* *Fickleness of friendship.* — In *Gotthold's Emblems* is an illustration of the danger of fickleness in friendship, drawn from a lute, which, having been exposed to the weather, became out of tune. A faithful friendship is like a well-tuned lute, full of sweet sounds. "Nothing, however, is sooner untuned than a lute, and nothing is more fickle than a human friend. The tone of the one changes with the weather; that of the other with fortune. With a clear sky, and a bright sun, and a gentle breeze, you will have friends in plenty; but let fortune frown, and the firmament be overcast, and then your friends will prove like the strings of the lute, of which you will tighten ten before you will find one which will bear the tension or keep the pitch."

now he is scorned by the young

[a] "It was among the chief virtues with the Orientals to show respect to the aged, and their sensibilities were peculiarly keen in regard to any indignity shown to them by the young." — *Barnes.*

[b] 1 Kl. xix. 4, 5; Ps. cxx. 4.

"Let me not live after my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff of younger spirits whose apprehensive senses all but new things disdain; whose judgments are mere father of their garments; whose constancies expire before their fashions." — *Shakespeare.*

"My way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses not loud, but deep, mouth-honor, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not."
— *Shakespeare.*

5—8. (5) **driven forth,** as vagabonds unfit for decent society. **cried,** *etc.*, outcast tribes naturally become robber-tribes. (6) *R. V.*, "In the clefts of the valleys must they dwell." **caves,**[c] Heb. *holes.* Those living in such holes are called Troglodytes. (7) **brayed,** like wild asses when hungry. *See* ch. vi. 5; xxiv. 5. **gathered together,** huddled up in heaps. *Delitzsch* prefers the idea, "spread out in disorder, amid useless weeds of the desert." (8) **fools,** worthless, the refuse of society. **base men,** *Heb.* men of no name. **viler,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "They were scourged out of the land."

Heredity. — The bane of humanity is bad heredity. We cannot get rid of it. The fathers have drunk the cup of sinful pleasures, and the children have drunk the dregs. The wondrous thing about the gospel is that it gives us a new heredity. I count that the very highest and sublimest statement of the doctrine of regeneration. A man grafting trees saws off a limb to put in the scion. If the limb is rotten he has to saw it off nearer to the trunk. We were

the youth who despised him described

[c] "Dr. Richardson found a large number of such dwellings in the vicinity of Thebes, many of wh. were large, and beautifully formed, and sculptured with many curious devices. Mr. Rich also saw a large

number of such caves not far from Mosul."—*Barnes.*

Wetzstein gives a full account of Troglodyte caves found in the districts adjoining the Hauran.

Ju. vi. 2.

"Depend upon this truth, that every man is the worse looked upon, and the worse trusted, for being thought to have no religion, in spite of all the pompous, specious epithets he may assume, of *esprits forts*, free-thinker, or moral philosopher; and a wise atheist, if such a thing there is, would, for his own interest and character in this world, pretend to some religion."—*Chesterfield.*

the treatment he received at their hands

a La. iii. 14, 63; Ps. lxix. 12.

b Wordsworth reminds of resemblance bet. Job and the suffering Messiah in this matter. Is. 6; Ma. xxvi. 67; xxvii. 30; Mk. xiv. 65; xv. 19; Lu. xviii. 32.

c This causes Job's sensitive heart the most poignant pain, "because men's treatment of him comes not from genuine heart-feeling, but from a conventional idea of God's disposition."—*Genung.*

they take ungenerous advantage of his affliction

d Comp. Ps. cx. 6.

e Vulg. understands, "an increasing crowd of calamities."

f "Express. denotes long-continued persecutions; they proceed like

grafted in Adam, but it was discovered that the branch was rotten, and then God began at the very beginning, and grafted us into Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God. Dr. Williams, of Boston, was asked, "How early do you think the training of a child ought to begin?" He replied instantly, "A hundred years before the child's birth." When God would build up a child holy in all things he goes back to the very beginning and gives us our birth in God himself: "Which were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The river of life has its sources in the very throne of God, and when we get that life, we have something in us which tends to make us do well instead of doing ill. As from Adam we had this hereditary tendency to do wrong, so when we are grafted into Jesus Christ, and given the eternal life, we have that influence impelling us to holiness.—*A. J. Gordon.*—*Society's problem.* — The section brings us face to face with a portion of the lowest stratum of humanity and the dregs of society. Such are found in most countries, Britain not excepted. It is the result not merely of vice and indolence in themselves and their fathers, perhaps for generations, but also probably of oppression and neglect on the part of their superiors. Their existence in a country often, under Divine Providence, is a retribution. It was probably due to Christianity that the description in the text was not verified in the British refugees among the mountains of Wales, and even in the Saxons after the Norman possession. The waifs and roughs, thieves and city Arabs, in the slums of London, are perhaps as much the result of harsh treatment and neglect as of personal depravity. Church and State in general are only now beginning to wake up to a sense of duty in regard to this class of society, when the case has become next to unmanagable. The great problem of the present day — what is to be done for the reclamation and elevation of the sunken masses? Much is capable of being done both by Church and State, under the impulse of loving hearts and the direction of enlightened heads. The gospel of the grace of God, suitably presented and lovingly applied, is the Divinely-appointed, and therefore the most efficient, means of restoring fallen humanity. — *Hom. Com.*

9—11. (9) **their song,** his calamities were the subject of low jesting, even by such people. **byword,** comp. ch. xvii. 6.[a] (10) **spare . . face,** "He speaks of their conduct to himself with resentment; for it was no requital of any injury he had ever done them. Yet though they might mistake Job's individual feeling to them, he was one of the class that had robbed them, and they avenged their wrongs on him with a malicious delight in the calamities that had overtaken him.[b]"—*Cam. Bib.* (11) **my cord,** taken away my strength,[c] cord being fig. for the life-power which holds together our bodily frame. **loose the bridle,** fig. for casting off all reverence and fear.

Contempt. — In his prosperity Job would have despised the opinion of those who now vex him with their insults. Yet he could never have been complacent under contempt. It has been well said that the greatest man in the world would receive some discomfort if he came to know that the meanest creature on earth despised him from the bottom of his heart. The pride that is quite indifferent to the good or ill opinion of others is not a virtue. Humility will set some value on the favor of the lowest. If we have a spirit of brotherliness we cannot but desire to live on good terms with all our neighbors.—*Pul. Com.*

12—15. (12) **right hand,** the place of honor; place of vantage.[d] **youth,** *R. V.*, "the rabble." The base crowd of his persecutors.[e] **push . . feet,** jostle me out of the way. **raise . . destruction,**[f] like an advancing army raising ramparts, *etc.* (13) **mar my path,** embarrass his plans. **set forward,** urge on, as Zec. i. 15. **they . . helper,** *R. V.*, "Even men that have no helper," *i. e.* even those who are "without kith or kin;" a proverb among Arabs to denote a worthless person. (14) *R. V.*, "As through a wide breach they come; in the midst of the ruin they roll themselves upon me;" a figure, of how deeply "Job had been wounded by the insolence of men who but a little while since would not have dared to brook his mere glance."—*Cox.* **wide,** *etc.;* fig. fr. besieged fortress. (15) **my soul,** *R. V.*, "mine honour."

Bearing scorn. — As Pericles was sitting before others in a meeting, a foul-mouthed fellow railed upon him all the day long; at night, when it was dark, and the meeting broke up, the fellow followed him, and railed at him, even to his door, and he took no notice of what he said; but when he came

home, this is all he said to him: "It is dark; I pray let my man light you home." — *Jer. Burroughs.* — *Trials.* — No trial is so sharp but a godly man may meet with it. If Satan has one dart in his quiver more fiery than another, he may shoot it at him. In respect to outward trials and sufferings, but for the inward comfort and future hope afforded them, believers, sometimes, of all men are the most miserable (1 Cor. xv. 19). Tribulation and persecution were promised by the Master. This, at times, is abundantly and amazingly realized. Witness the sufferings of the martyrs of Lyons, Smyrna, and elsewhere, in the second century. "Tortures by racks, by pincers, by faggots, by the tossings of wild beasts, by being seated in burning [iron] chairs, that the fumes of their roasting flesh might come up about them, amid scoffs and jeers from the rabble, when a word of retraction would have saved them." — *Hom. Com.*

an invading army, making for itself a road through the wilderness." — *Spk. Com.*

Scorn. —

"He hears
On all sides, from innumerable tongues,
A dismal universal hiss, the sound
Of public scorn." — *Milton.*

"Tribulation is the price we pay for the robe and the crown and the palm." — *Bp. Hunt.*

"But, (alas!) to make me
A fixed figure, for the hand of Scorn,
To point his slow, unmoving finger at."
— *Shakespeare.*

16—19. (16) **upon,** *R. V.*, "within," He has lost all spirit. It is as if his soul had gone from him.[a] (17) **bones,** *etc.*, he felt pain in the night when he looked for rest. **sinews,** *R. V.*, "the pains that gnaw me," never cease. Symptoms of the disease called *elephantiasis.* (18) **changed,** *R. V.*, "disfigured," "the purulent discharge from his ulcers disfigured and made filthy his garment, which stiffened as the discharge dried, and clung to his frame. **it bindeth me about.** The whole garment clung to his body as it is usual for a man's collar to cling about his throat."— *Rawlinson.* (19) **like dust and ashes,** being so long covered with them.[b]

he describes his various afflictions

[a] "The Arabs style a fearful person *one who has a watery heart*, or whose heart melts away like water." —*Noyes.*

[b] Job ii. 8.

Advantages of affliction. — There was a little boy who was so crippled that he could not open his Bible, which he had always before him. A gentleman asked him why he was so fond of reading it. "I like to read the Bible," said he, "because it tells me of Jesus Christ." "Do you think you have believed on Jesus Christ?" "Yes, I do." "What makes you think so?" "Because He enables me to suffer my afflictions patiently."— *Saved by affliction.* — "I would gladly take your tract," said a soldier in the hospital; "but I have lost both my arms in battle; and I would gladly lose them again, were it possible, rather than not enjoy what I now possess. While I was far away in the woods and did not know I should ever live to get back to camp, I cried unto the Lord in good earnest; and He had mercy on my soul."— *Use of affliction.* — But you have said and done well, when you look upon it as a rod of God; and He that so smites here will spare hereafter; and if you, by patience and submission, imprint the discipline upon your own flesh, you kill the cause, and make the effect very tolerable; because it is in some sense chosen, and therefore in no sense insufferable. Sir, if you do not look to it, time will snatch your honor from you, and reproach you for not effecting that by Christian philosophy which time will do alone. And if you consider that, of the bravest men in the world, we find the seldomest stories of their children, and the apostles had none, and thousands of the worthiest persons that sound most in story died childless; you will find it a rare act of Providence so to impose upon the worthy a necessity of perpetuating their names by worthy actions and discourses, governments and reasonings. — *Jer. Taylor.*

vs. 16. "'Why are you so dejected, my friend?' 'Because the *kettākalam, i. e.* the ruinous time, has caught me.'"— *Roberts.*

"Affliction is not sent in vain
From that good God who chastens whom he loves." —*Southey*

"If reproached for covetousness, labor to manifest a larger measure of beneficence, generosity, and Christian charity. If reproached for pride, cultivate more assiduously the mind of Christ in its self-renunciation and genuine humility." — *John Bate.*

20—22 (20) **regardest me,** *R. V.*, "lookest at me," *i. e.* indifferently (omit "not"). This is the worst of all his calamities, when he calls upon God he is met with indifference.[c] (21) **become,** Heb. *changed to become.* A painful comparison of the present with the former time of God's favor. **thy strong hand,** it was much that Job felt that his affliction was *from God.* (2) **liftest,** *etc.*, as a mere leaf or stubble. **ride upon it,** driven resistlessly along. **dissolvest my substance,** *R. V.*, "dissolvest me in the storm," "descriptive of the whirling, bewildering, perilous seeming spiritual experience that he is compelled to undergo." — *Genung.*

he mourns the apparent indifference of God

[c] "Compare the modern poet's wailing, 'O thou art pitiless! They call thee Light, Law, Justice, Love, but Thou art pitiless.'"— *Robert Buchanan.*

Sand-storms. — At seven in the morning we left Assa Hagga, our course being due north. At one o'clock we alighted among some acacia trees at Wadi el Halboub, having gone twenty-one miles. We were here at once surprised and terrified by a sight surely one of the most magnificent in the world. In that vast expanse of desert, from W. to N. W. of us, we saw a number of

"Thou raisest me upon the stormy

wind. Thou causest me to drive along and vanish in the roaring of the storm."—*Delitzsch*

Prayer is the rope in the belfrey; we pull it, and it rings the bell up in heaven. Keep on pulling it, and, though the bell is up so high that you cannot hear it ring, it can be heard in the tower of heaven by God, who will give you answers of peace according to your faith — *Christmas Evans.*

prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, at times moving with great celerity, at others stalking on with majestic slowness; at intervals we thought they were coming in a very few minutes to overwhelm us. Eleven of them ranged alongside of us about the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest appeared to me, at that distance, as if it would measure ten feet. It was in vain to think of flying; the swiftest horse, or fastest sailing ship, could be of no use to carry us out of this danger.— *Bruce's Travels.*

Unjust charges against God. — Job's three friends were to a large extent responsible for the patriarch's condition of mind, in which he was driven to charge God with cruelty. They had set up an impossible rule, and the evident falsehood had driven Job to desperation. A harsh orthodoxy is responsible for much unbelief. Self-elected advocates of God have thus a good deal of mischief to answer for. In attempting to defend the Divine government some of these people have presented it in a very ugly light. Whilst they have been dinning their formal precepts into men's ears on what they regard as the authority of revelation, they have been rousing a spirit of revolt, till what is most Divine in man, his conscience, has risen up and protested against their dogmas. From the days of Job till our own time theology has too often darkened the world's idea of God. If we turn from man to God Himself, we shall discover that He is better than His advocates represented him to be. When it is our duty to speak of religion, let us be careful not to fall into the error of Job's friends, and generate hard thoughts of God by narrow, un-Christ-like teachings. — *W. F. Adeney.*

he contemplates death as the only end

23, 24. (23) **know,** have abandoned all hope of life. **house . . living,**[a] Hades, the great involuntary rendezvous of all who live in this world. — *Delitzsch.* (24) *R. V.*, "Surely against a ruinous heap he will not put forth his hand; though it be in his destruction, one may utter a cry because of these things."[b] Job characterizes himself as a heap of ruins, and, appealing to the Almighty, argues that against such a thing one does not stretch out a hostile hand; neither does one derive advantage to himself from another's calamity. — *Cam. Bib.* Eighteen distinct interpretations have been given of this difficult verse.

[a] 2 Sa. xiv. 14; He. ix. 17.

[b] *Ewald's* trans. is "Howbeit will not a man in his ruinous fall stretch out his hand? in his calamity will he not complain thereof?"

Death.— The words direct us to three things. I. The Divinity of death. The Bible ascribes death to God. 1. Nothing can bring me to death unless Thou wilt; 2. Nothing can prevent me from dying unless Thou pleasest. II. The ordination of death. 1. This appointment is very natural; 2. It is very settled. III. The universality of death. Men when living have houses of various shapes, sizes, values, according to their tastes and means, but in dying they have only one house. All go to one place. What a house is this grave! Ancient, desolate, spacious, crowded.— *Homilist.*

Equality in the grave.— Diogenes was not in the wrong, who, when the great Alexander, finding him in the charnel-house, asked him what he was seeking for, answered, "I am seeking for your father's bones and those of my slave; but I cannot find them, because there is no difference between them."

"What disarrays like death? It defaces the fascination of the beautiful. It breaks the lamp of the wise. It withers the strength of the mighty. It snatches the store of the rich. Kings are stripped of trapping, trophy, treasure: 'Their glory shall not descend after them.'"— *R. W. Hamilton.*

"God's finger touched him, and he slept."— *Tennyson*

Release.—

"If one had watched a prisoner many a year,
Standing behind a barred window-pane,
Fettered with heavy handcuffs and with chain,
And gazing on the blue sky, far and clear;
And suddenly some morning he should hear,
The man had in the night contrived to gain
His freedom, and was safe, would this bring pain?
Ah! would it not to dullest heart appear
Good tidings?
To-day I looked on one
Who lay as if asleep, in perfect peace,
His long imprisonment for life was done—
Eternity's great freedom his release
Had brought. Shall we who loved him call him dead,
And weep, refusing to be comforted?"

his reasons for expecting other treatment

25—28. (25) **I weep,** Job appeals to the fact that he responded to the suffering poor, but God will not respond to him. (26) **for good,** for outward

prosperity as the reward of piety and charity. **evil,** in sense of affliction. **for light,** ch. xxii. 28. (27) **prevented me,**[a] *R. V.*, "are come upon me." "The bowels are the seat of feeling; and the words 'my bowels boiled' describe the tumult of feelings, griefs, regrets and pains, that worked within him." — *Cam. Bib.* (28) **mourning,**[b] "blackened, but not by the sun," rather with a hideous disease. **stood up,** as an innocent man crying for justice.

Job's compassion for the poor.— I. The poor when they are in trouble are great objects of compassion. II. To exercise compassion towards them is one of the principal duties of a Christian. 1. From political expediency; 2. From Christian necessity. Our exercise or neglect of charity will be the ground of the sentence that in the last day will be pronounced upon us.— *C. Simeon.*

Kindness to the poor. — The benevolent John Howard, well known for his philanthropy, especially his attention to prisoners, having settled his accounts at the close of a particular year, and found a balance in his favor, proposed to his wife to make use of it in a journey to London, or in any other excursion she chose. "What a pretty cottage for a poor family it would build!" was her answer. This charitable hint met with his cordial approbation, and the money was laid out accordingly.— *Disappointment.* — Earthly hopes may vanish in smoke, but the hope in Christ is sure. Even this may be lost sight of as the beacon-light is obscured by the driving storm; but it is not extinguished. For our Christian hope rests on the eternal constancy of God, and it concerns not fading and fragile earthly things, but the everlasting verities of heaven. Browning describes the man whose heart and life are strong against disappointment —

> "One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward;
> Never doubted clouds would break;
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph;
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake."— *W. F. Adeney.*

29—31. (29) **dragons,** *R. V.*, "jackals." **owls,** *R. V.*, "ostriches;" both these creatures utter the most dismal screams,[c] and live in the midst of desolation. (30) **upon me,**[d] *R. V.*, "*and falleth* from me," it peals off in blackened flakes. (31) *R. V.*, "Therefore is my," *etc.* **organ,** *pipe.* The common wind instrument, as the harp was the stringed. The joyous music of his former life is turned to wailing.

The needed chord. —

In every heart there is music,
When touched by the Master Hand,
In every life is melody,
Sad, joyous, plaintive, grand.

But should there be a minor chord,
And fraught perchance with fears,
A quivering tone that saddens the heart,
A sound that is full of tears:

Dread not, 'tis the touch of the Master,
But list to the wondrous strain
That follows, of tender pathos,
And rises to sweet refrain.

And know that whatever the changes
Trusting soul, that may come to thee,
Be sure 'tis the one chord needed
For God's perfect harmony. — *Helen Stickney.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

1—4. (1) **a covenant,** Job now utters his last and strongest assertions of righteousness. **mine eyes,**[e] "at the outset he strikes the key-note of the highest and most spiritual morality." — *Cox.* (2) **what portion,** would there be to one proved unchaste. (3) **to the wicked,**[f] so Job grants that if he had been wicked he might reasonably have expected the severe judgments of the

a Old Eng. for unexpectedly came upon me, surprised me.

b Delitzsch thinks reference is to the dirty black dress of mourners.

"Famine in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,
Contempt and beggary hang upon thy back,
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law."
— *Shakespeare.*

"To mortal men great loads allotted be; but of all packs no pack like poverty." — *Herrick.*

his forlorn and sad condition

c "Job compares his mournings to the long melancholy cries of the jackal and ostrich: described by travelers in the East as inexpressibly mournful and piercing." — *Spk. Com.*

d Ps. cxix. 83; La. iv. 8.

"Poverty makes people satirical — soberly, sadly, bitterly satirical." — *Friswell.*

Every day of meeting sorrow superbly makes the life more grand. — *Anna Robertson Brown.*

he appeals to God's perfect knowledge

e Mat. v. 28, 29; 2 Pe. ii. 14.

f Pr. x. 29; xxi. 15; 2 Pe. ii. 1.

"This chapter is perhaps the most lovely in the whole poem, its morality is that of the Sermon on the Mount" — *Cox.*

Almighty. **strange punishment,** *R. V.*, "disaster." (4) **not see,** "here 'ways' and 'steps' are said of things so slight as the glance of the eye. These are 'seen' and 'counted' by God. The thought of God in these verses is as lofty as the conception of morality is close and inward." — *Cam. Bib.*

God's watchfulness. — Job speaks of God as counting all his steps. Therefore God takes note of every one of them. No false step can escape His notice. The little slip is not unseen by God. He sees us stumble when we do not fall, and observes how we stray for a brief time, even though we afterwards return to the right path. This truth has an encouraging side to it. God knows how many steps we have taken; therefore if the way is long and weary He has not forgotten us, and He can give us rest and strength. He knows how many steps we have yet to take; therefore He will give us a sufficient supply of grace, whether the road be long or short, and He will not expect more of us than the length or brevity of life permits. — *Pul. Com.*

"O perilous mouths, that bear in them one and the selfsame tongue, either of condemnation or approof! bidding the law, make court'sy to their will; hooking both right and wrong to the appetite, to follow as it draws." — *Shakespeare.*

Self-mastery. —

Saint Augustine! well hast thou said,
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame.

. . . . . .

All thoughts of ill; all evil deeds
That have their root in thoughts of ill:
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will;

All these must first be trampled down
Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
The right of eminent domain. — *Longfellow.*

You must take possession of Christ for salvation; but to win a crown, Christ must take possession of you. — *H. W. Webb-Peploe.*

he desires to be judged by his character

5, 6. (5) **vanity,** falsehood. **deceit,** these are personified. They have not been his companions. (6) **weighed,** in balances of justice. He desires that his merits be carefully weighed to see if anything has been lacking in him. Comp. Dan. v. 27.[a]

The beauty of character. —

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd:
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. — *Shakespeare.*

[a] "He consents to have his life tried in the most exact and rigid manner, and was willing to abide the result." — *Barnes.*

1 Sa. ii. 3; Ps. xliv. 21; Is xxvi. 7; Da. v. 27.

"Of all unseen things, the most radiant, the most beautiful, the most divine is character." — *Drummond.*

and if he has done ill, that he may suffer

7, 8. (7) **out of the way,** *i. e.* the right way, the way of virtue. **after mine eyes,**[b] determined to gain what I coveted; if the mind consented to what the eye invited. **blot . . hands,** clean hands being emblematic of innocence.[c] (8) **offspring,** *R. V.*, "the produce of my field," (comp. Lev. xxvi. 16,) let the harvests of what I have sown be destroyed. My shoots.[d]

Value of character. — Canning wisely wrote in 1801, "My road must be through character to power; I will try no other course; and I am sanguine enough to believe that this course, though not perhaps the quickest, is the surest." You may admire men of intellect, but something more is necessary before you will trust them. Hence Lord John Russell once observed, in a sentence full of truth, "It is the nature of party in England to ask the assistance of men of genius, but to follow the guidance of men of character." — *Smiles.* — *Character-building.* — Many men build as cathedrals were built, the part nearest the ground finished, but that part which soars towards heaven, the turrets and the spires, forever incomplete. — *Beecher.* — Every man has at

[b] Nu. xv. 39; Eccl. xi. 9; 1 Jno. ii. 16.

[c] Job xvii. 9; Ps. xxiv. 4; Comp. Mat. xxvii. 24.

[d] De. xxviii. 38-41.

"I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all

times in his mind, the ideal of what he should be, but is not. That ideal may be high and complete, or it may be quite low and insufficient; yet in all men that really seek to improve, it is better than the actual character.— *Parker.*

titles the character of an 'honest man.'"— *George Washington.*

9—12. (9) **deceived,** befooled.[a] **woman,** reference is to a married woman, and to the sin of adultery. **laid wait,** comp. ch. xxiv. 15. (10) **grind,**[b] as a bond-slave. There is reference, however, in this verse, to the deeper moral degradations of the captive. (10) **this,** adultery. **heinous crime,**[c] Hos. vi. 9, marg.; Lev. xviii. 17. Adultery was a capital crime in Israel, Deut. xxii. 22; John viii. 5. (12) **fire,** *etc.*, a descrip. of the character of this sin, consuming the manhood, tending utterly to ruin and destroy a man.[d] **destruction,** *Abaddon*, or hell.

Pure characters.—Thank God, there are several cases of unsoiled character in the sacred history. No flaw was ever alleged against the beautiful Abel, the chaste and upright Joseph, the faithful Obadiah, with the heavenly seers Elijah and Elisha, or against Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and if Moses erred, it was only that "he spake unadvisedly with his lips;" and if this was set down as a sin by the Divine Lawgiver, it only shows how rigid and severe is His test, especially considering how many temptations and provocations the meekest man had to contend with. But what shall we say of Job, whom God Himself calls a perfect man, or of John, "the beloved disciple," or of St. Paul, against whom no flaw can be alleged? But, after all, how many, of whom better things might have been expected, have been painful specimens of the frailty of human nature and its fatal tendency to sin. Adam, Noah, David, and Solomon, how do all tend to humble us, to show how frail is humanity without God!— *Holdich.*—*Pure water from pure sources.*—A few years ago we were told that when we traveled in Europe, it was not safe to drink the water of the great cities. New pumping engines, new pipes of the latest pattern, new faucets in the houses could not remedy the evil. There was only one way, and that was to have pure water at the sources of supply, and this is what has been done. So that in the great capitals of Europe the water suppply is purer and safer than most of which we have boasted in this country. For ourselves, our first aim should be new hearts, purer souls, and then we can most easily have the noble outward life we are seeking.— *Peloubet.*

he speaks of wrongs for which, if guilty, he would deserve to suffer

a Eccl. vii. 26.

b "Grinding is the work assigned in the East to the lowest slaves and esp. to women."— *Spk. Com.*

"Let my wife be the mill-wench to another; be his abject slave, and be treated by him with the deepest indignity."— *Barnes.*

c Ge. xxxviii. 24; De. xxii. 22.

d Pr. vi 27, 29, 32.

"Every permitted sin incrusts the windows of the soul and blinds our vision, and every victory over evil clears the vision of the soul, so that we can see God a little plainer."— *J. Wilbur Chapman.*

13—15. (13) **despise . . maid servant,** he might have "despised" or slighted the cause of his servants when they had ground of complaint against him.[e] But in fact he had treated them not as possessions but as persons, who had rights as well as himself, 14, 15.[f] This treatment of them was due to the feeling that all men are children of the same God,[g] who will avenge wrong done to any, whether slave or free.— *Cam. Bib.* (14) **riseth up,** to judge the cause of the despised and oppressed servant. **visiteth,** to make search into the matter.

The sinner's defense in the day of sudden visitation (*vs.* 14).—I. What shall we do? 1. Shall we flee? 2. Attempt to resist? 3. Invoke the aid of our fellow sinners, saints, angels? 4. Harden ourselves to brave our fate? 5. Throw ourselves on the mercy of God, His general mercy, His mercy in Christ? II. What shall we answer? 1. That we are sinless? 2. That we were driven into sin by an irresistible necessity? 3. That we did not receive sufficient warning? 4. That we were too busy to attend to religion? 5. That our punishment is disproportionate to our guilt? 6. That we ought to be favored with a new term of probation? Apply both of these questions to individuals, and urge on them the acceptance of the only method of salvation.— *G. Brooks.*

The happiest man.—The happiest man on earth, nay, the only happy man, is the "man in Christ." In him thou beholdest at the same time, the most important, as well as the most mysterious phenomenon under heaven. His exterior indeed at most, but little or nothing of his dignity That which distinguishes him from others is within. Let us call up for once such an individual before us. We ask, Whence art thou? He points upwards. What is thy Father? He is an architect. What has He built? The world. What is His name? "The Lord of Hosts." What, is God thy Father? Yes, God is my Father. Why dost thou call Him thy Father? Because He loves me with paternal affection. I was begotten by Him. And dost thou possess great riches? My treasure is God.— *Krummacher.*—*The relations of masters and servants*, employers and employed, have undergone vast changes since

he speaks of his servants as, by birth, his equals

e "This recognition of the rights of servants, and of their common origin from the same Father as their masters (*vs.* 15), is an evidence that *slavery* is a contravention of that primitive jurisprudence wh. regulated human society in the age and country of Job, and was a part of the deposit of Divine tradition to man."— *Wordsworth.*

f Ex. xxi. 20; Le. xxv. 43; Col. iv. 1; Ja. ii. 13.

g Mal. ii. 10; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1, 9; Philemon 16.

"I tremble," said President Jefferson once speaking of slavery in the

United States, "when I remember that God is just."

"By the law of slavery, man, created in the image of God, is divested of the human character, and declared to be a mere chattel" — *Chas. Sumner.*

those ancient days. We all live under the equal protection of the laws of the land, and the general spirit of the law is to protect the weaker against the stronger, the poor against the encroachment of the rich. But in Christianity this relation receives a new meaning and sanctity by being brought under the great central relation in which we stand to Christ. And we have a beautiful example of the Christian treatment of the servant in St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon. To set our servants good examples, and to care for their moral and spiritual welfare, is the duty of a Christian master or mistress. — *Pul. Com. Slavery.* — It is observed by Homer, that "a man loses half his virtue the day that he becomes a slave;" he might have added with truth that he is likely to lose more than half when he becomes a slave-master. — *Whately.*

he speaks of his kindness to the poor

16—18. (16) **desire,** kindness to the poor was a virtue of great importance in the patriarchal ages.[a] Comp. Eliphaz's charge, ch. xxii. 7. **to fail,** in vain expectation of relief. (17) **myself alone,** without regarding the claims of strangers or guests.[b] (18) **he . . me,** rather, he (the fatherless) grew up with me. Job probably did not achieve his greatness; he was born to it. Even from his youth he took the place toward the poor of a patron and father.— *Davidson.* **her,** the widow; *vs.* 16.

Hospitality (*vs.* 17).— We did not arrive at the foot of the mountain till after sunset, and it was almost night when we entered the plain; but as it was full of villages, mostly inhabited by Maronites, we entered into the first we came to, to pass the night there. It was the priest of the place who wished to receive us; he gave us a supper under the trees, before his little dwelling. As we were at table, there came by a stranger, wearing a white turban, who, after having saluted the company, sat himself down to the table, without ceremony; ate with us during some time, and then went away, repeating several times the name of God. They told us it was some traveler, who, no doubt, stood in need of refreshments, and who had profited by the opportunity, according to the customs of the East, which is to exercise hospitality at all times, and towards all persons.— *De la Roque.— John Howard.*— His sublime life proved that even physical weakness could remove mountains in the pursuit of an end recommended by duty. The idea of ameliorating the condition of prisoners engrossed his whole thoughts and possessed him like a passion; and no toil nor danger nor bodily suffering could turn him from that great purpose of his life.

"By the law of slavery, man, created in the image of God, is divested of the human character, and declared to be a mere chattel" — *Chas. Sumner.*

"The stern law of Arab. hospitality demands that whenever a guest is present at a meal, whether there be much or little, the first and best portion must be laid before the stranger." — *Robinson.*

Lu. xiv. 13, 14; Ro. xii. 13.

and of his aid to orphans

19—21. (19) **perish,** letting them die without giving them any relief.[c] (20) **loins . . me,** the parts of the body benefited by Job are poetically personified, and represented as thanking him.[d] (21) **my help in the gate,** at the place of justice, because he saw that the judges would render for him a favorable verdict.[e]

Making a poor man happy.— Dr. Brown, who was many years Bishop of Cork and Ross, observing one day, at a visitation, a stout country parson of the consistory, with a tattered gown and an old wig, particularly examined him as to the state of religion in the parish in which he officiated. The clergyman, who felt that honest poverty was no disgrace, answered the bishop's question with good sense and modesty, and said that he was a curate of about forty pounds a year, for which he did the duty of two churches; that he had a family of eight children, and not being able to afford a horse, he walked every year up to the visitation, a distance of thirty miles. He added, that if it were not for the additional labor of his own hands, with those of his wife and eldest son, they must want the necessaries of life. The bishop heard this artless story with much attention, and praising the conduct of the clergyman, said he would take the first opportunity that occurred to him to better his situation. With the Bishop of Cork to fulfil a promise was a point of duty, and not a matter of convenience, and in less than three months he presented the curate of two parishes with a living worth between four and five hundred pounds a year. The poor curate on receiving this intelligence hastened to town with the whole of his family to thank his generous benefactor. The bishop was pleased with so unsophisticated a mark of gratitude, entertained the whole family with great hospitality, and when they took their leave, presented each with some domestic gift. — *Percy Anec.*

"Job had a good conscience in the recollection of his dealings with the poor. It could not have been for any deficiency in the exercise of these virtues that his calamities had come upon him."— *Barnes.*

"The blessing of the thankful is transferred fr. the person to the limbs wh. need, and are benefited by the warmth imparted." —*Delitzsch.*

"Job had a strong party who favored him, and might readily have carried any point he liked."—*Barnes*

Job. xxix. 7-10.

had he failed in these duties he would deserve to suffer

22, 23. (22) **arm fall,**[f] the falling away of the limbs was one of the most extreme features of the disease (elephantiasis) fr. wh. Job was probably suffer-

"Let my shoulder fall out

ing. **arm,** the forearm; let forearm be loosened away from the upper. **bone,** chanel-bone; the higher bone of the arm. (23) **terror to me,** the fear of God's judgments ever kept me in the ways of righteousness. **his highness,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "his excellency, I could no nothing."[a] The majesty of God was so real to him that he dare not have persisted even had he begun such a course.

The fear of God a good man's preservative against sin. — Seen in the case of Joseph and Nehemiah as well as of Job. The consideration of God's displeasure against the sinner and the punishment threatened against the sin is *one* motive for resisting temptation and practicing good, though not the highest. Rather, it is the last source of defense against temptation when others fail. It is better to abstain from sin and practice good, from hatred to sin itself and from love to God and good-doing, than from fear of His wrath. In gospel exhortations to resist temptation and to do good, the appeals rather are made to the believer's gratitude for mercies received, to his position and privileges in Christ, and to the example of his Divine Master and Father, than to his fears of punishment and the Divine anger. Fear is a right and important motive, but rather for the servant than the child. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry: Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15). Yet a loving and right-minded child will fear to offend a father, even more than a servant fears to offend a master. Love is a more powerful principle than fear; yet fear may be called in to help when love is not sufficiently strong in itself. — *Hom. Com.*

of its shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from its bone." — *Delitzsch.*

a Ps. lxxvi. 7; cxix 120.

Vs. 22. "It is said, 'If I have done as you say, may these legs be broken.' 'Yes, let these eyes be blind, if I have seen the thing you mention.' 'May this body wither and faint, if I am guilty of that crime.' 'If I uttered that expression, then let the worms eat out this tongue.' "— *Roberts.*

24—28. (24) **gold my hope,** he had shown no excessive delight in earthly possessions.[b] (25) **rejoiced,** as if I might confide in this gathered wealth, and so was taken away from trust in God.[c] (26) **sun . . moon,** as objects of worship. "The Zabian form of adoration, the earliest defection from true worship." (27) **kissed my hand,** "recognized form of adoration which seemed to have been observed in secret long after the public worship of sun, moon and stars had been forbidden." — *Cox.* (28) **denied the God,** *R. V.*, "lied to God," who made both sun and moon. The crime was treason against the Supreme Being.

Spiritual idolatry (*vss.* 24–26). — Job declared that he had never been guilty of this great impiety. Consider then — I. The disposition here specified. An undue regard to wealth is extremely common in this world. II. The sinfulness of it. It denies in fact — 1. That God is the only source of happiness to man; 2. That He is all-sufficient to that end. Improvement: — (1) For reproof; (2) For instruction in righteousness. — *Simeon.*

Worshiping empty bottles. — We have read of a lady missionary in India who on visiting a certain town found the place smitten with cholera. She gave to some of the patients a specific for cholera, and ordered further supplies of the medicine for other sufferers. On her return she was delighted, on meeting the chief man of the place, to hear him say, "We have been so much benefited by your medicine that we have decided to accept also your God." To prove the reality of what he said, he led her into their temple, where she saw the empty bottles arranged in order on a shelf; and immediately the whole company of natives prostrated themselves upon the floor in worship to the bottles as a god. It is quite possible that very Christian people may sometimes fall into an analogous idolatry. An excessive reverence or admiration for certain formulas of worship, capable of conveying a true blessing when the worship is really in the Spirit, but useless as empty medicine bottles when the Spirit is lacking, may not be so remote in character from the worship of empty bottles. — *D. Berger.*

so also, if he had atheistically trusted in wealth

b "This not a crime wh. has been laid to his charge by his friends· his conscience, prob. more enlightened than theirs, warned him of a danger, wh. to them may have seemed trifling."—*Spk. Com.* 1 Ti. vi. 17; Je. ix. 23.

c "Covetousness is covert idolatry, as it transfers the heart fr. the Creator to the creature." (Col. iii. 5.) — *Fausset.* 1 Ki. xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2.

The worshiper is always being assimilated to his idol. He who adores gold crushes and quenches the finer spiritual qualities; appetite for worldly things dominates the inner man.

29—31. (29) **hated me,** consideration for enemies was a sign of high and noble character, a foreshadowing of the spirit Christ enjoined. Eliphaz had made this rejoicing a test of righteousness.[d] **lifted up myself,** in malicious triumph, at the calamities of my enemies. (30) *R. V.*, "Yea, I suffered not my mouth to sin by asking his life with a curse."[e] He had never even, in his haste, cursed an enemy or wished a death. Comp. Prov. xxiv. 17 *ff.*; xxv. 21 *f.* (31) **men . . not Job,** applies to the men of his tent to say whether he had ever neglected to show due hospitality. **Oh,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Who can find one that hath not been satisfied with his flesh?" His very servants were filled with the spirit of hospitality. The apodosis is wanting.

or if he had triumphed over his foes

d Mat. v. 43-46.

e Ro. xii. 14.

"By demanding his life with a curse or imprecation."— *Spk. Com.*

"Stories of judgments by wh. the want of hospitality has been visited, form an important element of the popular traditions of the Arabs."—*Delitzsch*

"Happy the man who sees a God employed in all the good and ill that chequers life." *Cowper.*

Kindness to enemies.— After the dispersion of the Spanish Armada in 1588, Juan Lomes de Medina, who had been general of twenty hulks, was, with about two hundred and sixty men, driven in a vessel to Anstruther in Scotland, after suffering great hunger and cold for six or seven days. Notwithstanding the object for which this fleet had been sent, and the oppressive conduct of the Spaniards to the Scottish merchants who traded with them, these men were most humanely treated. Mr. James Melvil, the minister, told the Spanish officer first sent on shore, that they would find nothing among them but Christianity and works of mercy. The laird of Anstruther, and a great number of the neighboring gentlemen entertained the officers, and the inhabitants gave the soldiers and marines kail, pottage and fish, — the minister having addressed his flock, as Elisha did the king of Israel in Samaria, "Give them bread and water."

or if he had been inhospitable

32—35. (32) **in the street,** as nobody would give him shelter. **to the traveller,** refers to his universal hospitality. His house was on the wayside, and welcome given to all.[a] (33) **covered,** *etc.*, when h did fall into mistake and do wrong, did he cover and hide it up? **as Adam,**[b] could they accuse him of endeavor to cloak his sins and play the hypocrite? (34) **Did I fear,** *R. V.*, "Because I feared the great multitude and the contempt of the families terrified me." **went not out,** as if afraid to meet any one who may have found out my fault. "Have I ever acted like a secretly guilty man?" (35) *R. V.*, "Oh that I had one to hear me! (Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me!) and that I had the indictment which mine adversary hath written;" stating charges openly, so that he might answer them.[c]

Entertaining angels unawares.— Abraham supposed the three strangers (Gen. xviii) to be men; but his course toward them was such that he had no reason for regret when he found they were angels. That is a good way of treating everybody whom we encounter, so that if they should turn out to be angels, they would have no reason to complain of us, and we nothing to be sorry for in our treatment of them.— *Trumbull.* There is a classical fable that Jupiter and Mercury came down to earth to a wonderfully fertile valley that was once the bed of a lake, and being poorly clad they were treated with great neglect and disrespect by the inhabitants, who snubbed the poor but welcomed the rich. But a poor couple, Philemon and Bauces, entertained the strangers in the best way they could. As a reward their pitcher of milk was always full. The next morning the valley had become a lake, which had drowned the village and its wicked inhabitants, while the cottage of Philemon had become a marble palace.

a "In the Houran a traveler may alight at any house he pleases; a mat will be immediately spread for him, coffee made, and a breakfast or dinner set before him. It is a point of honor with the host never to receive the smallest return from a guest."—*Burckhardt.*

b Hos. vi. 7.

c Heb. *tav*, my mark, from *tavah*, to sign.

he could answer all unjust accusation

36, 37. (36) **take it,** my adversary's written accusation.[d] "Once more and for the last time he appeals to God for a fair and open trial, and once more and for the last time he proclaims his integrity to heaven."— *Cox.* **shoulder,** "as that which was his greatest honor. He would even wear it as a diadem upon his brows, as that which would give him kingly dignity and adornment."— *Cam. Bib.* (37) **number,** *etc.*, every act of the course of my life. **prince,**[e] with high and royal bearing.

Report of character.— A young man's character was such as to excite universal disapprobation. He could no longer resist the pressure of public sentiment. He disposed of his property and attempted to resume business in a distant part of the country; but his character, or, rather, his reputation, had gone before him. Men regarded him with suspicion. He was unable to secure the confidence and countenance necessary to success. In this case his sins went before him to his new place of residence. The sins of men go before them still further. They go before them to the judgment, and will be ready to meet them there. What a fearful meeting! how impossible to escape from their accusings and consequences! It is related of a prisoner, that after he had toiled for months in constructing a mine from his dungeon, by means of which he hoped to escape, when at last he broke ground, and let in the light of day, which he had so fondly hoped to enjoy, the first object he saw was an armed jailor waiting to arrest him! That jailer struck far less dismay and despair to the heart of the prisoner than meeting with his sins will strike to the heart of the sinner at the day of judgment.— *Jeffers.*

d "Two documents would be required, the accuser's statement, and the reply of the accused. In the representation of the judgment before Osiris, Thoth, the accuser or advocate, stands before the throne with a scroll in his left hand, and the recording pen in his right: the person on trial stands behind, holding up his hand, in attestation of innocence."—*Spk. Com.*

e Ge. xxxii. 28.

he is willing to suffer if he has been unjust

38—40. (38) **land,** if the land declares I have no rightful claim to it.[f] **furrows . . complain,** *R. V.*, "weep together;" the very ground cries out to

f Job. xx. 19.

heaven against the wrong done to the rightful owner, (39) **without money,** without paying due wages for tillage. **to lose their life,** *lit.* the soul of the owners thereof to breathe out. "Oppressions which brought the owners to death, after which their land was seized without money; or oppressive appropriation of the land so that the rightful owner was brought to death through penury and misery."— *Cam. Bib.* (40) **thistles,**[a] brambles, thorns. **cockle,** noxious weeds. **words,** *etc.*, the controversial words with his friends.[b]

Silent preaching. — We may have no words: we may be without argument, or learning, or power of exposition, and yet by suffering, as if in fellowship with Christ, we may be revealing to other men sources of truth undiscovered and unsuspected by them. Let us, then, take the largest view of life, and not the smallest; let us bring in the whole to assist the part; let us bring within our purview the great field of time in order to illustrate the immediate moment. — *Peop. Bib.*

Words. —

Nothing is lost: the drop of dew,
That trembles on the leaf or flower,
Is but exhaled to fall anew,
In summer's thunder shower;
Perchance to shine within the bow,
That fronts the sun at fall of day;
Perchance to sparkle in the flow
Of fountains far away.
So with our words: or harsh or kind,
Utter'd, they are not all forgot;
But leave some trace upon the mind,
Pass on, yet perish not. — *J. C. Prince.*

a Ge. iii. 18.

b "He had vindicated his character, sustained is positions, and they had nothing to reply." — *Barnes.*

Job answers accusations that applied to life and conduct; we must not suppose that before the heart-searching God He declared his absolute personal righteousness. Even the good man knoweth "the plague of his own heart."

"A blemish may be taken out of a diamond by careful polishing; but if your words have the least blemish there is no way to efface it."—*Confucius.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

Elihu . . his anger burns

1—3. (1) **righteous . . eyes,** refusing to admit their conclusion that he must be a sinner because he was so afflicted. (2) **wrath,** indignation, not anger. **Elihu,**[c] *My God is He.* **Buzite,** descendant of Buz. **Ram,**[d] a family of the Buzites. **justified himself,** was more anxious to affirm his own innocence than to find the righteousness of God in afflicting him. He had even charged God with injustice towards him. Comp. xl. 8. (3) **yet had condemned,** *i. e.* he blames them bec. though they condemned Job they were silenced by him, and unable to show his real error.

Enthusiasm. — Enthusiasm is the normal condition of the true Christian. Sometimes in the month of February, when the thermometer is away down at zero, an ignorant man says, "The sun doesn't give as much heat as usual; it must be burning out and cooling down." But on the very day when the thermometer is at zero, if you could send a pyramid of ice fifty miles in diameter, flying toward the sun at the rate of 270 millions of miles in a minute, it would melt as fast as it flew. We are at a different angle to the sun in February from what we are in July. If you are a cold Christian, you are in a wrong attitude toward Jesus Christ; away from duty, away from prayer, away in worldliness, away in unbelief, indulging in some besetting sin. When you get into the right position with reference to Christ, the blessing will descend upon you most abundantly. — *Theodore Cuyler.*

c "Elihu is the new wisdom of the rising world, that, like the Grecian chorus, with the sanction of the Almighty, sets at naught the subtle prejudices of the older generation." — *Dean Stanley.*

d "The name seems connected with Aram, and the language of Elihu is more strongly marked by Aramaic forms than any part of the book." — *Spk. Com.*

he commences his reply

4—6. (4) **waited,** a patient listener, though his feelings were aroused. **till Job,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "to speak unto Job." **elder than he,** and custom did not permit the younger to speak until the seniors had quite done. (6) **young,** "Elihu's youth determines the character of his thought, which is self-confident, constructive, unconventional, less bound by tradition and precedent than that of his friends." — *Genung.* **durst . . opinion,** "the tone of the original is at once less boastful and more confident than the Eng. Vers." — *Spk. Com.*

A young man. — The elders have spoken; now is the time for youth. Wisdom does not wholly reside with age. In the present day an American freedom is doing away with old-fashioned restraints upon youth, and young people are enjoying a prominence which was once regarded as not becoming. Whether the change is wholly profitable may be gravely questioned. But most assuredly it is not without some advantages. There is an *élan*, a fresh-

vs. 5. "When men are completely confounded, when they have not a word to say in reply, it is said 'In their *vayila*, *i. e.* mouth, there is no answer.'" — *Roberts.*

ness, and a vivacity which only the young can contribute to life; all the world should be thankful for the breezy vigor that accompanies youthful activity, for all the world is the better for it. — *Pul. Com.*

he perceives that the aged are not therefore wise

7—9. (7) **Days,** age should give wisdom, let it be heard. (8) **spirit in man,**[a] it is not mere age and experience that make men wise and able to teach others. It is according as his spirit is or is not enlightened from on high that one speaks words of wisdom or the contrary. — *Rawlinson.* Elihu plainly regarded himself as Divinely guided.[b] (9) **Great . . wise,** not by mere fact of their high position or lengthened years.[c]

Experience. — I. Experience is a possession too often dearly bought and lightly valued. To the wise it is wealth. 1. A beacon, warning from many a rock; 2. A repast: true, it has its bitter herbs; 3. A harp: the mercies of the past put a song in his mouth; 4. A book: wherein he reads of his own heart and of a gracious God. II. Experience is a trust. Days should speak — 1. Of your past mercies; 2. Of your past trials; 3. Of your past sins. III. Experience is a recorded history. Days do speak; they speak to God, and He sends a suitable reply.

Inspiration. — With the inspiration of Nature to illuminate what the inspiration of Revelation has left obscure, heresy in certain whole departments shall become impossible. With the demonstration of the naturalness of the supernatural, scepticism even may come to be regarded as unscientific. And those who have wrestled long for a few bare truths to ennoble life and rest their souls in thinking of the future will not be left in doubt. — *Drummond.* — *Inspired instinct* is greater and trustier than cultivated intellect. Let nature speak. Let all that is deepest in you have full expression. We so often talk up through the burden of our information, acquisition, attainment of any and every kind. We are kept back by the very fact that we may possibly be offending something that is written in the books. We more frequently go by the book than by the soul. By "the book" we do not mean the Book of Revelation, but the man-made book; the traditional system, doctrine, or thought; the scientific form: we are afraid lest we should offend there; and so inspired instinct has not fair play in this great process of spiritual education. If our instinct, being inspired, had fair, free, ample utterance, it would put an end to many a wordy fray. — *Peop. Bib.*

a Comp. Ge. xl. 8; xli. 16; Da. ii. 20, Mat. xi. 25; 1 Co. ii. 10, 12; xii. 8.

b "Understanding or ability to form a judgment is not limited to old age, but only by our allowing the spirit to rule in us in its connection with the Divine." — *Delitzsch.*

c Eccl. iv. 13; Jno. vii. 48; 1 Co. ii. 7, 8.

"The day following is scholar to that which went before."—*Seneca.*

"The virtue wh. nature denies, experience brings to wise men."
—*Politician.*

hence, he, though young, will speak

10—13. (10) **mine opinion,** knowledge given him by the Almighty. (11) "In Elihu's opinion the cause of the three friends was much better than their advocacy of it." — *Cam. Bib.* **searched out,** intimating that their arguments required much searching out and hunting up. (12) **attended,** closely, so as to weigh well the value of what you said. **convinced,** refuted, convicted. (13) **Lest,** *R. V.,* "Beware lest," *etc.,*[d] *i. e.* do not assert that Job was wiser than you had supposed, and his logic only to be answered by God.

Objects of wisdom. —

The wise man, says the Bible, walks with God,
Surveys far on the endless line of life;
Values his soul, thinks of eternity;
Both worlds considers and provides for both;
With reason's eye his passions guards; abstains
From evil; lives on hope; on hope, the fruit
Of faith; looks upward, purifies his soul,
Expands his wings, and mounts into the sky;
Passes the sun, and gains his Father's house,
And drinks with angels from the fount of bliss. — *Pollok.*

d Trans., "Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom, God shall thrust him down, not man." — *Revised English Bible.*

Is. v. 21; Je. ix. 23; 1 Co. iii. 18, 19.

"In the spiritual world, he will be wise who courts acquaintance with the most ordinary and transparent facts in nature."—*Drummond.*

he will now deliver his opinion

14—17. (14) **directed,** the reason why he has not been answered is because I have not yet spoken! **with your speeches,** using your arguments. (15) **were amazed,**[e] better, *are amazed.* An exclamation of astonishment that they could find nothing wherewith to answer Job. **left off,** *etc., R. V.,* "have not a word to say." Elihu speaks to the spectators about the condition of the three friends. (16) **waited,** at the close of Job's last speech. (17) **mine opinion,** declare my knowledge.

Avoiding censoriousness in controversy. — Mr. Newton of London was a very candid and friendly critic, and was often applied to by young authors for his opinions and remarks, which he would give very candidly, and some-

e "It may be that Elihu here turns from the friends to Job, and so passes from the second person to the third."—*Fausset.*

times under the name of Nibblings. On one of these occasions, a practical essay was put into his hand which he approved; but a letter was appended, addressed to an obscure and contemptible writer, who had said very unwarrantable and absurd things on the subject, and whom therefore the writer attacked with little ceremony. The following is a specimen of some of Mr. Newton's nibblings: "Were the affair mine, I would take no notice of Mr. ———; but if I did, it should be with the hope, at least with the desire, of doing good, even to him. This would make me avoid every harsh epithet. He is not likely to be benefited by calling him a fool. The evangelists simply relate what is said and done, and use no bitterness nor severity, even when speaking of Herod, Pilate, or Judas. I wish their manner was more adopted in controversy." — *Whitecross.*

"A man might frame and let loose a star to roll in its orbit, and yet not have done as memorable a thing before God as he who lets go a golden-orbed truth to roll through the generations of time."— *Beecher.*

18–20. (18) **matter,** *R. V.*, "words." Though the friends can say nothing, I can. **constraineth me,** puts pressure on me, forcing me to speak. (19) **belly,** *bosom*, "from which the words of Orientalists in speaking seem to come more than with us; they speak *gutturally.*" — *Faussett.* **burst,** *etc.*, Matt. ix. 17. (20) **refreshed,** or that I may breathe, for he felt almost suffocated with keeping in the truth he knew.

he asserts that he is full of matter

Speaking for good. — A good man will desire to speak for the profit of others. He who knows God's truth will long to declare it to others. So great a treasure is not to be hidden. For Christ's sake and for the world's sake it must be made known far and wide. The Christian should feel that a serious obligation is upon him to lead others to share in those privileges of the gospel which all need, and which are designed for all. St. Paul felt an awful necessity laid on him, and exclaimed, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. ix. 16). The lepers of Samaria felt they would be guilty of a great sin if they feasted in the camp of the Syrians, and did not let the starving city know that there was abundance of good outside the gates (2 Kings vii. 9). But not only is it a duty to preach Christ; it is a great joy. The body may be wearied by the effort, but the soul will be refreshed. There is a cheering and invigorating influence in making truth known; this is greatest when the work is to bring the knowledge of God's love in Christ to sorrowing men and women. — *Pulp. Com.*

"Christians are like the several flowers in a garden, that have on each of them the dew of heaven, which being shaken with the wind, they let fall at each other's roots, whereby they are jointly nourished, and become nourishers of each other."— *Bunyan.*

Not suppression, but expression, is the true life.— *Phillips Brooks.*

21, 22. (21) **accept,** *etc.*, "he fears the anger of God more than the censure of men, the pain of being untrue more than the shame of rebuke." — *Cox* (22) **flattering titles,** wasting his time in the mere formalities of speech. **would soon,** he claims a Divine impulse to utter his message, and declares he has the feelings of a prophet.

but he will speak without partiality

Accepting persons (*vs.* 21).— The Hebrew word here used signifies to surname, or more properly to call a person by a name which does not strictly belong to him, and that generally in compliment or flattery. Mr. Scott on this passage informs us from Pococke, that "the Arabs make court to their superiors by carefully avoiding to address them by their proper names, instead of which they salute them with some title or epithet expressive of respect." — *Burder.* — *The pope and his ambassador.* — It is related of Pope Clement the XIV. (Ganganelli), that when he ascended the papal chair, the ambassadors of the several states represented at his court waited on him with their congratulations. When they were introduced, and bowed, he returned the compliment by bowing also; on which the master of the ceremonies told his highness that he should not have returned their salute. "O, I beg your pardon," said the good pontiff, "I have not been Pope long enough to forget good manners." — *Cheever.*

"Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what we think, and in all things keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred professions of friendship." — *Longfellow.*

"Discretion of speech is more than eloquence; and to speak agreeably to him with whom we deal, is more than to speak in good words, or in good order."— *Bacon.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD.

Elihu continued

he addresses Job

1–3. (1) **Job, I pray thee,** his words are directly addressed to Job, as an answer to his statements and inquiries. (2) **open my mouth,** a phrase always denoting careful, deliberate utterances. **in my month,** or palate,[a] which tastes. Elihu speaks with discrimination, after trying or tasting his words. (3) **and my lips,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "And that which my lips know they shall speak sincerely." "Not distorting the truth through passion, as the friends had done." 1 Thes. ii. 3, 4.

Power of speech— "This day while I write (March 29, 1889) there is one

[a] "The palate represents to the

Heb. the judgment of a sound mind, which examines a thought impartially and thoroughly before it allows it to pass the tongue."—*Spk. Com.*

tongue in Europe in a poor, sick mouth, whose sweet utterances are keeping Europe in Easter peace. A hundred words from that tongue would, in a hundred hours, change the values of all properties in Christendom, and in a hundred days array millions of human beings in hostility, and change the face of affairs in all the continents and islands of the world.— *Deems.* The proverb, "Speech is silver, but silence is gold," is sometimes true; but there are often cases where speech is gold, and silence is death. We should not commit the folly of the man who burned down his barn to get rid of the rats. We are to bridle our tongues, not put them in chains; convert them, and guide them, not destroy them. It is said that Pythagoras enjoined five years of preliminary silence on his pupils. Was it wise? — *Peloubet.*

he professes to be under Divine instruction

4, 5. (4) **made me,**[a] "the appeal is to common reason (ch. xxxiv. 2, 3), which is a divine illumination, but in his animated zeal for God against the charges of Job Elihu feels that this spirit of God is within him in a powerful degree and gives him a higher wisdom than ordinary." — *Cam. Bib.* (5) **in order,** array thyself before me, defend thyself as at a judgment seat.

Influence of teachers. — A certain philosopher was always talking very much to his friends about the garden in which he was in the habit of walking, and where he carried on his studies. At length one of them came to see him, and he found this extraordinary garden was a patch of ground about twice the size of the floor of his own room. "What!" said he, "is this your garden? It's not very broad." "No," said the philosopher, "it's not very broad; but it's a wondrous height!" And so I would say to you, Sunday-school teachers: your work in your class is not a very large one; but it's a wondrous height. It goes up to heaven; to conceive of it aright, it goes right out to eternity. — *Scottish S. S. T. Mag.*

a "In the exalted consciousness of having been originated by the Spirit of God, and being endowed with life from the inbreathed breath of the Almighty, Elihu stands invincible before Job."—*Delitzsch.*

and yet he will speak as a fellow-man

6, 7. (6) **in God's stead,** *R. V.*, "I am toward God even as thou art."[b] I am a man like yourself. You need not fear to plead your cause before me to the utmost, though I am divinely inspired. **formed . . clay,** nipped from the clay, as when the potter nips off a piece of the clay to make a vessel. Elihu's idea is that instead of meeting Job's appeal by manifestations of terror,[c] God has sent him His message by a fellow-man.[d] (7) **my terror,** is only that of a fellow-mortal. I cannot terrify you as God would. Comp. vii. 14; ix. 34. **hand,** "pressure."

Need of sympathy. — There is a sort of sanctimonious spirituality which ignores humanity. This is disgusting to men, and it is the cause of much popular aversion to religion. We cannot help our fellow-men till we recollect we are human like them — frail, fallible, mortal; nay, sinful, fallen, ourselves needing a Saviour. Brotherly sympathy is the first essential for helpful religious influence. — *Pul. Com.*— *Faithful friends.* — "To-day," says Mr. Whitefield in the journal of his first voyage to Georgia, "Colonel C. came to dine with us; and in the midst of our meal, we were entertained with a most agreeable sight. It was a shark, about the length of a man, which followed our ship, attended with five smaller fishes called *pilot-fish*, much like our mackerel, but larger. These I am told, always keep the shark company; and, what is more surprising, though the shark is so ravenous a creature, yet let it be never so hungry, it will not touch one of them. Nor are they less faithful to him; for, as I am informed, if the shark is hooked, very often these little creatures will cleave close to his fins, and are often taken up with him." Go to the pilot-fish, thou that forsakest a friend in adversity, consider his ways and be ashamed. — *Whitecross.*

b LXX. "From clay am I formed as well as thou, and we are formed from the same."

c Job xiii. 21.

d He. iv. 15.

"Nature is not like a fossil that shows in its dead lineaments the traces of an old-world life; she is a mirror of the Divine activity." — *Pul. Com.*

"The end of wisdom is consultation and deliberation."—*Demosthenes.*

he says he has heard Job's self-vindication

8—11. (8) **Surely,** *etc.*, Elihu expresses the utmost astonishment at what he had heard Job say, but he is sure that he heard distinctly.[e] (9) **clean,** ch. ix. 17, 21, 30.[f] (10) **occasions against me,** treats me as an enemy.[g] (11) **stocks,** ch. xiii. 27.

The unchangeableness of God. — God's unchangeableness is not that of a statue, which always wears the same countenance; nor of a cold, hard heart, which has no variation of emotion, but feels the same toward good and bad alike. His is the unchangeableness which belongs to the spirit, the soul, — with infinite variety of emotions and of actions, but with the same character, the same principles, the same knowledge, the same plans, the same love, forever unchangeable; and toward the same persons in the same circumstances, always acting and feeling the same. To men on earth the sun seems constantly

e *See* also Job x. 7; xi. 4; xiii. 23; xvi. 17; xxiii. 10–13; xxvii. 6; xxix. 14.

f *See* Job. vii. 12, 20; xiii. 24, 27;

g *See* Job. vii. 12.

changing. Sometimes it is in the east, sometimes in the west; sometimes at the horizon, again at the zenith; it makes each day of the year a different course through the sky; now it is high noon, and now it is midnight; now eclipsed, and now clouded. But what is it that changes? The earth changes, the seasons change, the clouds change, but the sun itself is the same through all these changes. So men change, their character changes, their actions change, their needs change, and hence their relations to God change; but God is always the same, always loves, always rewards faithfulness and punishes iniquity. He is the same in knowledge, for He knows all that is to be known. He is the same in His purposes and plans, and all His promises are sure, and just as good to-day as when first uttered, because they were made in all knowledge and all wisdom, and He has all power to execute them. — *Peloubet.*

xiv. 16, 17; xvi. 9; xix. 11; xxx. 21; xxxi. 4, 25, 26.

"There is an order of mortals on the earth who do become old in their youth, and die ere middle age." — *Byron.*

12, 13. (12) *R. V.*, "Behold, I will answer thee, in this thou art not just; for God is greater than man." **not just,**[a] in thus regarding God's treatment of you. **greater than man,** *i. e.*, "the moral loftiness of God's nature makes it impossible that He should act in the arbitrary, hostile manner charged against Him by Job (comp. xxxvi. 5)." — *Cam. Bib.* (13) **strive,** desire to argue the matter of His dealings with you.[b] **giveth . . matters,**[c] Job was fretted because God did not explain His dealings. Enough for man to know it is God who does it.

he asserts that Job is unreasonable

a Je. ii. 35.

b Job. xiii. 3; xvi. 21; xxiii. 3-7.

c Heb. "*answereth not*," to accept Job's challenge.

God's equity. — God is true and righteous and holy; He is perfect in His equity and in His standards. Instead of turning away from the judgment of God as a blemish on his character we ought to rejoice in it as another aspect of his benevolence. We must have in God the blooming valley full of beautiful flowers and with the purling streams of grace, and also the dark, frowning crags of Divine judgment, the very intensity of whose shadow implies an intensity of glory, for you never can get shadows without light. Prostrate yourself before an engine, and the very qualities which make it a blessing make it an engine of destruction. God moves on a track of absolute and perfect equity and holiness, and the same qualities that insure that you would be borne forward into the eternal ages if connected with God make it sure that you would be ground to powder if you place yourself before His wheels of judgment. — *A. T. Pierson.*

"Perhaps there is in wisdom, gentle wisdom, that knows our frailties, therefore can forgive, some healing comfort for a guilty mind, some power to charm it into peace again, and bid it smile anew with right affection." — *Thomson.*

14. once,[d] in fact God does reveal His will not once, or in one way only, but twice, in many ways, — three of which are now to be named. **perceiveth it not,** and this is true even though men — you even — do not perceive it.

that God has various modes of speaking

The philosophy and use of dreams. — I. Their philosophy. 1. What originates the dream? often the state of the body; 2. Why do thoughts take such grotesque forms in dreams? the mind in sleep is left uncontrolled by the will. II. Their uses. 1. They serve to throw some light on our spiritual constitution; 2. They are sometimes the organs of Divine communication. — *Thomas.*

d Ps. lxii. 11; Pr. i. 24.

"Souls are made sweet not by taking the acid fluids out, but by putting something in — a great Love, a new Love, a new Spirit, the Spirit of Christ" — *Drummond*

God's voice. — Joseph's different dreams reiterated the same message (Gen. xxxvii. 9). Prophet followed prophet with warning and promise for Israel. The new Christian voice followed the old Jewish voice. God is speaking now, sending one message after another in His providence. We have all heard from God more than once. His was the voice that instilled the first eager desires for goodness in childhood, and His the voice that pleaded amid the passionate enthusiasms of youth. It has sounded in our ears repeatedly among the varied scenes of life, warning against sin and calling to Christian service. It is repeated whenever the Bible is read, whenever Divine truth is preached, whenever conscience is aroused. — *Pul. Com.* — *The purpose of the Divine voices.* — They are to guide and save. "To withdraw from his purpose," when that purpose is evil or dangerous. "To hide pride from man," *i. e.* to save man from his pride. Thus the voices are warning and deterrent They remind us of the "demon" of Socrates, which, he said, told him when he was *not* to do something, but did not prompt him to do anything. We know that God inspires for action, that heavenly voices summon to toil and battle. Yet perhaps we may perceive that the inner voice is more often a restraining than a stimulating voice. For the stimulus we look to the living Christ. Yet the restraint is sent in mercy. God warns, that He may save. — *W. F. Adeney.*

"Revelation never volunteers anything that man could discover for himself — on the principle, probably, that it is only when he is capable of discovering it that he is capable of appreciating it." — *Drummond.*

15—17. (15) **dream,**[e] one of the earliest modes of Div. communication. **slumberings,** the lighter sleep with which dreams are usually associated.

as by means of dreams

e Comp. Job. iv. 12-17.

(16) **sealeth their instruction,** *i. e.* "the instruction is that communicated when the ear is opened, and a revelation given; and 'to seal' it is to confirm it and give it abiding efficacy. This is done partly by the impressive circumstances and manner of the dream." — *Cam. Bib.* (17) **withdraw,**[a] *etc.*, this is quite a different explanation of suffering from that the friends had given, or Job had reached. Elihu says God teaches that it bears relation to moral training and culture. **hide pride,** "a peculiar expression for wearying a man of his pride, making him sick of the self-confidence by which he has so often been betrayed." — *Cox.*

Influence of a dream. — "A poor man," says the late Rev. Thomas Scott, "most dangerously ill, of whose religious state I entertained some hopes, seemed to me in the agonies of death. I sat by his bed for a considerable time, expecting to see him expire; but at length he awoke as from sleep and noticed me. I said, 'You are extremely ill.' He replied, 'Yes; but I shall not die this time.' I asked the ground of this extraordinary confidence, saying that I was persuaded he would not recover. To this he answered, 'I have just dreamed that you, with a very venerable-looking person, came to me; he asked you what you thought of me. What kind of tree is it? Is there any fruit? You said, No, but there are blossoms. Well, then, he said, I will spare it a little longer.' All reliance upon such a dream I should, in other circumstances, have scouted as enthusiasm and presumption; but it so exactly met my ideas as to the man's state of mind, which, however, I had never communicated to him, and the event, much beyond all expectation, so answered his confidence, by his recovery, that I could not but think there was something peculiar. On his recovery, this man for a time went on very well; but afterwards he gave up all attention to religion, and became very wicked; and when I reminded him of what has been now related, he treated the whole with indifference, not to say with profane contempt. But I have since learned, from very good authority, that, after I left that part of the country, he was again brought under deep conviction of sin; recollected and dolefully bemoaned his conduct towards me, and with respect to his dream, and became a decidedly religious character." — *Whitecross.*

[a] Comp. cases of midnight visions withdrawing men from their purposes, as Ge. xx. 3; xxi. 24.

[a] "Tartini, a distinguished violin player, is said to have composed his 'Devil's Sonata' under the inspiration of a dream, in which the devil appeared to him and invited him to a trial of skill upon his own instrument, which he accepted, and awoke with the music of the sonata so vividly impressed upon his mind that he had no difficulty in committing it to paper."

and by afflictions

18—20. (18) **soul,**[b] *i. e.* "he keeps him from committing any deadly sin which would have brought destruction." (19) **chastened,**[c] this is another voice of God. In this thought of the discipline of pain Elihu far surpasses any conception of the friends. **multitude,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "And with continued strife in his bones," *i. e.* constant pain as in a contest. (20) **dainty meat,** such as he specially loved. By reason of sickness it had become nauseous.

Various views of afflictions. — No man is more unhappy than the man who is never in adversity. In other words, the greatest affliction in life is never to be afflicted. "If my property had not perished," says an ancient philosopher, "I should have perished." Many of the servants of God have been enriched for eternity by being made poor for a time. Our bodies need physic; our trees need pruning; our metals need the furnace; and our minds need the discipline of affliction. Afflictions are blessings to us, when we can bless God for afflictions. Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions. Under the equitable Master whom we serve, we do not suffer a single affliction that hath not for its foundation either His justice, which corrects us for our sins, or His mercy, which would prevent the faults into which we are liable to fall. There is not one affliction, therefore, which is not either a just chastisement or a merciful preservation.

[b] Ps. xxx. 3.

[c] De. viii. 5; Ps. xciv. 12; cxiv. 67, 71; 1 Co. xi. 32; He. xii. 5–11.

Voltaire writes in review of a life of the world, without religion, "I wish I had never been born." The holy Halyburton on his death-bed said, "I long for God's salvation; I bless His name. I have found Him, and die rejoicing in Him, O blessed be God that ever I was born."

which may seem in their severity to threaten life

21, 22. (21) **consumed away,** this expression shows that Elihu was taking such a case of extreme suffering as was that of Job. "Such illness gives the sufferer time to review his life and conduct and consider his errors." **cannot be seen,** too painful a sight for any to look at. (22) **near unto the grave,** sickness may gain such a hold that life is despaired of. **destroyers,**[d] death and his attendants and precursors, the pangs preceding dissolution.

Faith in affliction. — We could take you to many scenes that would show the infinite profitableness of faith in God. We should take you to houses that have been desolated by misfortune, and show you the profitableness of religion in the sweet patience which it has wrought in sad hearts; we should take you to the house of affliction, where youth has been turned into old age by long-continued pain, and show how the fire has left the gold and only consumed the dross; we should take you to the chamber "where the good

[d] "Angels of death commissioned by God to end man's life. (2 Sa. xxiv. 16; Ps. lxxviii. 49.) Or the death-pains personified." — *Fausset.*

The obedience that leads to the fur-

man meets his fate," and as he smiles at the last enemy, and passes upward to the quiet and holy place, calm, fearless, exultant, we should say, "Behold the profit which comes of knowing and loving the Saviour of the world." — *Peop. Bib.*

Divinity taught by affliction. — A minister was recovering from a dangerous illness, when one of his friends addressed him thus: "Sir, though God seems to be bringing you up from the gates of death, yet it will be a long time before you will sufficiently retrieve your strength, and regain vigor enough of mind to preach as usual." The good man answered, "You are mistaken, my friend; for this six weeks' illness has taught me more divinity than all my past studies and all my ten years' ministry put together."

nace of fire will find in the end that it is a bed of roses.

If you would be miserable, look within. If you would be distracted, look around. If you would be happy, look up.

23, 24. (23) **messenger,** *R. V.*, "an angel;" any man is so called "who can show his fellows what is right and fair and good." — *Cox.* Elihu's primary reference is to himself as Divinely sent to explain God's ways with Job. **interpreter,**[a] one able to explain the meaning of the affliction, and the way of improving it. **among a thousand,** one of the many messengers and influences God uses for the good of men. **uprightness,** *R. V.*, "what is right for him." (24) **Then he,** God is gracious. God, not the angel, is the speaker in the rest of the verse. God commands that he be delivered from his affliction and saved from death. **ransom,** "may be the sinner's repentance and return to rectitude, or possibly the words may mean nothing more than that God is pleased of His goodness to hold the sinner as ransomed and delivered from the consequences of his sin." — *Cam. Bib.*

the Divine ransom

Comp. Hag. i. 13; Mal. ii. 7 Re. i. 20.

The benefit of visiting the sick. — I. The office of those who visit the sick. It is to show the righteousness of God — 1. In punishing sin; 2. In His way of pardoning sin. II. The benefit arising from the faithful discharge of this office. 1. Even to the bodies of men; 2. More especially to their soul. Reflections: — (1) How honorable an office is that of a visitor to the sick; (2) How blind are they who are averse to having such pious instructors introduced to their sick and dying friends. — *C. Simeon.*

[a] Ge. xlii. 22; 2 Chr. xxxii. 31, marg.; Isa. xliii. 27.

Theory of atonement. — Christ did not die to make God willing to save, — He was more than willing, — but to enable God to be righteous in His forgiveness and salvation, so that His very forgiveness should not increase unrighteousness both in the one forgiven and in the world. This a real problem and cannot be ignored. The thoughtful mind will not be satisfied till it can see some way in which the sacrifice of Christ might accomplish this end. I have never yet seen anything that so well suggests the truth as the oft-repeated story of Zeleucus, the king of the Locri. He enacted a law against adultery, the penalty of which was the putting out of both the eyes. The first one found guilty was the king's own son. But, out of love to his son, the king had one of his own eyes put out, and one of his son's. Thus he saved his son from blindness, but at the same time so honored his law that no one would imagine they could break it with impunity. It touched the heart of the son to see what his father had suffered for him, and led him to repentance and a new life. So the sufferings of a divine Saviour so express God's righteous hatred of sin, and also of His righteous love for man, that forgiving men in this way increases the righteousness of the world. — *Peloubet.*

The superintendent of the Inebriate Asylum at Binghamton, N. Y., says: — "No man ever has gone from this asylum cured of his inebriety unless there was some one — a sister, a mother, a wife, a maiden — who prayed for him, hoped for him, wept for him, at home" The great redemptive power in life is the power of a suffering heart.

25, 26. (25) **flesh,** mentioned bec. Job's was a disease of the skin and flesh. **a child's,** or childhood.[b] **days . . youth,** "by this various Divine teaching, man, if he profit by it, is made a new creature; he is restored to health both of body and soul; his youth is renewed."—*Cox.* (26) **favorable,** Job had complained that he prayed in vain.[c] **see . . joy,** rejoice in the Div. favor and fellowship; shall not even seem to be under a frown. **his righteousness,** deal with him according to his conduct.

the renewal of youth

[b] Comp. Naaman, 2 Ki. v. 10-14; see also Jno. iii. 3-7.

[c] Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9.

Strength of man. — The greatest strength of man comes from using the powers of God. The difference between the power of animals and of civilized men lies chiefly in the fact that man uses the powers of nature. Weak in himself, he is strong in God. By using the powers around him one man can do the work of a thousand and can exert the strength of a million men. It is the same with the power of man in spiritual things. Only in using God's spiritual powers, His wisdom, His providence, that makes even the wrath of men to praise Him. His Holy Spirit convincing, converting, inspiring, His power that compels even the "stars in their courses" to fight for His children — — only thus can man be made strong. — *Peloubet. Studying the laws of health.*

"The Master's work may make weary feet, but it leaves the spirit glad."

"Auspicious health appear'd on zephyr's wing; she seem'd a cherub most divinely bright, more soft than air, than

blushing morning light. Hail! blooming goddess! thou propitious power, whose blessings next to life implore; with so much lustre your bright looks endear, that cottages are courts when these appear. Mankind, as you vouchsafe to smile or frown, finds ease in chains or anguish in a crown."—*Garth.*

— The written Bible is not the only volume that God has given us. There are two Bibles. One is a printed book, and the other is nature. And the laws of God in nature are as much laws as those in the printed book. You are as much bound to find out and obey the former as the latter. The pains and penalties of violation are just as certain in the one case as in the other. And if God has imposed upon you the duty of educating a child for another world, and if that education is associated with the child's bodily condition, you are bound to know how to bring the child up healthily. Much attention should be given by parents to this subject, for many of the infelicities of children spring from their physical state. Many and many a child has been spoiled by reason of wrong training in this regard. The life of many a child has been a fruitless endeavor to overcome the mischiefs done to his health through the ignorance of parents.—*H. W. Beecher.*

God waits for human penitence

27—30. (27) **He,** *R. V.*, "He singeth before men and saith," *i. e.* the restored penitent. **profited me not,** *lit.* "he has not requited me according to my deserts."[a] (28) **will deliver,** *R. V.*, "He hath redeemed my soul," this is a part of the song. **his life,** *R. V.*, "my life." **see the light,** the light of life, for he is redeemed from the darkness of the pit. (29) **oftentimes,** *R. V.*, "Twice, yea thrice." (30) **his soul,**[b] in love and not in anger. **to be enlightened,** this is God's purpose in afflicting men; He aims at enlightening their understandings, and so enabling them to comprehend His ways, and clearly see the path which it is their true wisdom to walk in.— *Rawlinson.*

God waiting to discover repentance, and to accept the penitent (*vs.* 27).— I. The first truth that meets us in these words is this, that God's eye is fixed upon every individual in the family of man. II. That for which God especially looks upon men is to discover the full confession of sin. True contrition includes — 1. An acknowledgment of sin's essential guilt; 2. It will explicitly confess the fact of sin; 3. It will confess its disappointing and deceptive folly. Learn — (1) To view confession of sin as a duty of the first importance; (2) That each one has reason to make the confession of sin in the text his own.— *R. Eden.*

Delayed repentance (*vs.* 27).— "Ah! Mr. Hervey," said a dying man, "the day in which I ought to have worked is over, and now I see a horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness forever. Woe is me! When God called I refused. Now I am in sore anguish, and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows. I shall be destroyed with an everlasting destruction. *The source of redemption.*— God himself brings about the new, happy condition of the restored penitent. He could not restore himself; no creature in the universe could give him what he needs. For the evil was death, and the requirement was a gift of life. Only He who first created life, and whoever lives in all His creatures, can renew life. Regeneration implies a Divine energy. Those forms of religion which are satisfied with man as he is, may dispense with any very marked activity on God's side, in religion; but when the ruin of man is acknowledged, the chief element in religion must be, not man's devotion, but God's salvation. Now, this is what we see in the Bible. There man appears in his sinfulness and helplessness, utterly unfit for heaven, or even for earthly life in its beauty and fruitfulness, and there God is seen as the mighty Deliverer, coming to the rescue of His helpless child.— *Pul. Com. Repentance.* — There is a popular impression abroad, that repentance is simple sorrow for sin. A man may be sorry for sin, simply because of the consequences of sin which he has experienced, or because of the consequences which some other person whom he loves may have experienced; and yet he may not be so sorry for sin but that as soon as those consequences are removed, or even before, he will commit that very same sin again and with delight. Pharaoh was sorry for sin, yes, bitterly sorry for disobeying God, every time one of those dreadful plagues came down upon him and his household and nation: and yet the moment the plague was removed, Pharoah was the same as before and his heart was as hard against God as it had ever been. Whatever repentance may be, it is not simply sorrow for sin. — *Jas. M. Gray.*

[a] "It has not been recompensed to me according to my deserts, favor instead of right is come upon me."—*Delitzsch.*

[b] Is xxxviii. 17; Ps. lvi. 13.

"Try what repentance can — what can it not? Yet what can it, when one cannot repent? O wretched state! O bosom, black as death! O limèd soul; that, struggling to be free, art more engaged. Help, angels, make assay! Bow stubborn knees! and, heart, with strings of steel, be soft as sinews of the newborn babe; all may be well!"—*Shakespeare.*

"Upon our removal hence, there will be no place for repentance, nor any possibility of returning unto God by penitence. In this life, or nowhere, must be laid the hope of eternal life; here, or nowhere, must our adoration of the true God, and the fruits of our faith, secure to us an interest in the kingdom of heaven."—*Tertullian.*

Elihu professes to wish to justify Job

31—33. (31) **Mark well,** this expression indicates a division in the speech: a break, which may afford Job an opportunity of reply. **hold thy peace,** "here the effect of Elihu's speech on Job is indirectly portrayed. He may have stirred, or lifted a hand, or opened his lips, as if about to reply, — but checked himself."— *Cox.* (32) **desire to justify thee,**[c] do thee justice; do

[c] "Job had sought to justify himself

not therefore misconstrue my words. (33) **teach thee,** by yet further explanations. **wisdom,**[a] the true view of the character and dealings of God: and the true submission to Him.

Repentance not censurable. — If a man has murdered his friend and benefactor, and if, when brought to repentance, we find him laboring under the heaviest sorrow, it is not his repentance that we condemn, but the crime which brought this distress upon him. In like manner the griefs of the penitent are to be charged, not to the account of religion, as so many drawbacks from its felicity, but to the account of sin, as so many additions to the dreadful catalogue of its mischiefs, and pains, and plagues. In repentance itself, considered as contrition for sin and hatred to it, arising from a timely discovery of our guilt and danger, there is no ground for pain, but much for gratitude and satisfaction. It never needeth to be repented of. — *Bunting. Repentance.* — He who would be most like Christ must pay the cost. As God reckons jewelry, there is no gem that shines with more brilliancy than the tear of true penitence; yet God only knoweth what heart-pressure and what crushing of wilful pride may have been necessary to force the tear to the cheek of a stubborn sinner.— *Theodore L. Cuyler. Death-bed repentance.* — Not long since, a Congregational preacher, who had been forty-one years in the ministry, said: "I have never in all my experience as a pastor, known of a single instance in which a repentance on what was supposed to be a death-bed proved to be of any value whatever after the person recovered." This was strong language. We involuntarily exclaimed, "Have you known many such cases?" "More than I dare remember." "And as many more, perhaps, where the person died." "Yes, fully as many more." "Then did not the bitter failure of these death-bed repentances to bear the tests of time shake your confidence in their value under the tests of eternity?" "It did — it does," said the clergyman, with tears in his eyes. The conversation made a deep impression on our mind. It was strong evidence, from a quarter in which we least looked for it, of the utter paltriness and insufficiency of fear as a motive when brought to bear upon decisions in spiritual things.— *S. S. Messenger.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

1—3. (1) **Furthermore,** Elihu at once renewed his address, as Job showed no disposition to make a reply.[b] (2) **ye wise men,** not simply Job and his friends, but those in the circle of spectators and listeners, which, as is assumed, has assembled round the disputants.[c] **have knowledge,** the practical knowledge of experience. (3) **mouth,** or *palate:* ch. xxxiii. 2.

A word in season.— A minister was some time ago speaking of one whom he had many years known as a consistent and exemplary Christian, and observed that the first serious impressions were made on his mind by a word dropped from the lips of a stranger. In his youth he was driving a number of cattle to a fair, when some of the animals becoming unruly, he uttered a profane exclamation, and swore in a manner that is, alas, too common. A stranger, on horseback, who happened to be passing by at the moment, said to him, "My friend, those brutes have no souls, they are not capable of damnation; but you have an immortal soul, and your curses must fall on yourself." The stranger rode off; but his words were riveted in the mind of the youth, and proved the means of awakening a train of thought and feeling the most salutary and profitable. He sought the means of grace and the way of salvation, and became sober, circumspect and useful. Perhaps the stranger may never know, in this world, the good effects of his well-timed reproof; but let others be encouraged thus to drop a word which may prove as "bread cast upon the waters, to be seen after many days."

4—6. (4) **choose,** *lit. prove by means of a touchstone,*[d] find out what is right. **good,** *i. e.* befitting to the occasion; what view of this difficult matter may worthily be taken.[e] (5) **righteous,** in respect of the accusations made by the friends against him. **my judgment,** *R. V.*, "my right."[f] The right of the righteous to temporal prosperity. Job regarded God as acting towards him in mere *sovereignty.* (6) **lie,** *R. V.*, "Notwithstanding my right I am accounted a liar; my wound is incurable, though I am without transgression," *i. e.* when I affirm my rectitude God's treatment of me belies my affirmations by making me guilty, and this against my right (Comp. ch. ix. 20; xvi. 8).— *Cam. Bib.*

before God; he needed to be shown that he could be justified only by seeking for righteousness in God, not in himself."— *Wordsworth.*

Ro. x. 3; Phil. iii. 7-9.

a 1 Co. i. 30.

"While music flows around,
Perfumes, and oils, and wine, and wanton hours;
Amid the roses fierce repentances rears
Her snaky crest; a quick-returning pang
Shoots through the conscious heart."
—*Thomson.*

"'Tis ever thus with noble minds, if chance they slide to folly; remorse stings deeper, and relentless conscience pours more of gall into the bitter cup of their severe repentance."— *Mason.*

the ear trieth words

b "Some of the language of Elihu in this chap. has been censured as harsh and unfeeling towards Job. The words of truth, though they might seem to be stern, were also words of love."— *Wordsworth.*

c 1 Co. x. 15.

Our repentance is far from being the condition of God's forgiveness; the fact is our tears need washing in the blood of Christ before they can be acceptable. God was in Christ putting away the obstacles to our communion with him. *A. J. Gordon.*

Job charged with self-righteousness

d Jno. vii. 24; Ro. xii. 2; 1 Co. vi. 5; Phil. i. 10.

e "The wise man will contend not for victory but for truth."-*Robinson.*

f Comp. Job xiii. 18; xxiii. 10; xxvii. 2.

wound, *lit. arrow:* fig. for disease with which he was smitten. **without transgression,** as an immediate and adequate cause for such smiting.[a]

Repentance and self-righteousness (*a Persian legend*). — Jesus, while on earth, was once entertained in the cell of a dervish of eminent reputation for sanctity. In the same city dwelt a youth sunk in every sin, "whose heart was so black that Satan himself shrunk back from it in horror;" he appearing before the cell of the monk, as smitten by the very presence of the Divine Prophet, began to lament deeply the wickedness of his life past, and shedding abundant tears to implore pardon and grace. The monk indignantly interrupted him, demanding how he dared to appear in his presence and in that of God's holy prophet; assured him that for him it was in vain to seek forgiveness; and in proof how inexorably he considered his lot was fixed for hell, exclaimed, "My God, grant me but one thing, that I may stand far from this man on the judgment day." On this Jesus spoke, "It shall be even so: the prayer of both is granted. This sinner has sought mercy and grace, and has not sought them in vain — his sins are forgiven; his place shall be in paradise at the last day. But this monk has prayed that he may never stand near this sinner — his prayer, too, is granted; hell shall be his place. for there this sinner shall never come." — *Saadi. Social unity forbids lying.* — Let not the eye lie to the foot, nor the foot to the eye. If there be a deep pit, and its mouth covered with reeds shall present to the eye the appearance of solid ground, will not the eye use the foot to ascertain whether it is hollow underneath, or whether it is firm and resists? Will the foot tell a lie, and not the truth as it is? And what again if the eye were to spy a serpent or a wild beast, will it lie to the foot? — *Chrysostom. Self-righteousness.* — Men are sometimes self-righteous because all they see in the law is an outward formal keeping of its precepts to which they can attain; as a child, seeing a star rising over the hills, may think it but a street-lamp and that he can easily reach it; but whosoever sees the spirit of the law, as the expression of God's holy character, will be convicted of sin, for he will see how high and great and radiant that law is; as to the astronomer, the child's star is known to be infinitely above him, a measureless world of light. — *Peloubet.*

[a] Job xvi. 17.

"What! will this penitence not move thee? Know there is a rose-lipp'd seraph sits on high, who ever bends his holy ear to earth to mark the voice of penitence, to hear her solemn sighs, to tune them to his harp, and echo them in divine music up to the throne of grace." —*Mason.*

"To love truth for truth's sake is the principal part of human perfection in this world and the seed plot of all other virtues." — *Locke.*

"Earnestly observe the uncompromising condemnation, by the Gospel, of all kinds and phases of dishonesty. Nothing untruthful can possibly be holy. A pious fraud is, in the light of true Christianity a most grievous sin."—*Moule.*

and with being a scorner

7—9. (7) **drinketh up,** an image taken from the camel.[b] "Job had in no respect scorned God; and if he had occasionally poured some scorn upon his 'comforters,' must it not be admitted that they had deserved it?" —*Rawlinson.* **scorning,**[c] to Elihu, Job's language seemed daring and irreverent. (8) **goeth in company,** makes common cause with, by taking up their sentiments. (9) **profiteth,** *etc.*, Job had meant so far as the providences of this world are concerned. This seemed to intimate that God did not actually govern righteously.[d]

Thirsting for scorn (*vs.* 7.) — Of a man who does not care for contempt or hatred, it is said, "He drinks up their hatred like water." When a man is every way superior to his enemies, "Ah, he drinks them up like water." "He is a man of wonderful talents, for he drinks up science as water." Thus, Elihu wished to show that Job had hardened himself, and was insensible to scorn, for he had swallowed it as water. — *Roberts. False friendship.* — A great deal of evil comes from false friendship. The danger is doubly great because it comes under the guise of friendliness, — a wolf in sheep's clothing. "Give me," says one, "a roaring devil rather than a sleeping one; for a sleeping devil makes me slumber, but roaring ones provoke me to run to my master." How many young people are ruined by bad companionship! How large a part of drunkenness comes from the custom of social drinking! How many are kept away from Christ and heaven by fear of their friends! Beware of the Jonadab friendship, whose test is that it is willing to lead you or join you in sin. — *Peloubet.*

[b] Job xv. 16.

[c] Scorn. fr. Fr. *écorner*, to break off the horn. Fr. L. *ex.* from; *cornu*, horn. Extreme and passionate contempt. See Ps. i. 1.

[d] Job ix. 22, 30; xxi. 7; xxiv. 1; Mal. iii. 14.

"Falsehood is the natural outgrowth of every other crime, as an attempt at defense from discovery and punishment."

what one sows he shall reap

10—12. (10) **far be it,** *i. e.* it is a thing profane even to think of. **wickedness,** injustice.[e] "Elihu's argument in these verses is the truest answer that can be given: injustice on the part of God is inconsistent with the idea of God. The three friends combined it with their other theory that good and evil befell men solely according to the principle of retribution, and that this latter principle was that according to which God's actual providence was entirely administered. Job could not consent to this reasoning." — *Cam. Bib.* (11) **the work,** "recompense is exactly proportioned to man's deeds."[f]

The sword of justice. — When the Son of God was made of a woman, and made under the law, there was heard the most awful voice that ever was

[e] Ge. xviii. 25; De. xxxii. 4; Ro. ix. 14; Ja. i. 13.

[f] Ps. lxii. 12; Je. xxxii. 19; 2 Co. v. 10; Re. xxii. 12.

" Trans. *vs.* 10. 'Far be it from

heard in the universe yet: "Awake, O sword, against the Man that is My fellow, and smite the shepherd" — smite Him! When there was a Man in the world that was Jehovah's fellow there was some one who could magnify the law, in smiting whom justice could obtain its demands. The sword of justice smote Him, struck Him, cut Him. The sword of justice had a commission to smite the Man that was Jehovah's fellow; it smote Him in Bethlehem; it smote Him all along the highway of His life, even to Calvary. On Calvary the strokes of the sword fell heavy; the glances of that sword then darkened the sun; the strokes of the sword shook earth, shook hell; it kept smiting and smiting the Man that was God's fellow, till at last He cried, "It is finished." Then the sword fell down at the foot of the cross, hushed, lulled, pacified; and it lay there till the third hallowed morning, when it was found changed into a sceptre of mercy; and that sceptre of mercy has been waving among mankind ever since. — *Beaumont.* *God's wisdom.* — Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment. Then wait: He will bring forth judgment as the morning, and righteousness as the noonday. Such doctrines establish the heart in gracious confidence. They do not blind men to the tumult and confusion which are so manifest on all the surface of life; such doctrines enable men to cultivate and exemplify the grace or virtue of patience; they acknowledge that appearances are against their doctrine, but they claim time for the Almighty: they reason analogically; they say, look at nature; look at human life; look at any great enterprise entered into by men; what digging, what blasting of rocks, what marvelous confusion, what a want of evident form and shape and design! Yet when months have come and gone, and architects and builders have carried out their whole purpose, they retire, and say, behold what we have been aiming at all the time, — then in great temple, or wide, noble bridge spanning boiling rivers, we see that when we thought all things were in confusion, they were being carried on to order and shape and perfection and utility. — *Peop. Bib.* *Justice the foundation of life.* — The one Divine work, the one ordered sacrifice, is to do justice; and it is the last we are ever inclined to do. Anything rather than that! As much charity as you choose, but no justice. "Nay," you will say, "charity is greater than justice." Yes, it is greater; it is the summit of justice — it is the temple of which justice is the foundation. But you can't have the top without the bottom; you cannot build upon charity. You must build upon justice, for this main reason, that you have not at first charity to build with. It is the last reward of good work. Do justice to your brother (you can do that, whether you love him or not), and you will come to love him. But do injustice to him because you don't love him, and you will come to hate him. It is all very fine to think you can build upon charity to begin with, but you will find all you have got to begin with begins at home, and is essentially love of yourself. — *Ruskin.*

God to do evil, and the Almighty to act wrongfully.'" —*Delitzsch.*

"That which the air is in the elementary world, the sun in the celestial, the soul in the intelligible, justice is the same in the civil. It is the air which all afflicted desire to breathe; the sun which dispelleth all clouds; the soul which giveth life to all things." — *N. Caussin.*

"Sophistry may perplex truth, ingenuity may warp the decrees of justice, and ridicule may raise an undeserved laugh, but where free inquiry prevails, errors will be corrected, justice will be revered, and ridicule will be retorted on those who have abused its influence."—*Ennius.*

"God deigns not to discuss
With our impatient and o'erweening wills,
His times, and ways of working out through us
Heaven's slow but sure redress of human ills."
—*Meredith.*

13—15. (13) **given him a charge,**[a] so as to make Him a servant who could prove unfaithful. God has sole authority, and He himself created the world and arranged things as they are. (14) **upon man,** it should be *upon Him*: *i. e.* if God thought only of Himself all things that have breath would perish, for all depend on Him.[b] But absolute power in God is joined with unselfish love. (15) **All flesh,** *etc.*, bec. by the breath of God alone man lives. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.[c]

God's power. — People used to speak of God as a tyrant, and as if to be in His hands was to be next to all that was miserable and terrible. The hands that bled for me on the cross mean only to bless me. O hands of the Crucified, shall I dread to intrust my life to you? Nay; the misery of life will not be to be in the hand, but to be *outside* the hand of God. Never be afraid of God, unless you are sinning against him; always believe that behind what seems difficult and mysterious there is a heart as true and tender as the heart of the sweetest, gentlest woman that ever pressed her child to her bosom. Nay; all the love in all women's hearts together, compared to the love of His heart, is as a glow-worm's torch compared to the sun at noontide.—*F. B. Meyer.*

none can limit the Almighty

a "Committed the earth to his charge, as a superior commits a charge to a subordinate." — *Robinson.*

b Our version gives a sense out of harmony with the context. "If God regarded man with enmity, he would certainly perish."

c Ps. xc. 3–10; civ. 39; Ge. ii. 7; Ac. xvii. 28.

Justice from God. —

What wouldst thou have, good fellow?
Justice, madam.
Oh, ambitious beggar, wouldst thou have that
That lives not in the world?

"The tree that bears the choicest fruit stands continually in the sunshine, without which the fruit can never evenly ripen and mature. So he who bears heavenly

fruit must continually live in the light of the 'Sun of righteousness.'" — *C. W Bibb.*

Why, all the undelved mines cannot buy
An ounce of justice, 'tis a jewel so inestimable.
I tell thee God hath engross'd all justice in His hands,
And there is none but what comes from Him.— *Kyd.*

16—19. (16) **hear this,** the further matter of fact that God does deal with men impartially. (17) **govern,** marg. *bind.* "Is it also possible that an enemy of right should govern?" **most just,** *R. V.*, "just and mighty," "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" comp. Rom. iii. 5; Mat. xii. 25. (18) **Is it fit,** or becoming. **princes,** regarded as king's representatives. (19) **accepteth,** *etc.*, is therefore infinitely above the persuasions that may influence kings to unjust deeds,[a] and is strictly impartial.

the impartiality of God

"One of the grandest things in having rights is that, being your rights, you may give them up."— *George MacDonald.*

"How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made."
—*Shakespeare.*

Fidelity to conscience. — Hugh Latimer was very outspoken to King Henry VIII., feeling that he must tell him his duty. "You that be of the court, and especially, ye sworn chaplains," he said long afterwards, "beware of a lesson that a great man taught me at my first coming to court. He told me for good will; he thought it well. He said to me, 'You must beware, howsoever ye do, that ye contrary not the king; let him have his sayings; follow him; go with him!' Marry! out upon such counsel! Shall I say as he says? *Say your conscience, or else what a worm shall ye feel gnawing!* What a remorse of conscience shall ye have when ye remember how ye have slackened your duty! Yet a prince must be turned not violently, he must be won by a little and a little. He must have his duty told him, but with humbleness, with request of pardon, or else it were a dangerous thing."— *Old Test. Anec.*

Justice impartial. — A striking instance of the stern and impartial administration of justice is afforded in the history of one of the kings of Acalhuacan, a province which composed a part of the Mexican Empire. There was a law which forbade, on pain of death, the speaking of indecent words in the royal palace. One of the sons of this king, for whom he had felt a more particular attachment than for any of the rest, on account of his disposition and his virtues, violated this law. The words made use of by the young prince were rather the effect of youthful indiscretion than of any bad intention. The king was informed of it, and understanding that the word had been spoken by the prince in the presence of his tutors, he sent to examine them. They, being afraid of experiencing some punishment if they concealed the truth, confessed it openly, but at the same time endeavored to exculpate the prince by saying that he did not know the person to whom he spoke, nor that the language was improper. Notwithstanding all this, he ordered the young prince to be arrested immediately, and the very same day pronounced sentence of death upon him. The whole court was astonished at the rigor of the king, and interfered with their prayers and tears in behalf of the prince; but no remonstrance could move the inflexible mind of the king. "My son," said he, "has violated the law. If I pardon him, it will be said the laws are not binding on every one. I will let my subjects know that no one will be pardoned a transgression, as I do not even pardon the son whom I dearly love." The punishment was accordingly executed. The king shut himself up for forty days in a hall, without letting himself be seen by any one. He vented his grief in secret: and to conceal from his sight everything that might recall his sorrow, he caused the door of his son's apartment to be closed up by a wall. He showed his subjects that, although he was incapable of repressing the feelings of a father and sealing up the fountains of his grief, yet he would never permit them to overcome his zeal for the laws, and the most rigid impartiality in their execution. — *J. Todd.*

20—23. (20) *R. V.*, "In a moment they die, even at midnight; The people are shaken and pass away," *etc.* **they die,** God has full control over them. Their lives are altogether in His hands. **people,** the poor of *vs.* 19. **at midnight,**[b] the time of security and helplessness. **without hand,** *i. e.* man's hand[c] or interference. The life of both poor and rich is in God's absolute control. (21) **eyes,** *etc.*, God's omniscience equals His omnipotence.[d] (22) **shadow of death,** poetic fig. for exceeding thick darkness.[e] (23) *R. V.*, "For he needeth not further to consider a man, that he should go before God in judgment."[f] God beholds all, and His insight and judgment operate simultaneously. — *Cam. Bib.* Hence there is no need to enter into judgment with God.

God has full control over all men

God's control. — Christ had control of all things, and could and would do

a De. x. 17; 2 Chr. x. 7; Ac. x. 34; Ro. ii. 11; Ga. ii. 6; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iii. 25; 1 Pe. i. 17.

When great presents were sent to Epaminondas, the celebrated Theban general, he used to observe: "If the thing you desire be good, I will do it without any bribe, even because it is good; if it be not honest, I will not do it for all the goods in the world." He was so great a contemner of riches, that when he died he left not enough to discharge the expenses of his funeral.

b Ex. xii. 29, 30; 1 Sa xxv. 37, 38; 1 Th. v. 2.

c Da. ii 34, 44, 45.

d God has no need to *watch*, or set watch, as Job had supposed, ch. vii. 12.

2 Chr. xvi. 9; Je. xxxii. 19

e Je. xxiii. 24; Am. ix. 2, 3; He. iv. 13.

f "A single thought of God's is

what was best. It was not for want of goodness or power that things were not done differently. Jesus held the helm of the ship of Zion, and would guide it safely to the desired haven, in spite of tempests, or darkness, or rocks. We do not know the way, but the Captain does. We are weak, but He is strong. We are on no derelict vessel, lost in the wide, wide sea. "Zola, of whose books it is said that enough have been sold to build a pile as high as Eiffel Tower, wrote a novel called *La Bête Humaine*," which closes with "the description of a railway train, crowded with soldiers, dragged by an engine whose driver has been killed, dashing at headlong speed into the midnight. The train is the world; we are the freight; fate is the track; death is the darkness; God is the engineer; who is dead?" — *Henry Van Dyke.* *Trouble at midnight.* — The providence of God has been often remarkably displayed in the discovery of murder. A respectable publication at Basle relates the following instance: "A person who wrought in a brewery quarreled with one of his fellow-workmen, and struck him in such a manner that he died upon the spot. No other person was witness to the deed. He then took the body and threw it into a large fire under a boiling vat, where it was in a short time so completely consumed that no traces of its existence remained. On the following day, when the man was missed, the murderer observed very coolly that he had perceived his fellow-servant to have been intoxicated, and that he had probably fallen from a bridge, which he had to cross on his way home, and been drowned. For the space of seven years after no one entertained any suspicions of the real state of the fact. At the end of this period the man was again employed in the same brewery. He was then induced to reflect on the singularity of the circumstance that his crime had remained so long concealed. Having retired one evening to rest, one of the other workmen who slept with him, hearing him say in his sleep, 'It is now full seven years ago,' asked him, 'What was it you did seven years ago?' 'I put him,' he replied, still speaking in his sleep, 'under the boiling vat.' As the affair was not entirely forgotten, it immediately occurred to the man that his bedfellow must allude to the person who was missing about that time; and he accordingly gave information of what he had heard to a magistrate. The murderer was apprehended, and though at first he denied that he knew anything of the matter, a confession of his crime was at length obtained from him, for which he suffered condign punishment." — *Whitecross.*

enough to summon the whole world to judgment. Job had craved for leave to enter into judgment with God. Elihu replies that God, of His own accord, finds out men in a moment, without any effort, and summons them to judgment." — *Wordsworth.*

"As the rainbow would never be seen were it not for the clouds and the rain, the beauties of holiness would never shine so brightly were it not for the trials which the spirit of God employs to promote them." — *Tweedie.*

"All things that are on earth shall wholly pass away, except the love of God, which shall live and last for aye." — *Bryant.*

24—26. (24) **without number,**[a] *R. V.*, "in ways past finding out;" without such processes as belong to human judgments. **set others,** as Ps. lxxv. 7; 1 Sam. ii. 7; Dan. ii. 21. (25) **destroyed,** or crushed God makes short work with them. (26) **open sight,** *lit.* in the place of beholders: their punishment is publicly seen.[b]

God has no need to search after a human fashion

Inflexibility of justice. — When a prince of the royal blood of France disgraced himself by committing robbery and murder in the streets of Paris, Louis XV. would not grant a pardon, though eagerly solicited to do so by a deputation from the Parliament of Paris, who tried him, and suspended their sentence until the royal pleasure should be known. "My lords and counsellors," said the king, "return to your chambers of justice, and promulgate your decree." "Consider," said the first president, "that the unhappy prince has your majesty's blood in his veins." "Yes," said the king, "but the blood has become impure, and justice demands that it should be let out; nor would I spare my own son for a crime for which I should be bound to condemn the meanest of my subjects." The prince was executed on the scaffold in the court of the grand Chatelet, on the 12th of August, 1729. — *Cheever.*

Justice. —

If the deed were ill,
Be you contented, wearing now the garland,
To have a son set your decrees at naught;
To pluck down justice from your awful bench;
To trip the course of law, and blunt the sword
That guards the peace and safety of your person;
Nay, more, to spurn at your most royal image,
And mock your workings in a second body?
Question your royal thoughts, make the case yours;
Be now the father, and propose a son:
Hear your own dignity so much profaned,

a Heb. *cheker*, digging the earth to find out.

b 2 Sa. xii. 12; 1 Ti. v. 20.

"Who painted Justice blind, did not declare what magistrates should be, but what they are; not so much 'cause they rich and poor should weigh in their just scales alike; but because they, now blind with bribes, are grown so weak of sight, they'll sooner feel a cause, than see it right." — *Heath.*

"This is the bitterest of all,—to wear the yoke of our own wrong-doing." — *George Eliot.*

"He is miserable once who feels it, but twice who fears it before it comes."—*Oriental Prov.*

See your most dreadful laws so loosely slighted,
Behold yourself so by a son disdain'd;
And then imagine me taking your part,
And, in your power, soft silencing your son.—*Shakespeare.*

27, 28. (27) **turned back,** fallen away from Him.[a] Following God is obedience to His commands, and consecration to His service. **his ways,** either of providence or precept. (28) **cause,** *etc.*, by their oppressions and neglect.[b] **heareth,** *etc.*, "God's ears are ever open to the cry of the oppressed, and his hand is ever heavy upon those who 'afflict' the weak and defenseless."

the disobedience of men

[a] Ps cxxv. 5; Prov. i. 24–32; 2 Ki. xvii. 15, 16; 2 Pet ii. 24.

[b] Ex. ii. 23, 25; xxii 23; Ps. xii. 5; Ja. v. 4.

Obedience, as Robertson puts it, is the spiritual organ of knowledge, and if any man refuses to obey what he knows, he shall know no more; whereas if any man obeys what he knows, he shall be led swiftly in the path of truth.—*Schauffler.* The Bible rings with one long demand for obedience. The key word of the book of Deuteronomy is, 'Observe and do." The burden of our Lord's farewell discourse is, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." We must not question or reply or excuse ourselves. We must not pick and choose our way. We must not think that obedience in one direction will compensate for disobedience in some other particular. God gives one command at a time; if we obey this He will flood our souls with blessing, and lead us forward into new paths and pastures.—*F. B. Meyer.*

"If we refuse to 'Observe and do' the commandments of the Lord, we shall remain stagnant and waterlogged, without progress in Christian experience, and lack both power and joy."—*Meyer.*

when God gives peace who can hinder?

29, 30. (29) **quietness,** peace and security from oppression. **make trouble,** *R. V.*, "condemn." Comp. Ro. viii. 31–34. **hideth his face,** as in anger. **behold him,** as a friend; enjoy his favor. **whether . . only** affirming God's ways to be regulated by principles of impartiality and righteousness which apply equally to one, or to many. (30) **hypocrite,** "that the godless man reign not; that the people be not ensnared."—*Cam. Bib.* **be ensnared,**[c] deceived by seeing the wicked prospering.

[c] "That godless people reign not, that they be not nets to the people."—*Delitzsch.*

Salem.—The heart of man pants after peace. I. It is the prerogative of God to give quietness. Man makes war. God concludes peace. 1. It is so in the nation; 2. It is so in the heart; 3. It shall be so the world over. II. The particular quiet that He gives to the soul. 1. Describe it negatively; it is not solitariness, nor insensibility, nor constrained silence, nor inactivity, nor temporary, nor unsatisfactory; 2. Describe it positively: it is the quiet of sweet satisfaction, of full assurance, of conscious safety, of confiding love, of hallowed devotion, of meek dependence. III. The impossibility of its being destroyed. Is there an arm stronger, a will more potent, attraction greater than His? Learn:—(1) Beware of false peace; (2) Fear not thou shalt lose true peace; (3) Peace is to be had for the asking.

"A visitor to the Royal Hospital for Incurables is struck with the spirit of peace that pervades it. What is outwardly a palace of pain is found to be in fact a home of peace. The sufferers have been drilled by suffering into patience; into more than patience, indeed, for a cheerfulness is seen among the hopeless sufferers. Long endurance has brought forth wonderful fruits which we scarcely see among the happy and heedless."—*Pul. Com.*

The secret of success.—A young sailor boy was remarked for his serenity and presence of mind in his first battle. "How was it, my boy," the mate asked, "that you were ready for everything, and yet as quiet as if by your mother's fireside?" "Because," said he, "I was alone with my God for an hour before the fight began."—*Oxenden.* *Peace.*—An aged Christian, lying on his death-bed in a state of such extreme weakness that he was often entirely unconscious of all around him, was asked the cause of his perfect peace. He replied, "When I am able to think, I think of Jesus; and when I am unable to think of Him, I know He is thinking of me."—*Spurgeon.* *The martyr.*—I never saw a long-faced Christian that amounted to anything. It is worse to meet such a man than to face an east wind in March. What we want is the spirit and confidence of the old martyr who said to a king who threatened to banish him, because he would not give up testifying for Christ, "I am not afraid of that, for you cannot banish me from where Christ is." The king said, "Well, I will take away your property." The man replied, "No, you can't; my treasure is laid up in heaven; it is hid with Christ in God." The king said hotly, "I will kill you then." "You can't do that either; I have been dead these forty years," exclaimed the martyr. "What are you going to do with such a fanatic?" asked the king. You can't do anything with him; he has a security and peace which all the kings on earth cannot disturb.—*D. L. Moody.*

"When the tale of bricks is doubled, Moses comes."—*Hebrew Prov.*

speaking to God in the time of affliction

31–33. (31) **meet,** *R. V.*, "For hath any said unto God," *i. e.* any of those whom God has so punished, have they acknowledged His justice and promised amendment? **have borne,** so as to be humbled and learn by it.

(32) **teach,** the expression of a humble and submissive spirit, such as should follow sanctified chastisements. (33) *R. V.*, "Shall His recompense be as thou wilt, that thou refusest it? For thou must choose and not I," *i. e.* shall God proceed to judgment with you (Job) just as you may wish? **choose,** you may choose such a conclusion concerning God, I will not. **speak,** *etc.*,[a] your conclusion.

Wordsworth prefers to put these sentences as a series of questions, "Hath the ungodly said to God," *etc.*

The future resigned to God. — I. Some errors reproved. 1. A desire to choose for ourselves; 2. A disposition to murmur at our earthly lot; 3. Envy at the circumstances of others; 4. Confidence in our own judgment. II. Doctrines to be established. 1. The absolute sovereignty of 2. God; The universal extent of His holy providence. III. Consolations supplied. 1. Faithfulness of Divine promises; 2. Comfort of submission to His will; 3. Certainty of final perfection of all believers in Divine presence.

Le. xxvi. 40–42; Je. xxxi. 18, 19; Da. ix. 7–14.

"*Should it be according to thy mind?*" — We are all very apt to believe in Providence when we get our own way; but when things go awry, we think, if there is a God, He is in heaven and not upon the earth. The cricket, in the spring, builds his house in the meadow, and chirps for joy because all is going so well with him. But when he hears the sound of the plow a few furrows off, and the thunder of the oxen's tread, then his sky begins to darken, and his young heart fails him. By-and-by the plough comes craunching along, turns his dwelling bottom-side up, and as he goes rolling over and over, without a house and without a home, "Oh," he says, "the foundations of the world are breaking up, and everything is hastening to destruction." But the husbandman, as he walks behind the plough, does he think the foundations of the world are breaking up? No. He is thinking only of the harvest that is to follow in the wake of the plough; and the cricket, if it will but wait, will see the husbandman's purpose. My hearers, we are all like crickets. When we get our own way, we are happy and contented. When we are subjected to disappointment, we become the victims of despair. — *A. B. Jack.*

Ps. xix. 12; xxxii. 8; Eph. iv. 25, 28; 1 Pe. iv. 3.

Man would have God govern (not only himself, but) the whole world according to his mind. Man hath much of this in him. Luther wrote to Melancthon, when he was so exceedingly troubled at the providence of God in the world, "Our brother Philip is to be admonished that he would forbear governing the world." We can hardly let God alone to rule that world which Himself alone hath made. — *Caryl.* *Payson's happiness.* — "Christians might avoid much trouble and inconvenience," says Dr. Payson, "if they would only believe what they profess — that God is able to make them happy without anything else. They imagine, if such a dear friend were to die, or such and such blessings to be removed, they should be miserable; whereas God can make them a thousand times happier without them. To mention my own case — God has been depriving me of one blessing after another; but as every one was removed He has come in and filled up its place; and now, when I am a cripple, and not able to move, I am happier than ever I was in my life before, or ever expected to be; and if I had believed this twenty years ago, I might have been spared much anxiety."

34–37. (34) **Let . . me,** *R. V.*, "Men of understanding will say unto me, yea, every wise man that heareth me;" he is now about to give the verdict of all wise men on Job's words and conduct. (35) **hath spoken,** in his intense and agonized utterances. All wise men will admit that Job's speech is the utterance of ignorance and folly. Let him be tested to the utmost. (36) **for wicked men,** like them, such as *they* might give.[b] (37) **rebellion,** a stubborn spirit that will not be humbled. **clappeth,** as expression of scorn and triumph.

words without wisdom

Trials. — Trouble is not like a tunnel, from which there is no exit except at its ends. It is a burden which may be lifted whenever God sees fit. The object of trial may be obtained by other means, and it is possible that gentler methods may bring about the same results. Thus God leads to repentance by His goodness as well as by purgatorial afflictions. Therefore we should not live as though some iron fate held us to a certain amount of trial. God is a living Spirit and a loving Father; and He will not permit His children to suffer, when peaceable methods of discipline will do the desired work for them. Our part is to take patiently what God sends, and to use it profitably, trusting God to cut short the trouble or lengthen it as He sees best. — *W. F. Adeney.*

[a] If you think to order God, tell what your principles are.

"Men grumble because God put thorns on roses; would it not be better to thank Him because He put roses on thorns?"

"There is no such way to attain to greater measures of grace, as for a man to live up to that little grace he has." — *Thomas Brooks.*

"Men are born to trouble at first and exercised in it all their days. There is a cry at the beginning of life, and a groan at its close." — *Arnot.*

[b] "Since Job will not give way, Elihu feels that he has no alternative but to wish that the trial may go on until it has done its work." — *Spk. Com.*

"We may see the cunning and curious work of nature, which hath barred and hedged nothing in so strongly as the

tongue, with two rows of teeth, and therewith two lips, besides she hath placed it farre from the heart."—*Lyly's Euphues.*

Words. —

Words are the notes of thought and nothing more.
Words are like sea-shells on the shore; they show
Where the mind ends, and not how far it has been.
Let every thought, too, soldier-like, be stripped,
And roughly looked over. — *Bailey.*

"The worthiest people are the most injured by slander, as we usually find that to be the best fruit which the birds have been pecking at."—*Swift.*

The slanderer. —

Slander, the foulest whelp of Sin. The man
In whom this spirit entered was undone;
His tongue was set on fire of hell;
His heart was black as death;
His pillow was the peace of families
Destroyed, the sigh of innocence reproached,
Broken friendships, and the strife of brotherhoods,
From door to door you might have seen him speed,
Or placed amidst a group of gaping fools,
And whispering in their ears with his foul lips.
Peace fled the neighborhood in which he made
His haunts; and, like a moral pestilence,
Before his breath the healthy shoots and blooms
Of social joy and happiness decayed.
The prudent shunned him and his house
As one who had a deadly moral plague. — *Pollok.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

the charge of self-righteousness reiterated

1—4. (1) **moreover,** after another brief pause. "Elihu states Job's complaint that godliness avails a man nothing, and undertakes to answer it."[a] (2) **more than God's,** or as LXX., "I am just before God." From the statement that his righteousness exceeded God's we may well suppose Job would have shrunk. (3) **advantage,** present temporal good. **profit . . sin,** *R. V.*, "What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned."[b] But Job declares this position to be the judgment of evil men and concludes, "the counsel of the wicked be far from me." (4) **answer,** *lit.* return to thee words. **companions,** such as may take the same imperfect views.

Man's character. — I. Selfishness is an evil in man's character. 1. Some take up even religion for mere worldy gain; 2. Some for eternal gain. II. God is independent of man's character. Divine sovereignty is — 1. The reason of all law; 2. The source of redemption; 3. The ground of rewards. III. Society is influence by man's character. It may hurt, or it may profit. Three things give to every man some influence. 1. Relationship; 2. Dependence; 3. Affection. — *Thomas.*

Is goodness profitable? — Although the question is natural, we ought to be able to rise above it. After all, our chief concern is not with results, but with duty. Our part is to do the right, whether it leads to failure or to success. Obedience is our sphere: results are with God. We sow and water; He it is who gives the increase. It is difficult to learn this lesson, for we all gravitate to selfish and material ends unless we are lifted out of ourselves. Still, the lesson must be learnt. If a man is only virtuous on account of the rewards of virtue, he is not really virtuous at all. He who does not steal simply because he is persuaded that "honesty is the best policy," is a thief at heart. Conscience is independent of advantage, and true goodness is only that which rests on conscience. — *Pul. Com.*

a Comp. Job. ix. 30-35; x. 13-15.

b "The idea is, that as to good treatment, or securing the favor of God under the arrangements of His government, a man might just as well be wicked as righteous. He would be as likely to be prosperous in the world, and to experience the tokens of the Div. favor." — *Barnes.* "To do God's will not because it is God's will, but because you want to be happy, is neither to do God's will nor to be happy."

the clouds as reminders of greatness, etc., of God

5—7. (5) **heavens,** "if God be so high, how can aught that man do reach up to Him? Neither their goodness nor their wickedness extend to Him; they cannot affect the determinations of the Divine Ruler and Judge!" — *Cox.* (6) **against him,** thy sin hurts thyself, it cannot reach to Him.[c] (7) **what givest thou?** so as to have any kind of claim upon Him.

A heathenish idea. — The huge mistake of heathen worship is that it consists for the most part in attempts to buy off the anger and secure the favor of the gods by means of gifts and sacrifices. We meet with the same heathenish idea in all religious exercises that aim at being really profitable to God, not for His own sake, but to purchase His favor.—*Pul. Com. Access to God.*—

c "The drift of this is that there is no such relation between God and man as to make happiness a reward due to right-

We must not make God too imperious. There is a conception of God which represents Him as keeping men at the staff-end, allowing them to approach so far, but not one step beyond. That conception could be vindicated up to a given point, but there is the larger conception which says: We have boldness of access now; we have not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; we have come unto Mount Sion, where with reverent familiarity we may look face to face upon God, and speak to Him, as a man speaketh with his friend, mouth to mouth, and return to our daily employment with the fragrance of heaven in our very breath, and with the almightiness of God as the fountain of our strength.— *Peop. Bib.*

8—11. (8) **hurt a man,** a fellow-man, who belongs to your sphere; it cannot affect God, who is so infinitely exalted above thee.[a] (9) Elihu admits that there are instances where godliness does not seem to advantage men, where oppressed innocence cries in vain for redress. The reason is that the cry is merely the natural voice of suffering; it is no true devout appeal to heaven.— *Cam. Bib.* **oppressions,** introducing the case Job had stated,[b] in order to present Elihu's explanation of it. **they make,** *etc., R. V.*, "they cry out: They cry for help by reason," *etc.* **mighty,** the violence of tyrants and ungodly rich people. (10) **none saith,**[c] *i. e.* they cry, but do not cry to God; or if they do, not in a right spirit. **songs . . night,**[d] fig. for comfort in time of distress. (11) **more,** *i. e.* better. **beasts,** who cry only through animal instinct.[e]

Dr. Ryland and his hymn. — Dr. Ryland was the author of that beautiful hymn, which he wrote under singular circumstances:

"O Lord, I would delight in Thee,
And on Thy care depend;
To Thee in every trouble flee,
My best, my only Friend."

He was at Bristol Academy, engaged to be married to a young lady whom he fondly loved. She was taken with a dangerous sickness, from which it was feared she would not recover. Filled with anguish, he called to inquire about her, and was told by the servant if he would call in half an hour he would hear the opinion of the doctors, who were then holding a consultation on the case. He retired to an empty house, then under repair, sat down on a large stone, and taking a piece of slate wrote thereon that beautiful hymn, which has been the comfort of thousands of the tried children of God:

"When all created streams are dried,
Thy fulness is the same:
May I with this be satisfied,
And glory in Thy name!

"No good in creatures can be found
But may be found in Thee;
I must have all things, and abound,
While God is God to me."

He called, and received a favorable report. The lady recovered, they were married, and lived most happily together for seven years, when she was removed by death. Thus out of trial came a song, even as out of the lion came honey. — *Old Test. Anec.*

Songs.—

"Our lives are songs; God writes the words.
And we set them to music at pleasure;
And the song grows glad, or sweet, or sad,
As we choose to fashion the measure.

"We must write the music, whatever the song,
Whatever its rhyme or meter;
And if it is sad we can make it glad,
Or if sweet, we can make it sweeter."

12—14. (12) **they cry,** "they cry because of the pride of evil men, but none giveth answer."—*Cam. Bib.* **because,** *etc., lit.* "from the face of the pride of

eousness. When granted, it is a matter of favor and grace; when withdrawn, complaints imply a wrong conception of our position before God."—*Spk. Com.*

1 Ch. xxix. 14; Ps. xvi. 2, 3; Pr. viii. 36; ix. 12; Je. vii. 19; Ro. xi. 35.

God gives songs in the night

a Elihu does but touch one side of the truth: the sin of man does affect God by becoming a matter of compassionate interest to Him.

b Job. xxiv. 12.

c Ps. xliii. 2; lvi. 1, 2.

d Ps. xlii. 8; cxlix. 5; Ac. xvi. 25.

e Ps. civ. 27; viii. 5, 6.

"In trial, character is shaped and beautified and brightened."—*S. Coley.*

"If thou art wise, thou knowest thine own ignorance, and thou art ignorant if thou knowest not thyself."—*Luther.*

"Be loving, and you will never want for love; be humble and you will never want for guiding."—*D. M. Muloch.*

Job exhorted to trust in God

wicked men."[a] "Too often it is the mere tyranny of wicked men against which they cry out, not the wickedness."— *Cox.* (13) **vanity,** vain, hollow, heartless petitions.[b] Now he argues that if God does not hear man's prayers it is because he asks amiss. (14) **thou sayest,** *R. V.*, "How much less when thou sayeth thou beholdest Him not, the cause is before Him, and thou waitest for Him!" much less will God hear a man who complains that he cannot see God, and fails to discover His righteous dealings in the world. **therefore trust,**[c] that word is meant to sum up the spirit towards God wh. Job should cherish: trust, including submission, humility, and patience.

[a] "The sense is, None giveth answer to deliver them from their oppressors. And why? Because they do not ask in faith."—*Wordsworth.*

[b] Pr. xv. 8; Jas. iv. 3.

[c] Compare Job's own words, ch. xiii. 15.

A check to despondency.—

There's not a star the heaven can show,
There's not a cottage hearth below,
But feeds with solace kind the willing soul:
Men love us, or they need our love;
Freely they own, or needless prove
The curse of lawless hearts, the joy of self-control.

Then rouse thee from desponding sleep,
Nor by the wayside lingering weep,
Nor fear to seek Him farther in the wild,
Whose love can turn earth's worst and least
Into a conqueror's royal feast;
Thou wilt not be untrue, thou shalt not be beguil'd. — *F. Keble.*

"Luther's strength lay in the way in which he laid the burden of the Reformation upon the Lord. Continually in prayer he pleaded, 'Lord, this is Thy cause, not mine. Therefore, do Thine own work; for if this gospel do not prosper, it will not be Luther alone who will be a loser, but Thine own name will be dishonored.'"—*Spurgeon.*

Trust in trial. — In one of the German picture-galleries is a painting called "Cloud-land." It hangs at the end of a long gallery, and, at first sight, it looks like a huge, repulsive daub of confused color, without form or comeliness. As you walk toward it, the picture begins to take shape. It proves to be a mass of exquisite little cherub faces, like those at the head of the canvas in Raphael's "Madonna San Sisto." If you come close to the picture, you see only an innumerable company of little angels and cherubim. How often the soul that is frightened by trial sees nothing but a confused and repulsive mass of broken expectations and crushed hopes! But if that soul, instead of fleeing away into unbelief and despair, would only draw up near to God, it would soon discover that the cloud was full of angels of mercy. — *T. Cuyler.*

words without knowledge

15, 16. (15) *R. V.*, "But now because he hath not visited in his anger,[d] Neither doth he greatly regard arrogance;" "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, and God seems as if He took no knowledge of wrong and oppression, therefore Job draws the futile conclusion (*vss.* 2, 3) that there is no advantage in being righteous more than in sinning." — *Cam. Bib.* (16) **in vain,** or for uttering vain things, *i. e.* that there is no advantage in being righteous more than in sinning. **without knowledge,** spoken foolishly.

[d] "The connection of thought may be, 'And now bec. God hath not visited Job in wrath, as he deserved, and hath not taken full account of his insolence, his spirit is unbroken, and he continues to speak rebelliously against God.'" *Spk. Com.*

Suitable words. — The following anecdote is told of Richard Weaver. In a railroad carriage a navvy was swearing terribly. The guard, knowing Richard's habit of speaking to every one, whispered to him, "Better let him alone; he is so violent that he would strike you if his passions were raised." Richard got close to him, and said, "Give me your hand, my friend." He then whispered into his ear, "Why are you calling on my father?" "I know nothing of your father," answered the swearer. "I'll tell you his name and character," said Richard; and then he repeated the text, "God so loved the world," *etc.*, and enlarged upon it. As if struck by some sudden conviction, the man answered, "These were the last words my mother said to me." "Then let us pray," said Richard, "that God may make them the means of your salvation." They did so: and Richard met him not long after a changed man. *Patience.* — James declares that if a man has perfect patience he has a perfect character. I wish I had a voice that could ring over our run-mad country in this end of the nineteenth century, when men are tumbling over one another, rushing after nothing and finding it. I would like to proclaim this lesson: whoever has perfect patience has a perfect character.— *Broadus.*

"Blessings may appear under the shape of pain, losses, and disappointments, but let him have patience and he will see them in their proper figure." — *Addison.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

1—4. (2) **Suffer,** bear with me in prolonging my speech.[a] **yet to speak,** Heb. "these are yet words for God." (3) **from afar,** *i. e.* I will not utter mere commonplaces, but from my wide range of travel and study I will speak. **will ascribe,** *etc.*, setting his first principle, to regard God as righteous, whatever happened, against Job's complaints. (4) **perfect in knowledge,**[b] prob. he means that he is absolutely certain of the things concerning which he is about to speak. Of them he has perfect knowledge.

The preacher. — The words may be used to represent some of the words of the true preacher. I. They represent the side he has to take. 1. He has to defend the procedure of God; 2. He has to vindicate the character of God; 3. He has to enforce the claim of God; 4. He has to offer the redemption of God. II. They represent the knowledge he has to communicate. He has to fetch his knowledge from afar. 1. From afar in relation to the intuitions of men; 2. From afar in relation to the philosophical deductions of men; 3. From afar in relation to the natural spirit of men. III. They represent the purpose he has to maintain. Ascribe righteousness to God. He will show—1. That no suffering falls on any creature more than he deserves; 2. That no work is demanded of any creature more than he can render. — *Thomas.*

The ministry. — The advantage of the ministry is that a man's whole life can be thrown into the carrying out of that program without any deduction. Another advantage of the ministry is that it is so poorly paid that a man is not tempted to cut a dash and shine in the world, but can be meek and lowly in heart like his Master. It is enough for a servant to be like his master, and there is a great attraction in seeking obscurity, even isolation, if one can be following the highest ideals. — *Drummond.*

Pursuit of knowledge. — Let us arise by sanctified meditation to the survey of the immense field spread out before us. Let us view science in all its aspects. Let us also stand on a holy mountain whence we may see the land which the Lord has given us to conquer and possess. Let us keep near to the river, and then, if necessary, let us pursue its whole extent. Let us glance up to its source and follow its current afar off. Let us distinguish its forms, its secondary streams, its principal branches from the accessory branches. Let us examine the marsh in which its pure water is corrupted, because the impulse of the former stream is wanting. Let us contemplate it when its fructifying waters are flowing along shores enriched by its gifts, and when its foaming waves rush on with impetuosity. Let us consider the tributary streams that bring foreign waters to it, and the various soils over which it rolls, that we may be well acquainted with the elements it derives from them. It is by all these branches of knowledge that science is formed. We must weigh all the influences, discern all the combinations that we may derive from the Christian system, and construct sacred theology, which is man's noblest science, since it is the science of God. — *D'Aubigne.*

5—7. (5) **despiseth not,** doth not act scornfully. Therefore He cannot have scorned Job, as he too easily assumed.[c] **strength . . wisdom,** *Heb.* strength of heart; in Heb. heart is often used to denote the intellectual powers. (6) **poor,** afflicted, humble, the poor in spirit.[d] (7) **his eyes,** *i. e.* His favor and regard is never removed from them. **with kings,** *etc.*,[e] *R. V.*, "But with kings upon the throne He setteth them forever," *etc.*, *i. e.* He raises to the loftiest positions those who are righteous.

The eye of God on the righteous (*vs.* 7). — Many good things do others receive from the hand of God; but with these good things the saints have also His good-will, which good-will sweetens all their comforts, and sanctifies all their afflictions, turns their afflictions into blessings, and makes their blessings blessings indeed! "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous." Common comforts come from the saints as a fruit of covenant-love, and God's severest chastisements are the effects of His paternal affection. Those things that are not good in themselves work for their good; and dispensations, grievous at the time, are salutary in their issue, for they produce the "peaceable fruits of righteousness." — *B. Beddome.*

8—10. (8) **fetters,** fig. for cast into prison.[f] "If life often appears to present a different picture and men are seen in affliction, this is for discipline,

Elihu professes to urge not ordinary reasons

[a] "The Hebrew commentators remark that the word 'added,' or 'proceeded,' is used bec. this speech is *added* to the number which it might be supposed he would make. There had been three series of speeches by Job and his friends, and in each one of them Job had spoken three times." — *Barnes.*

Word *suffer* in Heb. means to *surround*, in a hostile sense. In Syriac and Chaldee, it means, *to wait*, prob. from the idea of going round and round.

[b] Co. ii. 17; 2 Pe. i. 16.

"Only add deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith, add virtue, patience, temperance; add love, by name to come called charity, the soul of all the rest. Then wilt thou not be loth to leave this paradise, but shalt possess a paradise within thee, happier far." — *Milton.*

the mighty God regards even the poor

[c] Job x. 3-7, 13-16.

[d] Mat. v. 3.

[e] Comp. Eph. ii. 6; Re. iii. 21.

If you hear the loud thunders of God's wrath rolling over you in the terrors of the law, be sure you listen to the still small voice of the gospel.

and teaches those who are in affliction

[f] "The words wh. describe afflictions

wh. befall the righteous are purposely chosen to indicate their direct object viz., to arrest and chastise them when they are going wrong." —*Spk. Com.*

"This word *tribulation* is derived from the Latin '*tribulum*,' the threshing instrument whereby the Roman husbandman separated the corn from the husks, and '*tribulatio*' was the act of this separation." —*Trench.*

needful to warn them and bring their evil before them."—*Cam. Bib.* (9) **Then,** while in the affliction. **work,** the true character of their actions. **have exceeded,** *R. V.*, "behaved themselves proudly;" encouraging inward evils of presumption and self-sufficiency. (10) **discipline,** correction, teaching that reveals inner secret evils. **commandeth,** affliction being the voice that calls to repentance and change.

Scripture interpreted by affliction.—What an interpreter of Scripture is affliction! How many stars in its heaven shine out brightly in the night of sorrow and pain which were unperceived or overlooked in the garish day of prosperity! What an enlarger of Scripture is any other outer or minor event which stirs the depths of our hearts, which touches us near to the core and centre of our lives. Trouble of spirit, condemnation of conscience, sudden danger, strong temptation, when any of these overtake us what evils do they take away, that we may see what hitherto we saw not! What new domains of God's Word do they bring within our spiritual ken! How do promises, which once fell flat upon our ears, become precious now; psalms become our order, which before were aloof from us! How do we see things now with the eye, which before we knew only by the hearing of the ear; which before men had told us, but now we ourselves have found, so that on these accounts also the Scripture is fitted to be our companion and to do us good all the years of our life.—*French.*

the happy fruit of obedience

11, 12. (11) **obey,** *R. V.*, "hearken," to this voice of God in affliction. **serve him,** with a new spirit of consecration. **in prosperity,** *lit. in good.* **pleasures,** delights. "Such teachings are common in O. T., but in the N. T. when any such promise is made, it is carefully guarded (Mk. x. 30) while in many passages the promise is of an opposite character—the righteous are told to expect tribulations and persecutions (John xvi. 33).—*Rawlinson.* (12) **perish,** pass away. **sword,** sudden Div. judgments. **without knowledge,**[a] on account of their wilful ignorance of God's purpose in chastising them.

Affliction is profitable.—Affliction is very useful and profitable to the godly. The prodigal son had no thought of returning to his father's house till he had been humbled by adversity. Hagar was haughty under Abraham's roof, and despised her mistress; but in the wilderness she was meek and lowly. Manasseh lived as a libertine at Jerusalem, and committed the most enormous crimes; but when he was bound in chains in the prison at Babylon, his heart was turned to seek the Lord his God. Bodily pain and disease have been instrumental in rousing many to seek Christ, when those who were in high health have given themselves no concern about Him. The ground which is not rent and torn with the plough bears nothing but thistles and thorns. The vines will run wild, in process of time, if they be not pruned and trimmed.—*Daniel Rowlands.*

Cyrus's two feasts.—When Cyrus the Great desired to enlist the Persian warriors to join in his plans he assembled the army on a certain day and place and provided each with an axe. He marched them into the forest and made them toil all day in cutting down trees, with coarse food and little rest. The next day he brought them to a great banquet, with abundant meat and rich wines in profusion, and bid them feast and be merry. They enjoyed it all the more after the hard fare of the previous day, and joined in merry songs and tales and dances. At evening Cyrus called them together and asked which service they liked best. Then he said to them, "If you follow me you will enjoy ease, abundance and luxury. If you refuse you must toil on in privations and hardships as you do now and so end your days."—*Abbott's Cyrus the Great.* So we must choose the service of God or the service of sin.

a Job iv. 20, 21; Ho. iv. 6.

Impenitence changes affliction, wh. is intended to be a means of rescue, into total destruction; yet there are some who will not be warned and affrighted by it.

"That the Christian religion is favorable to human happiness, is, I believe, the secret conviction even of many who may not openly confess it; hence it is no uncommon thing to hear even the openly wicked say, 'I believe that the real Christian is the happiest man in the world.' I recollect the remark of a certain sceptic, made to myself, in the hour of affliction, 'Oh, sir, you Christians have the advantage of us.'"—*From "Addresses to Young Men," Daniel Baker.*

the fate of the hypocrite in heart

13, 14. (13) **heap up wrath,** *R. V.*, "they that godless in heart lay up anger;" the godless ones cherish anger at the Divine discipline.—*Davidson.* **cry not,** in prayer to Him. **bindeth,** with cords, as *vs.* 8. (14) **in youth,** prematurely.[b] **among the unclean,**[c] *R. V.*, "perisheth among," *etc.*, comp. Deut. xxiii. 17: like the unclean. Allusion to the sins of Sodom.

A ruined life the fruit of selfish pursuit of pleasure.—In Rochester, N. Y., there is a little picture hanging in an art gallery which represents a young man riding very swiftly on a horse. Out in front of him is floating what seems to be an angel, holding in her hands a crown. The young man is reaching out his hands to get the crown. He is trampling under his feet, flowers and helpless children. He almost touches the crown, but just one more leap

b "By premature decrepitude brought on by sin."—*Wordsworth.*

c Heb. *Kedeshim.* See De. xxiii. 17. The literal meaning is consecrated, *i. e.* devoted to the

of the horse and he will go over the precipice in front of him. Suppose he does reach the crown, he will have it in his hands only for a moment, and then he is lost. That is the way it is with many who are bound to have pleasure, whether they have to sin in obtaining it or not. They just reach out their hand and catch hold of the pleasure, and, like the bubble, it bursts, and they have ruined themselves.— *C. H. Tyndall.*

15—18. (15) **in his affliction,** *R. V.*, "the afflicted by his affliction,"[a] it being the means of leading him to repent of that which brought this suffering upon him. **openeth their ears,** to receive admonition. **in oppression** by suffering. (16) **Even so,** if thou, Job, hadst but cherished a right spirit under the chastisement. **set on thy table,** *Heb.* the rest, or setting down on thy table: what is laid upon the table.[b] (17) **fulfilled the judgment,** experienced the punishment wh. comes on the wicked, bec. of the wrong spirit you cherish. **take hold,** join in punishing thee. (18) **beware,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "beware lest thou be led away by thy sufficiency; neither let the greatness of the ransom turn thee aside."[c] **sufficiency,** *i. e.* self-satisfaction. **ransom,** *i. e.* the suffering which rightly endured would obtain his pardon and peace.

Solemn warning.—These words are applicable to all impenitent sinners. They contain—I. An important assertion. "Because there is wrath." 1. This assertion must be explained; 2. It must be confirmed. II. They contain an affectionate admonition. "Beware." It enjoins—1. The exercise of caution: 2. The pursuit of salvation. The text urges—III. An impressive argument. 1. The sinner's punishment; it is inevitable: 2. It is irremediable.

Affliction.—In itself, of course, it is undesirable. But its "peaceable fruits of righteousness" may be so wholesome and profitable that, on the whole, the affliction must be accounted a good thing. We should judge of any experience by its results, not by its passing phases. We have to learn that the pain that blesses is really itself a blessing. The black cloud that brings a refreshing shower is not a threatening storm. The spur that drives us from the desert where we would perish to the streams of living water is not a cruel instrument of torture. The heavy blow that awakens us when we are sleeping in the snow the sleep that would end in death is nothing less than an angel of mercy. When God sees that His scholar has learnt the desired lesson, He can close the book. No more of the scorching lines need be spelt out with tearful eyes. The student has graduated. Henceforth he is free from the old drudgery. Therefore the true way to escape from dreaded suffering which God sends as discipline is not to murmur against it, but to make the best use of it, in order that, being purified by fire, we may become vessels fit for the King's use.—*Pul. Com.*

19—21. (19) *R. V.*, "Will thy riches suffice, that thou be not in distress, or all the forces of thy strength?" *i. e.* of what service is any earthly means?[d] **forces of strength,** such as age, wisdom, reputation, authority and rank. (20) **the night,** of death; to this Job had looked:[e] but Elihu says the future life can bring no joy to him save as he is right-hearted. (21) **this,** *etc.*,[f] the iniquity of complaining against God. **rather than affliction,**[g] bearing affliction in a spirit of true resignation.

The trial of faith.—Faith is tried (1) by means of those things which tempt men to deny their faith, to lose or diminish their faith, such as persecutions, loss of property, reproaches, aversion of friends, for adherence to Christ; (2) by sudden and overwhelming assaults; (3) by a worldly, malarial atmosphere, deadening the soul; (4) by prosperity; (5) by the little trials and vexations of life; (6) by the absence of definite rules as to what is right and wrong, and the necessity of deciding by general principles; (7) by attacks on the foundations of faith; (8) by the uncertainties and doubts which arise in the progress of truth through discussion and investigation.—*Peloubet.*

Result of affliction.—It is wonderful how the vision is broadened by the experience of sorrow. Although at first it may be cramped and confined to the immediate present by the absorbing influence of pain, when deliverance comes, this is followed by a wonderful mental expansion. No one knows the depth and breadth of life who has not been through the waters of affliction. The broad place is open to the fresh air and the bright sunshine. Delivered from dank and dreary narrow regions, we can rejoice in our God-given liberty. This bliss is partly enjoyed on earth; it will be perfect in heaven, the large place of life and liberty.—*Pul. Com.*

service of Astarte, an ancient form of the most hideous of all superstitions."—*Spk. Com.*

God delivers the poor

a Job xxxiii. 15-28; Ps. cxix. 67, 71; He. xii 11.

b "The tables of the Orientals in ancient times were prob. like what they are now—easily movable; trays set on short feet, raising them a few inches from the ground."—*Rich.*

Ps. xxiii. 5.

c "Let not anger entice thee to scorning."—*Delitzsch.*

"The truth is, when we are under any affliction, we are generally troubled with a malicious kind of melancholy; we only dwell and pore upon the sad and dark occurrances of Providence; but never take notice of the more benign and bright ones."—*Bp. Hopkins.*

God regards not the wealth and power of man

d *Delitzsch* trans. this verse,—"Shall thy crying place thee beyond distress, and all the efforts of strength?"

e Job iii. 3-14; vi. 8, 9; vii. 1; x. 18; xiv. 13; xvi. 22; xxiii. 3; xxxi. 65.

f "Thou has not acquiesced in afflictions, wh. are means of spiritual health, but hast perverted them into occasions of sin."—*Wordsworth.*

g He. xi. 25.

Divine teachings are plain to all

a "Because He, as a sovereign, explains not all His dealings, Job has presumed to teach Him."—*Fausett*.

b See Job xxxiv. 13.

c "Concerning which men sing."—*Vulg*.

Ps. xxxiv. 3.

d Ps. xix. 1-4.

"Aquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thine heart
Made pure shall relish, with divine delight
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought."
—*Cowper*.

We don't know of the Divine mind in matter, bear in mind.

God is great in His works, the rain and the clouds

e "At this point it is supposed Elihu beholds the approaching tempest. As he catches sight of it he breaks off from his argument to give a voice to the storm, to describe and interpret it."—*Cox*.

f 1 Co. xiii. 12.

g Ps. cxlviii. 8.

the clouds and the light

h *Lit. crashing*.

i Ps. xviii. 11, Isa. xl. 22.

j Fig. for lowest depths.

Elihu appears to represent the lightning as so intense that it will illuminate the very depths of the sea.

22—25. (22) **exalteth,** *R. V.*, "doeth loftily in his power," exalts Himself in the exhibition of His power. **who . . him?** this is called by some the keynote to Elihu's discourse.[a] Life is a school; God teaches by His Providence. (23) **Who,**[b] *etc.*, comp. Isa. xl. 12–14. (24) **magnify his work,** by submission, by learning well the moral and spiritual lessons He would teach thereby. **behold,** *R. V.*, "Whereof men have sung,"[c] *i. e.*, celebrated in hymns of praise. (25) **Every man,**[d] *R. V.*, "All men have looked thereon." **man may,** *etc.*, they behold His works with awe.

Admiring God's works. — It is a miserable thing to sink into that cynical pessimism that can only criticise adversely and can never see and enjoy merit. It passes for cleverness, but it is really a form of dulness, for it is the result of a want of capacity to perceive the good points of that which only arrests attention on account of its real or supposed defects. This habit of mind prevents us from rising to any true greatness ourselves, because men are drawn upwards by admiration. When, however, we have learnt to admire the works of God, it is only fitting that we should go on and adore their great Artificer. The praise of the picture is the praise of the artist. Yet there are lovers of Nature who seem to forget her Author. — *W. F. Adeney.*

Reception of power.— When a lecturer on electricity wants to show an example of a human body surcharged with fire he places a person on a stool with glass legs. The glass serves to isolate him from the earth, because it will not conduct fire, the electric fluid. Were it not for this, however much might be poured into his frame, it would be carried away by the earth; but, when thus isolated from it, he retains all that enters him. You see no fire, you hear no fire; but you are told that it is pouring into him. Presently you are challenged to the proof; asked to come near, and hold your hand close to his person; when you do so a spark of fire shoots out towards you. If thou, then, wouldst have thy soul surcharged with the fire of God, so that those who come nigh to thee shall feel some mysterious influence proceeding out from thee, thou must draw nigh to the source of that fire, to the throne of God and of the Lamb, and shut thyself out from the world — that cold world which so swiftly steals our fire away; then the fire shall fill thee; and, when thou comest forth, holy power will attend thee.— *W. Arthur.*

26—28. (26) **know him not,**[e] cannot fully, or even adequately, apprehend Him.[f] **number of his years,** Ps. xc. 2; cii. 27. (27) **maketh small,** *R. V.*, "For he draweth up the drops of water, which distil in rain from his vapour."[g] (28) **abundantly,** *better* "upon the multitude of mankind," *i. e.* everywhere.

God's power over nature.— Prof. Tyndall has said that to answer a prayer for rain would require as great a change in the laws of nature as it would to roll the St. Lawrence up the Falls of Niagara. But there is no need of changing the laws of nature to answer a prayer for rain. All that is necessary is to use the laws, not to break them. If I need a shower on my lawn, I turn the water on to the hose and produce a shower. Cannot God do on a large scale what any of us can do on a small scale? A child is caught in the machinery of a great factory; to reverse that machinery by its own laws would be a great cost and labor. But the owner can turn off a band and rescue the child in a moment. Cannot God do as much with the machinery of the universe?— *Peloubet.*

29—31. (29) **spreadings,** the wondrous way in wh. they cover the heavens, and lie fold on fold. **noise,**[h] *etc.*, *R. V.*, "The thunderings of his pavilion," the noise of thunder reverberating in the clouds. God is poetically said to have His pavilion amidst dark clouds.[i] (30) **light,** lightning, seen against the dark clouds. **upon it,** *R. V.*, "around him." **bottom,** marg. roots.[j] God's power seen not only in the waters of the clouds, but also in the waters of the sea (Gen. i. 9). (31) **by them,** by His clouds God works two opposite effects. He executes judgment upon the peoples, destroying their crops with His thunderbolts. **he giveth meat,** restoring to the parched earth its fertility by means of copious and refreshing showers. — *Rawlinson.*

The shadowing of light. — Light makes some things invisible. Were it not for darkness and the shadow of the earth, the noblest part of creation had remained unseen, and the stars of heaven as invisible as on the fourth day, when they were created above the horizon with the sun, and there was not an eye to behold them. The greatest mystery of religion is expressed by adum-

bration; and in the noblest part of Jewish types we find the cherubim shadowing the mercy-seat. Life itself is but the shadow of death, and souls departed but the shadow of the living. All things fall under this name. The sun itself is but the dark simulacrum, and light but the shadow of God. — *T. Browne.*

Light of God. — What folly it is to imagine that I cannot expect God to be with me every moment! Look at the sunshine! Have you ever said, "Oh, how can I keep that sunlight, and be sure that I shall have it to use while working?" Is not God, who made the sun to shine, also willing and able to let His light and His presence so shine through me that I can walk all the day with God nearer to me than anything in nature? Praise God, He can do it.— *Andrew Murray.*

The transforming power of light. — The most entrancing vision of beauty I ever beheld was the view from the Eiffel Tower, looking down at night upon the enclosure of the Exposition buildings in Paris. The architecture of the buildings themselves was outlined in golden and silver light. The very trees bore fruit of electric lights. The groups of statuary were illuminated. The lawns were like immense emeralds surrounded by frames of golden light. The illuminated fountains, not from light thrown upon them but from light underneath, threw up their waters in a glorious changing harmony of brilliant colors, like variegated fireworks. It was like a dream of Paradise, a vision of fairy-land. Then it came to me that all this beauty was made from the grass and water and light of our common, every-day life, and that so God can take the materials now in our souls, and in society, and transform them into the glories of His new Jerusalem.

Vision of the dawning light. — Aristotle, in one of his works, fancies the feelings of one who, having lived in darkness all his life, should for the first time behold the rising of the sun. He might have some idea of the world from the light of candles, or of the stars, but when the sun rose, what new glories would burst on his vision. The dangers, too, would be shown in clearer light, as well as the safe roads. So Christ was the dayspring from on high.

32, 33. (32) **clouds,** *R. V.*, "He covereth his hands with the lightning: and giveth it a charge that it strike the mark."[a] (33) **The noise,** of thunder following the lightning flash. **concerning it,** *R. V.*, "concerning him." **vapour,** *R. V.*, "the storm that cometh up." Even the cattle hear with terror his awful voice.[b]

God's power over nature. — All nature is a magazine of means prepared by the Almighty, to be employed by Him, either in judgment or in mercy. His goodness is exhibited in the copious or softly falling shower; his terrible majesty and awful displeasure against sin, in the forked lightning and crashing thunder. Even the irrational creatures are gladdened by the one, but alarmed and terrified by the other. All the elements of nature are under the Almighty's control. The lightning-flash or thunderbolt has its commission from the Creator. "He commandeth concerning it where it shall strike." Alexis, the friend of Luther, is struck dead by a flash of lightning, while Luther himself, close by his side, remains unhurt. — *Hom. Com.*

Light in darkness. — It was out of the cloud that the deluge came, yet it is upon it that the bow is set! The cloud is a thing of darkness, yet God chooses it for the place where He bends the arch of light! Such is the way of our God. He knows that we need the cloud, and that a bright sky without a speck or shadow would not suit us in our passage to the Kingdom. Therefore He draws the cloud above us, not once in a lifetime, but many times. But lest the gloom should appall us, He braids the cloud with sunshine — nay, makes it the object which gleams to our eye with the very fairest hues of heaven. Yes, it is not merely light, after the darkness has fled away. That we shall one day know — how fully! But it is light in darkness; light beaming out of a ray produced by that darkness! Water from the rock, wells from the sand, light from the very cloud that darkens — life in the very midst of death! This is the marvel — this is the joy. Peace in trouble, gladness in sorrow; nay, peace and gladness produced by the very tribulation itself; peace and gladness which nothing but that tribulation could have produced! Such is the deep love of God; and such is the way in which He makes all things work together for good to us. — *Horatius Bonar.*

"When Alexander the Great visited the Greek philosopher, Diogenes, he asked him if there was anything that he could give him. He got this short answer, 'I want nothing but that you should stand from between me and the sun.' One thing there is which should never satisfy and content us; and that is, 'anything that stands between our souls and Christ.'" — *J. C. Ryle.*

"So have I seen the sun with a little ray of distant light challenge all the powers of darkness, and without violence and noise, climbing up the hill, hath made night so to retire that its memory was lost in the joys and sprightliness of the morning." — *Bishop Taylor.*

the shadowing of the light

a "He clotheth His hands with lightning, and giveth it command whom it shall reach." — *Spk. Com.*

"Both hands He covereth over with light, and directeth it as one that hitteth the mark." — *Delitzsch.*

"His hands he covereth with lightning, and He giveth it command against the enemy." — *Revised Eng. Bib.*

b "Some animals give various intimations that they are sensible of the approach of a storm." — *Fausset.*

"Flesh is translucent to inner light. A face is lighted by a thought, by a joy. Much more by Him who is the Light of the World." — *Bp. Warren.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

1, 2. (1) **At this,** the thunder Elihu had just spoken of; ch. xxxvi. 33. This part of the discourse may have been delivered amid the loud thunder-claps. **trembleth,**[a] palpitates with terror and admiration. (2) **attentively,**[b] Heb. *hear in hearing.* **noise,**[c] or roar. **the sound,** or murmuring; so we speak of the muttering of the thunder.

The voice of God in nature (Arab legend). — Nimrod attempted the life of the child Abraham, because the soothsayers announced that he would prove formidable to the gods. His mother concealed him for fifteen years in a cave. When she thought that the danger was past she led him forth from the cave for the first time. It was a wild, stormy night. The angel of the wind was flapping his mighty wings; one solitary star peeped through a rift in the clouds. Abraham saw nothing but darkness, heard nothing but the sighs of the bride of the wind. Then he thought that the pure light which looked down so calmly amid the war of nature's elements must be the Supreme Power which had given unity and order to the universe. He fell down and worshiped it. But when the star faded away, Abraham saw his error, and cried, "I will never worship that which fadeth away." The bright moon now arose resplendent with light. Abraham cried, "This is not my God; I will not worship that which fadeth away." Then the sun arose in all his majesty and power; and the wonders of creation, illuminated by his rays, unfolded themselves to Abraham's astonished gaze. "This is my Lord and my God," he cried in a transport of delight, as he threw himself on the ground to worship. But the sun also finished his course and sank beneath the western horizon. "This is not my Lord and my God," cried Abraham; "I will not worship that which fadeth away. I look up to Him who has created the small and the greatest light, to the Lord of heaven and earth. He is my Lord and my God." — *Franke.*

3—5. (3) **directeth,** or sendeth it forth. **ends,** *Heb.* wings, or skirts. Earth was sometimes compared to a bird with wings spread out; sometimes to an extended garment.[d] (4) **of his excellency,** *R. V.*, "majesty." "As once more the peal follows the flash he bids them listen to the voice which thunders out its challenge against iniquity and mark how nothing is held back, but the whole contents of the sky — rain, hail, wind,— all discharged on the troubled earth." — *Cox.* (5) **marvellously,** thunder in Arabia is sublimely terrible.

The storm. —

'Tis listening fear, and dumb amazement all,
When to the startled eye, the sudden flame
Appears far South, eruptive through the cloud;
And following slower, in explosion vast,
The thunder raises his tremendous voice.
At first heard solemn, o'er the verge of Heaven,
The tempest growls; but as it nearer comes,
And rolls its awful burden on the world,
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more
The noise astounds: till overhead a sheet
Of lurid flame discloses wide; then shuts
And opens wider, shuts, and opens still
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze.
Follows the loosened aggravated roar,
Enlarging, deepening, mingling; peal on peal
Crush'd horrible, convulsing heaven and earth. — *Thomson.*

6—8. (6) **snow,** "the fall of snow is always portentous to the mind of an Eastern." **Be thou,** or *fall* thou. **small . . great,** ordinary gentle rains, and the severe rains attending thunder-storms. (7) **sealeth up,** stops, brings to a standstill. This is true of storm-times, but more so of winter-time, and to it Elihu may be here referring. **his work,** and so realize their continued dependence on Him.[e] (8) **places,** lairs. Some require sheltering, some become torpid, hibernate.[f]

the voice of the Lord

a Comp. *Shakespeare* in "Macbeth." "And make my seated heart knock at my ribs, against the use of nature."

b Ps. lxxxix. 7; Je. v. 22.

c "The word means *commotion*, that which is fitted to produce perturbation or disquiet." — *Barnes.*

"Nature is avariciously frugal; in matter, it allows no atom to elude its grasp; in mind, no thought or feeling to perish. It gathers up the fragments that nothing be lost." — *David Thomas.*

the noise of the storm

d De. xxii. 12; Nu. xv. 38.

"The universe is the realized thought of God." — *Carlyle*

"Nature's self, which is the breath of God, or His pure word by miracle revealed." — *Wordsworth.*

"Wise is Nature's plan,
Who, in her realm as in the soul of man,
Alternates storm with calm, and the loud noon
With dewy exening's soft and sacred lull." — *Paul H. Hayne.*

the snow, the rain,— winter

e "God seals the works of men in winter, in order that they may recognize His work, and may adore Him, who enables them to work, and also disables them fr. working when He wills." — *Wordsworth*

f "The desolation of the fields, at

The teaching of snow. — It is well to mark the ways of God in nature as well as in grace. I. We see the wisdom and goodness of God in the formation of snow, as indeed we do in all the varied productions and operations in the natural world. II. But let us look at the uses of snow for a further exemplification of this wisdom and goodness of God. 1. Snow-water is peculiarly purifying; 2. Snow waters the earth. III. The evanescent nature of snow. IV. Snow may teach the power of God and the impotency of man. — *J. S. Broad.*

Snow in Switzerland. — In a work, *Voyages aux Alpes*, which has recently been published in Paris, a curious account is given of an avalanche which occurred in Switzerland many years ago. During the absence of a Swiss farmer, his cottage and stable were, by the fall of the avalanche, inclosed in snow; his wife and daughter were at the time in the stable. Six weeks afterwards, the snow having melted a little, an opening was effected, and the two females were found alive, having been supported by the milk of the cow during that long period. The space left free from the snow was sufficient for air, and there was a good winter's stock of provisions for the cow near the stable. — *Whitecross.*

God's bidding, is poetically graphic." — *Fausset.*

Ps. civ. 22; cxl. 2.

Ridge of the mountain wave, lower thy crest!
Wail of *Eurocłydon*, be thou at rest!
Sorrow can never be, darkness must fly,
Where saith the Light of light, Peace! It is I!

9, 10. (9) **south,** *lit.* chamber.[a] The term "chamber" is most probably used in the sense of "treasury." "He bringeth the wind out of His treasuries." The meaning probably is, out of its (or, His) chamber cometh the whirlwind."[b]—*Cam. Bib.* **north,** *Heb.* scattering winds; "cold from the cloud-sweepers." — *Delitzsch.* (10) **breath,** gentle influence in the still night, not by violent wind. **straitened,** congealed; held in from flowing.

Whirlwinds in the east (*vs.* 9). — It was about this time when the wind began to be felt by us, coming in short and sudden puffs, which, instead of cooling and refreshing, oppressed us even more than the calm; each of those blasts seeming like the hot and dry vapor of an oven, just at the moment of its being opened. The southern desert was now covered with a dull red mist, not unlike the sunrise skies of our northern climates on a rainy morning; and soon afterwards we saw large columns of sand and dust whirled up into the air, and carried along in a body over the plain with a slow and stately motion. One of these passed within a few hundred yards of us, to the northward, having been driven over a large tract of stony land, to a distance of perhaps twenty miles from the place of its rising. It was apparently from eighty to a hundred feet in diameter, and was certainly of sufficient force, by its constant whirling motion, to throw both men and animals off their legs, so that if crossing a crowded caravan, and broken by the interruption of its course, the danger of suffocation to those buried beneath its fall would be very great, though, if persons were prepared for it, it might not perhaps be fatal. — *F. S. Buckingham.*

the winter and the frost

a Compare Job ix. 9.

b "*Savary* says of the south wind, wh. blows in Egypt from Feb. to May, that it fills the atmosphere with a fine dust, rendering breathing difficult...Sometimes it appears in the form of a furious whirlwind, which advances with great rapidity, and which is highly injurious to those who traverse the desert. It drives before it clouds of burning sand; the horizon appears covered with a thick veil, and the sun appears red as blood." — *Barnes.*

11—13. (11) **by watering,** *R. V.*, "Yea, He ladeth the thick cloud with moisture; He spreadeth abroad the cloud of His lightning." **bright cloud,**[c] returning brightness figured as if it were a cloud scattering the rain-clouds. (12) **it,** the cloud of light, or lightning. **counsels,** *lit.* steering.[d] **on the face,** refreshing the thirsty surface of the earth. **the world,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "the habitable globe." (13) **He causeth,**[e] God sends it, God controls it. "He has different purposes in directing the rain hither or thither. Sometimes His object is to punish by violent or excessive rainfall; sometimes it is to fertilize His own special land; sometimes it is out of kindness to men generally." —*Rawlinson.*

The power of rain. — Rain is most potential, not when it is yet rain, but when it is in the lion's paw; when it is in the foot of the deer; when it is in the horn of the unicorn; when it is in the hand and brain of man; when it has been organized and exists in some invisible latent form, giving to life its potency. Not printed truth is the most potential form of the truth. When it has disappeared as truth and reappeared as life, then it is the truth of God, as rain and snow, which, coming down in visible forms, lose their life, find it again, and are more mighty than ever. — *Beecher. The rain storm governed by God.* — The clouds seem to pass over the heavens in wild confusion. We can see no reins to hold them in, nor any whip to drive them on. The science of meteorology is about the most backward of all the sciences, because it is so difficult to reduce the phenomena of the weather to their place in an orderly scheme, on account of their ceaseless variations and apparently

rains exhaust the clouds

c The burst of lightning shattering the clouds appears to be described.

d Pr. xi. 14.

e For correction, as Deluge; for mercy, as in yearly overflow of the Nile.

Ps. cxlviii. 8; Joel ii. 23.

boundless irregularities. But we are already seeing that there are laws behind the weather, and some of them are already known. Hence our weather prognostications in the newspapers. Now, the Scripture view of the weather, as much as that of the most orderly and changeless phenomena, attributes all its movements to the will of God. God is in what looks to us most conflicting and purposeless. If He is steering it, we can trust to Him to bring it to a happy end.— *Pul. Com.*

"The more a man follows Nature, and is obedient to her laws, the longer he will live; the farther he deviates from these, the shorter will be his existence."— *Hufeland.*

Rain. —

The clouds consign their treasures to the fields;
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow
In large effusion o'er the freshen'd world. — *Thomson.*

the wondrous works of God

14, 15. (14) **this,** *i. e.* the lessons conveyed by such things. **stand still,** be calm and quiet; cease from restless complainings. (15) **disposed them,**[a] if Job could not compass, and fitly explain God's work in nature, how could he expect to explain the more difficult questions of Div. Providence? **light,** lightning. Some have referred this also to rainbow. **shine,** or flash.

[a] 1 Sa. ii. 3; Pr. iii. 19, 20; Je. x. 12, 13.

God's greatness in nature.— God's greatness and our own littleness are never more realized than in the intelligent contemplation of the arrangements in nature in relation to the earth, and of the mechanism of the heavens, of which the earth forms a part. Of God's work in creation we understand but little; still less of His secret purposes and providential procedure; least of all, of Himself. The origin of the universe, except as God reveals it, is entirely hidden from our knowledge. Science, of itself, is able to teach nothing as to the fact of creation, or of the first great cause, except that there is one — an intelligence infinite in power and wisdom. The distance of the time when God first "disposed," or put His Almighty hand to the work, is far beyond man's conception, millions of years being revealed in the earth's strata as antecedent to man's existence.— *Hom. Com.*

"What throbbings of deep joy pulsate through all I see; from the full bud whose unctuous sheath is glittering in the moon, up through the system of created things, even to the flaming ranks of seraphim." — *Alford.*

God in nature.—

A present Deity in all.
It is His presence that diffuses charms
Unspeakable o'er mountain, wood, and stream;
To think that He who hears the heavenly choir
Harkens complacent to the woodland song;
To think that He who rolls yon solar sphere,
Uplifts the warbling songster to the sky.
To mark His presence in the mighty bow
That spans the clouds, as in the tints minute
Of tiniest flower; to hear His awful voice
In thunders speak, and whisper in the gale;
To know and feel His care for all that lives;
'Tis this that makes the barren waste appear
A fruitful field, each grove a paradise.— *Grahame.*

"Do not let the empty cup be your first teacher of the blessings you had when it was full. Seek, as a plain duty, to cultivate a buoyant, joyous sense of the crowded kindnesses of God in your daily life."— *Alexander McLaren.*

the mysteriousness of a cloudy firmament

16, 17. (16) **balancings,** poisings; attemperings of weight; arrangements by which they are upheld, or fall as vapor, and rain.[b] (17) **garments are warm,** through the changed atmosphere giving warmth to thy body.

God's works are "wondrous." They are stamped with the impress of thought. The most advanced science is but man's blundering attempt to spell out God's hieroglyphics written in the great book of nature. The very difficulties of nature spring from its vast complexity. The Architect of the universe is an infinite Artist, Mathematician, Physiologist.— *Pul. Com.*

[b] "The phenomena of the clouds would be among the first that would attract the attention of man, and in the early times of Job it is not to be supposed that the subject could be explained." —*Barnes.*

Spirit of nature.—

And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.— *Wordsworth.*

18—20. (18) **spread out,** "firmament" is regarded as a solid body spread out, Gen. i. 6, 7.[a] **strong,** *etc.*, "wh. for firmness is like a molten mirror." **looking glass,** mirror, wh. was made of plates of metal highly polished.[b] The sky was regarded as a solid bright expanse, so like a mirror. (19) **order,** frame; carefully and fittingly arrange. **darkness,** of mind; ignorance. Elihu again intimates that Job's hurried and intense speeches were unworthy; and he demands of Job with what words of man such a Being is to be addressed, if one sought to contend with Him. (20) **if . . up,** more correctly, "shall one wish to be destroyed?" as Job had done.[c]

The pleasure of surveying the heavens.— I invariably experience a variety of sensations when I "survey the heavens" on a calm, clear night, about the end of the month of May. I can then inhale the sweets of the woodbine and other flowers, whose fragrance is drawn out by the gentle dews of evening. The nightingale breaks the silence by his sweet and varied notes; and the full moon "walking in brightness," and rendered still more beautiful by the lustre of so many shining stars, which appear in the wide-extended firmament, completes the loveliness of this nocturnal scene. Then I begin to reflect upon my own insignificance, and to ask myself what I am, that the great Author of the universe should be mindful of me. His mercy, however, then presents itself to me, as well as His majesty, and the former affects me more than the latter. I listen to the bird which appears to be pouring forth his little tribute of gratitude and praise, and my heart prompts me to do the same. The very perfume of the flowers seems to be an incense ascending up to heaven; and with these feelings I am able to enjoy the calm tranquillity of the evening. — *Jesse.*

21—24. (21) **now,** while the storm-cloud hung so thick and low. So there was a darkness about the spirit of Job wh. kept him fr. discerning God's gracious ways. **cleanseth them,** cleareth them; so that the sunlight comes again to view. (22) **fair weather,**[d] *R. V.*, 'golden splendor," sunshine.[e] **terrible majesty,** *R. V.*, "God hath upon him terrible majesty," therefore there should be cherished holy awe of Him. (23) **find him out,** so as fully to know the mystery of His ways. **excellent,**[f] excelling others; and beyond our thought. **not afflict,** not in mere punishment, only as chastisement.[g] (24) **fear him,** with reverent, godly fear. **wise,** *i. e.* in their own conceits.[h]

The bright light in the clouds. — Here appears to be a figurative allusion to the occurrences which are under the control of Divine Providence under the similitude of clouds, and the bright design which is sometimes beyond the reach of the human mind to understand. I. These occurrences resemble the clouds sometimes —1. In their sudden appearance; 2. In their various magnitude; 3. In their happy effects. II. There is a bright light in every cloud, or something cheering in all the dispensations of Providence. 1. The character of God is a bright light; 2. The promises are a bright light in the clouds: 3. The past conduct of God is a bright light in the clouds. III. There are, however, various causes which frequently prevent us from seeing the bright light in the clouds. 1. Constitutional or physical dejection will do this; 2. There are, however, other causes, both intellectual and moral, such as —(*a*) Defective views of Divine truth; (*b*) Want of faith in the wisdom and goodness of God.

God veils His glory in clouds. — The day often begins with clouds about the sun. Then we can look at the splendor of the dawn, because the ever-shifting panorama of crimson and gold that heralds in the day is visible to us in colors that our eyes can endure to look at. God begins the education of his children in a light that is tempered to suit their feeble vision. But a common mistake is to forget that God is condescending to our weakness, and to limit our conception of God to the measured revelation. Thus we form partial and human ideas of God. If His cloud is thick and dark we do not see His glorious light, and then we accuse Him of the darkness, and narrow and unjust thoughts of God spring up in our hearts. Difficulties in nature and Providence trouble us. Vexatious thoughts about the apparent imperfection of God's works fill our minds with doubt. And all the while the simple truth is that God is merciful and considerate, veiling Himself in clouds for the very purpose of sparing us.— *Pul. Com.*— *The Sun of Righteousness.* — "I have seen a picture that I used at one time to think a good deal of, but now that I have come to look at it more closely, I would not put it in my house except I turned the face to the wall. It represents Christ standing at a door knocking and having

the strength and beauty of the sky

a "Elsewhere the hemispheric firmament is likened to a clear sapphire (Ex. xxiv. 10); a covering (Ps. civ. 2); a gauze (Isa xl. 22)."—*Delitzsch.*

b "Specimens are found in Egyptian monuments of extreme antiquity."—*Spk. Com.*

c "Durst a man speak before Him, that he is, without cause, being destroyed?"—*Umbreit.*

the bright light in the cloud

d LXX., "clouds shining like gold."

e "O, wait! wait patiently for Him and you shall see. A breath from Him will clear all mysteries from your life, just as a wind from Him sweeps the darkness from the sky and suffuses it with golden light."—*Cox.*

f "All God's attributes harmonize with each other, and find their perfect manifestation in love."—*Spk. Com.*

g La. iii. 32, 33; He. xii. 10.

h Mat. xi. 25; 1 Co. i. 26.

"If a man whose body was radiant and bright as the sun were walking through a land of Egyptian darkness, all who followed him would actually walk in the light, and the closer they kept to him the clearer their light would be and the safer their road. He who follows Christ follows One from whom light streams upon the road we are to go —an illuminated Man—laying bare its hidden pitfalls, discovering its stumbling-stones, showing all its

turnings and windings, and enabling us to walk safely, surely, and cheerfully on our way (John viii. 12.)"—*G. S. Bowes.*

God speaks to Job out of the whirlwind

a "Obscureth and distorteth the wise and gracious counsel of God in afflicting him, by words without knowledge, in wh. he presumptuously asserts his own righteousness, and impugns God's justice."—*Wordsworth.*

b Job. ix. 34, 35; xiii. 22; xxiii. 3, xxxi. 35.

"When George Stevenson was trying to pass his bill for railways in England, a peer said to him, 'Suppose that a cow were to get on the line when one of your new-fangled engines was on the road?' 'So much the worst for the cow,' said he. If you get into a collision with God, it is so much the worse for you. Woe to the man that striveth with his Maker."—*F. B. Meyer.*

human life a modern thing in the creation

c Ge. i, ; ii. 4; He. i. 10.

"We talk of human life as a journey; but how variously is that journey performed! There are those who come forth girt and shod and mantled to walk on velvet lawns and smooth terraces, where every gale is arrested and every beam is tempered a big lantern in his hand. Why! you might as well hang up a lantern to the sun as put one into Christ's hand. He is the Sun of Righteousness, and it is our privilege to walk in the light of an unclouded sun."—*D. L. Moody.*

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) **the Lord answered,** by a voice heard: no form was seen. "Jehovah, even when condescending to speak with men, must veil Himself in the storm cloud, in which He descends and approaches the earth. His revelation of Himself to Job, at least, was pastly to rebuke him, for he had sinned against His majesty, and He veils Himself in terrors."—*Cam. Bib.* **Job,** not the friends; not Elihu. (2) **darkeneth counsel,** makes the subject darker.[a] (3) **Gird,** *etc.*, for contending the matter with God, as He had desired to do.[b] **like a man,** boldly, courageously; as one entereth upon a battle.

The discourses of Jehovah.—At length, in answer to the repeated appeals of Job, the Almighty appears, not to crush and overwhelm, as fear had often suggested, but to reason with his servant; to appeal to his spiritual intelligence, rather than to smite him into lower prostration by some thunderbolts of rebuke. "Come now, and let us reason together," is the gracious invitation of him who is Eternal Reason amidst the wild clamors of our passion and despondency. At the same time, this revelation of the majesty of God humiliates and purifies the recipient of it, teaching him his own littleness and limitation in presence of this fulness of might and of wisdom. God, as the Almighty and only Wise, with whom no mortal may contend in judgment, may appoint the sufferings of the righteous for their probation and purification. And thus the great problem of the book, and the enigma of life, receives from the highest Source its long-delayed solution.—*Pul. Com.*—*The power of the Word.*—All human speculations have alloy about them—that Word is perfect. All human speculations fail—that Word abideth. The Jew hated it—but it lived on, while the veil was torn away from the shrine which the Shekinah had forsaken, and while Jerusalem itself was destroyed. The Greek derided it—but it has seen his philosophy effete, and his Acropolis in ruins. The Roman threw it to the flames—but it rose from its ashes, and swooped down upon the fallen eagle. The reasoner cast it into the furnace, which his own malignity had heated "seven times hotter than its wont," but it came out without the smell of fire. The Papist fastened serpents around it to poison it—but it shook them off and felt no harm. The infidel cast it overboard in a tempest of sophistry and sarcasm—but it rode gallantly upon the crest of the proud waters. And it is living still—yet heard in the loudest swelling of the storm—it has been speaking all the while—it is speaking now. The world gets higher at its every tone, and it shall ultimately speak in power, until it has spoken this dismantled planet up again into the smiling brotherhood of worlds which kept their first estate, and God, welcoming the prodigal, shall look at it as He did in the beginning, and pronounced it to be very good — *W. M. Punshon.*

4, 5, (4) **Where,** *etc.*, ironical allusion to the comparison between Job's short life and God's eternity. To understand the cause of things man should have been present at their origin. Questions such as these would most effectively humble the spirit of Job. **laid the foundations,** *lit.* "when I founded it;" created or established it. **hast understanding,** art capable of judging. (5) **laid the measures,** as the architect. **stretched the line,** as the carpenter and builder.[c] Were you there to see? can you tell from your own observation?

The insignificance of a man as a creature.—This subject implies two facts. 1. That God has made special communications to man; 2. That man should pay special attention to them. Adopting a somewhat paraphrastic method of treatment—I. What is thine intellect to Mine? II. What is thine age to Mine? III. What is thy power to Mine? IV. What is thy independency to Mine? For He is—1. Independent in being; 2. In action. This subject serves—(1) To rebuke all disposition to pronounce an opinion upon the ways of God; (2) To suggest that our grand effort ought to be to cultivate a loving trust in the Divine character, rather than to comprehend the Divine procedure; (3) To enable us to appreciate the glorious service of Christianity.—*Thomas.*

Man's work and God's.— We find no difficulty in distinguishing between the works of God and the works of man. God's works are absolutely perfect; man's are only relatively so. The most perfect needle may be perfect for the work to which it is adapted; but make it a microscopic object, and the smooth hole appears ragged and the needle becomes a honey-combed poker. Take, on the contrary, a hair from the leg of a fly or the dust from a butterfly's wing. Magnify these, and they are seen to be absolutely perfect. — *F. Hudson Taylor.*—*Man — a late creation.* — Who can read all these questions without feeling that man came very late into the field of creation? No deference is paid to his venerableness. The Lord does not accost him as a thing of ancient time as compared with the creation of which he is a part. Everything was here before man came: the earth was founded, the stars shone, the seas rolled in their infinite channels; the Pleiades were sprinkled on the blue of heaven, and the band of Orion was a fact before poor Job was born. It would seem as if everything had been done that could have been done by way of preparation for him! He brought nothing with him into this creation, not even one little star, or one tiny flower, or one singing bird: the house was furnished in every chamber for the reception of this visitor. This is scientific according to the science of the passing time. — *Peop. Bib.*

There are others who walk on the alpine path of life, against driving misery, and through stormy sorrows, over sharp afflictions; walk with bare feet and naked breast, jaded, mangled, and chilled." — *Sydney Smith.*

6, 7. (6) **fastened,** or sunk.[a] **corner stone,** wh. sustains the principal weight of the building.[b] (7) **morning stars,** they, as it were, sang a song of loud acclaim on witnessing the new marvel. Their priority to the earth is implied, since they witness its birth. Their song is, of course, that silent song of sympathy, whereof Shakespeare speaks when he says, "Each in its motion like an angel sings."—*Pul. Com.* **sons of God,** the angels.[c] For Biblical doctrine of "angels" comp. Gen. xxviii. 12; xxxii. 2 *ff.*; Deut. xxxiii. 2. **shouted,** in chorus.[d]

The creation of the earth is likened to the rearing of a great edifice, whose extent was determined by line, whose pillars were sunk in their bases, and its corner-stone laid with shoutings and songs of rejoicing among the heavenly hosts (comp. Ezra iii. 10 *seq.*; Zech. iv. 7).

Such music, as 'tis said,
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung;
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.
— *Hymn on the Nativity.*

the morning stars singing at the creation

a "Reference is to a foundation-stone that sinks or settles down into clay or mire until it becomes solid." — *Barnes.*

b Ps. cxviii. 22; Zec. iv. 7.

c "This repres. of creation is a poetical development of the first chap. of Gen., full, however, of personifications and metaphors of wh. no trace is to be found in that document. The singing and shouts are, so to speak, an echo of the Creator's declaration, 'God saw that it was good.'" — *Spk. Com.*

d Comp. Ezr. iii. 10-13; Zec. iv. 7; Lu. ii. 9-13; Re. xix. 1-6.

8—11. (8) **with doors,** gates, such as shut up water in a dam; flood-gates. Such are the *shores*, holding back the ocean.[e] **brake forth,** at the uplifting of the mountains, the swirling waters were set in place by God. The mighty sea "under the figure of a vast Being, born of Chaos, full of proud ambition, but submissively in the power of God."—*Genung.* (9) **garment,** of this ocean-babe. **thick darkness,** mist as its swaddling clothes. (10) **brake up for it,** *R. V.*, "And prescribed for it my decree,"[f] given in next verse. (11) **proud waves,** a beautiful poetic figure. The waves seem as if they would overwhelm, but God's rugged rocks and ribbed sand effectually quell their pride.[g]

The ocean. —

"Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time;—
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving — boundless, endless, and sublime,
The image of eternity, the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee: thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone."
—*Byron.*

the boundaries of the ocean

e Ge. i. 9, 10; Je. v. 22.

f "The shore, with its broken precipices and rugged rocks, is God's decree, wh. He has set to restrain the raging of the sea." — *Wordsworth.*

"Then I broke its course with My barrier."—*Luther.*

Vulg., "I surrounded it with My limits."

LXX. "I placed boundaries to it"

g Ps. lxxxix. 9; Mar. iv. 39.

12—15. (12) **morning,** to arise and appear. **since thy days,** since thou wast created. **dayspring,** dawn,[h] aurora. **know his place,** the point of

the day-dawn

h Lu. i. 78.

sky in which morning first appears differs through the year. Yet perfect order controls the variety. (13) **ends,** wings; extremities. **wicked,** *etc.*, whose evil schemes are spoiled by returning light.[a] (14) *R. V.*, "It is changed as clay under the seal,[b] and all things stands forth as a garment." All things with clear-cut impression as clay under the seal and vivid coloring stand forth under the light, and together form a various, many-colored garment, in which the earth is robed. **they stand,** the objects of earth; grass and flowers *stand out*, radiant with the rich hues. (15) **their light,** the light that the wicked prefer is night and darkness.[c] **high arm,**[d] of the wicked. **broken,** by losing its opportunity; the night in wh. it works.

Turned as clay to the seal (*vs.* 14).— The birds pillage the granary of Joseph extremely, where the corn of Egypt is deposited that is paid as a tax to the grand seignior, for it is quite uncovered at the top, there being little or no rain in that country; its doors, however, are kept carefully sealed, but its inspectors do not make use of wax upon this occasion, but put their seal upon a handful of clay, with which they cover the lock of the door. This serves instead of wax, and it is visible; things of the greatest value might be safely sealed up in the same manner. — *Harmer.*— *Surrender to God's will.* — The clay has no option but to be what the potter would make it; but somehow you and I possess the marvelous power of saying "Yes" and "No" to God. If you say "Yes," then you have the blessedness of the beatitudes; if you say "No," 'Woe to him that striveth with his Maker!" God wants to make you, but you have the power to resist and you have used it. A great Christain worker, when dying, was asked the secret of his saintliness. He modestly disclaimed any title to saintliness, but he said, "The secret of my life is that I have said 'Yes' to Christ." I think I hear that clay saying "Yes" to the potter every time he touches it. With all your heart say "Yes" to Jesus Christ, and let Him have a chance to make you over again. — *F. B. Meyer.*

a "This has a special reference to Job's discourse, ch. xxiv. He there represented the evil-doers as working with impunity, in darkness; here he is told that the light, which they hate and dread, has a direct mission to overthrow them." — *Spk. Com.*

b "The expression turned may poss. refer to the rolling cylinder seal, such as is found in Babylon, which leaves its impressions on the clay as it is turned about." — *Fausset.*

c Pro. xiii. 9.

d Eze. xxx. 22.

the size of the earth

16—18. (16) **entered,** so as either to understand or control. **springs,**[e] *i. e.* sources, origins, "canst thou go to the bottom of anything, explore its secrets, explain its cause and origin." — *Rawlinson.* **search,** or recesses: deep places, caverns.[f] (17) **gates of death,** Sheol, or Hades, the abodes of the dead. **shadow of death,** ch. x. 21. (18) **perceived,** *R. V.*, "comprehended," do you even know the earth, the extent of it and its contents?

The unknowable (*vs.* 16).— Some things in nature must remain a mystery to the most intelligent investigator. Universal knowledge for God alone. Why then be curious about things I cannot understand? What I cannot gain by intellect, I can possess by affection. — *Spurgeon.*— *Mysteries.* — A Bible that man can comprehend, or anybody else can comprehend, is not very much of a Bible. Infinite things cannot be grasped by the human mind. The Bible opens with three great mysteries; the mystery of time, the mystery of being, and the mystery of creation. We cannot understand them; they are past our finding out. — *Alexander McKenzie.* The great canon of interpretation, that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, cannot be too strongly insisted on. One cannot interpret Scripture by mere intellect any more than a mathematician can interpret the oratorio, "The Creation," by his multiplication table, or a shop-keeper can comprehend "Paradise Lost." with his yard-stick. Only the Spirit that inspired the Word of God can give us the key to that Word.— *A. J. Gordan.*

e Ge. vii. 11.

"The gushing forth."— *Gesenius.*

f Ps. lxxvii. 19.

"To a vain, boasting fellow, it is said, 'Yes, yes; the sea is only knee-deep to thee.' 'It is all true; thou hast measured the sea.'" — *Roberts.*

"Mystery such as is given of God, is beyond the power of human penetration, yet not in opposition to it." — *Mme. De Staël.*

the way of the light

19—21. (19) **way,** *R. V.*, "way to the dwelling of light." Light and darkness are here personified and regarded as having each its own abode. (20) **bound,** can Job determine the bounds or limits of light and darkness? (21) **knowest . . born,** *R. V.*, "*doubtless*, thou knowest, for," *etc.* "Job, of course, is as old as the Almighty, or, at any rate, coeval with creation; otherwise he could not presume to take the tone which he has taken, and arraign the moral government of the Creator."— *Rawlinson.*

"You have noticed the lighting of the streets or of a public building — how when the first lamp is lit it is plainly seen, and disperses in part the surrounding darkness; but when the second, third, fourth, and all the lamps are lit, the light meets light, ray blends with ray, until the whole

Light. —

Hail, holy light, offspring of Heaven firstborn.
Or of th' Eternal co-eternal beam.
May I express thee, unblamed? Since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light,
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate.— *Milton.*

Light.— The business of Christians is to hold up the true Light, to be as a lamp set upon its stand (Matt. v. 14–16), to let the light shine over the world, to kindle other souls that they may shine, too, till the whole world is flooded with the light of heaven. "It has been pointed out," says Professor Henry Drummond in *The Programme of Christianity*, "as a blemish on the immortal allegory of Bunyan that the Pilgrim never did anything — anything but save his soul. The remark is scarcely fair, for the allegory is designedly the story of a soul in a single relation, and besides he did do a little. . . . Christ's conception was heavens removed from that of a man setting out from the city of Destruction to save his soul. It was rather that of a man dwelling amidst the Destructions of the City, and planning escapes for the souls of others, escapes not (merely) to the other world, but to purity and peace and righteousness in this." Bunyan's object was to save souls, because only saved souls could save others. He wanted more lamps burning, and his work was to kindle them, that they might kindle others, as his whole life showed. In a neighboring city is an immense electric light manufactory. If I were describing that I would not tell what the electric light was doing in churches and libraries and homes and streets. I would only describe how the lights were made, and he would wholly misunderstand the description and the factory who should imagine that the factory was an end in itself, and not for the very purpose of giving light. Let us not make this mistake in thinking of our salvation. We are saved to save others: our hearts are lighted that we may light others.— *Peloubet.*

place is illuminated. Thus it is with the spread of Christian light. The light of life shining from one believer joins and blends with that of another; the light of one neighborhood with an adjoining one; the light of nation with nation, until the whole world becomes filled with the light of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." — *John Bate.*

"Against the darkness outer
God's light his likeness takes,
And He from the mighty doubter
The great believer makes."
—*Gilder.*

22, 23. (22) **treasures,** that is, the treasuries, the magazines. Snow and hail are represented as having been created and laid up in great store-houses in the heavens or above them, from whence God draws them forth for the moral ends of His government. — *Cam. Bib.* (23) **time of trouble,** to use as agents in the chastisement of men. Hailstones have been employed by God in connection with battle.[a]

the treasures of the snow

[a] Ex. ix. 22-26; Jos. x. 11; Ps xviii. 13, 14; Is. xxviii. 17-21; Re. xvi. 21.

Napoleon's defeat at Moscow.— Napoleon was defeated at Moscow by the soft-falling snow. "Earthly state had never reached a prouder pinnacle than when Napoleon, in June, 1812, gathered his army at Dresden — that mighty host, unequaled in all time, of 450 thousand, not men merely, but effective soldiers — and there received the homage of subject kings. And now, what was the principal adversary of this tremendous power? By whom was it checked, and resisted, and put down? By none, and by nothing, but the direct and manifest interposition of God. I know of no language so well fitted to describe that victorious advance to Moscow and the utter humiliation of the retreat, as the language of the prophet, with respect to the advance and subsequent destruction of the host of Sennacherib, 'When they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses,' applies almost literally to that memorable night of frost, in which twenty thousand horses perished, and the strength of the French army was utterly broken." — *Thomas Arnold.*

"In ancient times, when the bow held the place in war wh. is now occupied by the rifle or the musket, a heavy hailstorm, striking full in the face of the combatants on one side, while it only fell on the backs of their adversaries, must often have decided a battle." — *Raulinson.*

The architecture of the frost. —

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,
From the snow five thousand summers old;
The little brook heard it, and built a roof
'Neath which he could house him, winter proof;
All night, by the white stars' frosty gleams,
He groined his arches, and matched his beams;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars,
As the lashes of light that trim the stars;
He sculptured every summer delight,
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest crypt,
Long sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
Sometimes, the roof no fretwork knew,
But silvery mosses that downward grew;
Sometimes it was carved, in sharp relief,
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf,
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heav'n to shine through; and here

"The frost is God's plough, which He drives through every inch of ground in the world, opening each clod, and pulverising the whole."— *Fuller.*

"Silently, like thoughts that come and go the snow flakes fall, each one a gem."— *W. H. Gibson.*

"The silent falling of the snow is to me one of the most solemn things in nature." — *Longfellow.*

"I think better of snow-storms since I find that if they keep a man's body indoors, they bring his mind out."—*Prescott.*

He had caught the nodding bulrush tops,
And hung them thickly with diamond drops,
Which crystaled the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one;
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter palace of ice;
'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depth serene through the summer day,
Each flitting shadow of earth and sky. — *Lowell.*

the mystery of light

24. light, of day, not here lightning. **parted,** distributed over the earth. Light appears to start from a point in the east, and then spread over all the earth and sky; can Job fully explain how this is done? **which,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Or the east wind scattered upon the earth?" The inquiry is made concerning two things, light and wind.[a] **east wind,** spoken of as a kind of personification of all winds, which, beginning at some point, diffuse themselves over the earth.

Divine mysteries.—I. The question here proposed. It concerns two familiar things, the light and the wind. Though familiar, they are little understood even at this time. II. What this question suggests. If there are mysteries in the world of nature, should we be surprised to find mysteries in the world of revelation, or in the kingdom of grace? Nay, should we not much more expect to find mysteries there than in nature? See the words of our Lord, Jo. iii. 7–13. Do we exclude things from our belief because they are mysteries? How little shall we believe if we believe only what we fully comprehend!

Mystery.— What is mystery to many men, what feeds their worship and at the same time spoils it, is that area around all great truth, which is really capable of illumination, and into which every earnest mind is permitted and commanded to go with a light. We cry "mystery," long before the region of mystery comes. True mystery casts no shadows around. It is a sudden and awful gulf, yawning across the field of knowledge; its form is irregular, but its lips are clean-cut and sharp, and the mind can go to the very verge and look down the precipice into the dim abyss

"Where writhing clouds unroll
Striving to utter themselves in shapes."— *Drummond.*

Nature unsympathizing.—

A comely face hath Nature, but no heart.
None! Are you sad? she smiles. Is your grief past,
And gladness come? Her skies are overcast.
In your chameleon moods she hath no part.
Praise her — your warmest words will ne'er impart
A ush the more to her full loveliness —
Flout her, and she will offer you, no less,
Flowers, fruitage, all the effluence of her art.
Die, she will send her merriest birds to sing
Outside your window, and upon your brow
Shed showers of sunbeams, in bright overflow:
Go down into your grave — no cloud will fling
Its shade, in sorrow that your tale is told:
She is a comely mother, but stone-cold. — *A. L. Westwood.*

"The light and the east wind are thus associated together, as both come from one quarter, and often arise together."—*Fausset.*

"The causes of the propagation of light which seems to proceed from a center, and to spread rapidiy in every direction, are perhaps as little known now as they were in the time of Job."—*Barnes.*

"We should render thanks to God for having produced this temporal light, which is the smile of heaven and joy of the world, spreading it like cloth of gold over the air and earth, and lighting it as a torch, by which we might behold His works."—*Caussin.*

"Light from the native East
To journey the airy gloom began,
Spher'd in a radiant cloud: for yet the sun was not."
— *Milton.*

"The best way to see Divine light, is to put out thine own candle!"—*Quarles.*

the lightning, the rain, and the dew

25—28. (25) **divided a watercourse,** *R. V.*, "Who hath cleft a channel for the waterflood," *i. e.* "Who has furrowed and seamed the ground (in Western Asia) with deep gullies, or "watercourses."[b] — *Rawlinson.* **way for the lightning,** which is the usual precursor of heavy rains in the East.[c] (26) **no man is,** the tenantless steppe: lonely wastes.[d] (27) **To satisfy,** *etc.*, the desolate parts are figured as thirsty, and crying to God for refreshing. (28) **a father,** *i. e.* a human father; "does any man, Job perhaps, beget the rain or the drops of dew? They are marvels of God's creative power."— *Cam. Bib.*

The spiritual rain and dew (*vs.* 28).—I. What is this question about? The "rain" and the "dew." The rain is an emblem of the word, and the dew of the spirit of God. Hath any mortal man been the origin and cause of the mighty doctrines that are set forth in scripture concerning the wisdom of God, *etc.*? "My doctrine shall drop as the rain." II. What is the question itself? Has any mortal man created the one or the other?— *W. Nunn.*

[b] "A channel for the heavy rains which descend like a torrent through the riven atmosphere." — *Spk. Com.*

[c] Job xxviii. 26; Zech. x. 1. marg.

[d] Ps. cvii. 35; Is. xliii. 19, 20; Ps. cxlvii. 7, 8.

Rain and Grace.—A lady traveling in Palestine writes: "Rain began to fall in torrents. Mohammed, our groom, threw a large Arab cloak over me, saying, 'May Allah preserve you, O lady! while He is blessing the fields.'" Oh, how pleasant are the effects of rain to languishing plants, to make them green and beautiful, lively and strong, fragrant and delightful! So the effects of Christ's influence are most desirable to drooping souls, for enlightening and enlivening them, for confirming and strengthening them, for comforting and enlarging them, for appetizing and satisfying them, transforming and beautifying them. *God's care for creation.*—This should tend to humble human pride; humanity is not the only creature that God careth for. Man is not the centre and pivot of the world. God cares for oxen, birds, insects, and everything that lives. He works the mystic machinery of heaven to water meadows untrodden by the foot of man. No flower is born to blush unseen and waste its sweetness; for God sees it, and that is enough. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and man is but one servitor out of the many which are created for God's pleasure. Let him take his place as one among many servants, and no longer dream that all things are made for him, and that they are wasted if he does not derive some benefit from them.

"The earthward direction assigned to the waterspouts is likened to an aqueduct coming downwards from the sky."—*Delitzsch.*

"New mercies give new meaning to old praises. Words hallowed by having borne the gratitude of many generations are the best vehicles for today's praise."—*Alex. McLaren.*

29, 30. (29) **whose womb,** who is the mother of ice and frost?[a] It is not only creation itself, but the transformations of created things, that transcend the scientific intellect and are inexplicable.—*Rawlinson.* (30) **are hid,** or lie hidden; the appearance of water is lost, the ice looks like stone: they are hid as with a covering of stone.

the ice and the hoar-frost

The suggestions of the ice.—I. God has made nothing in vain. A use for, a purpose in each of His works. So, no doubt, in the ice and hoar-frost. II. There are lands where snow, frost, ice, are unknown; where, if we described them, our truth would be doubted. Why should we doubt things that are outside our knowledge or experience? Thus the love of God, and the new birth, may be facts in the experience of some men, though we are not experimentally acquainted with them. A central African would surely believe that there might be ice, etc., on reliable testimony: and have you not reliable testimony to the facts of the spiritual life? An African who travels may have the witness of his own eyesight: and you, by traveling the way of prayer, may have the witness in yourself.

Hoar-frost (*vs.* 29).—The hoar-frost is generated in a way analogous to the snow; for the latter is vapor frozen aloft, and the former vapor frozen near the surface of the earth. Bodies have a tendency to throw off their heat, so that it is sometimes cooler in their immediate vicinity than at a short distance from them. This occasions a deposition of moisture upon their surface from the surrounding atmosphere, independently of the mists that float in it. The natural tendency of bodies to cool themselves might seem, at first sight, to be a defect, since warmth is so necessary for the health of plants. But observation teaches us that there has been no mistake, for they often get a covering of hoar-frost by it which protects them from cold. Thus God displays His wisdom and benevolence in spreading over the vegetable creation a beautiful mantle, serving both for protection and beauty.—*The Visitor.*

[a] Job. xxxvii. 10; Ps. cxlvii. 16.

"These questions refer not to the analysis of phenomena or of natural laws, but to the inner principles, of wh. science *now* professes to know nothing."—*Spk. Com.*

"When storms lower, and wintry winds oppress thee, Nature, dear goddess, is beautiful, always beautiful! Every little flake of snow is such a perfect crystal, and they fall together so gracefully, as if fairies of the air caught waterdrops and made them into artificial flowers to garland the wings of the wind."—*Mrs. L. M. Child.*

31. Canst, *etc.*,[b] "Dost thou bind the bands of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion."—*Cam. Bib.* **sweet influences,** *R. V.*, "cluster." Probably they are allusions here to mythological ideas now unknown: nor is the meaning of all the names certain. The name of Orion, the fool-hardy giant, seems to have come from some such myth.—*Genung.* **Pleiades,** seven stars[c] so closely set together as to seem bound in sisterly union. **Orion,** or the giant. It is the pioneer of winter, as the Pleiades are the spring.[d] "The main import of the question is 'Canst thou bring back the gracious, fruitful warmth of spring, and release the frozen earth from winter's sterile bands.'"—*Cox.*

Pleiades

The influences of Pleiades.—By the Greeks this cluster of stars was called Pleiades from *pleein*, to sail, because it indicated the time when the sailor might hope to undertake a voyage in safety; it was also called Vergiliæ, from *ver*, the spring, because it ushered in the mild vernal weather favorable for farming and pastoral employments. Job therefore would understand the question as meaning "Canst thou hinder or retard the spring?" The attention of astronomers had for years been directed to the question of the sun's stationary or movable condition, and it is now supposed by many that

[b] "Canst thou not arrange together the rosette (chain) of diamonds of the Pleiades?"—*Biegel.*

[c] Am. v. 8.

[d] "Orion and the Pleiades are visible in the Syrian sky longer in the year than with us, and there they come about seventeen degrees higher above the horizon than with us."—*Delitzsch.*

"Canst thou tie the Pleiades in a knot?" —*Wordsworth.*

"The Greenlanders call the Pleiades *Killukturset*, a name given to them because they appear to be bound together." —*Barnes.*

"Stately spring, whose robe-folds are valleys, whose breast bouquet is gardens, and whose blush is a vernal evening."—*Richter.*

the sun has itself a central point around which it with its system revolves. M. Mädler, of Dorpat, after many intricate calculations and laborious observations, came to the conclusion that this central point is Alcyone, the brightest star of the Pleiades group, and that it is the center or axle of our solar system. *Influences of the heavenly bodies.* — We are subject to influences from the heavenly bodies. We have given up astrology as a delusion. But we are entirely dependent for life itself upon one heavenly body, the sun. This earth is not self-sufficient. It would be frozen to death if the sun were to cease to pour into it his streams of heat. Some have connected sun-spots with social and financial crises! Although this may be but a survival of an ancient superstition, perhaps it is not wise to affirm that it must be nothing more. Now the physical heavens have always been to us a type of the spiritual heavens. Spiritually our life is not self-contained. Astrology had this in its favor, that it taught a certain largeness of view. It did not permit a parson to confine his attention to his own parish. It compelled him to look up, and to look to distant things. — *Pul. Com.*

the ordinances of heaven

32, 33. (32) **Mazzaroth,**[a] some think this refers to the twelve constellations, or signs of the Zodiac; but neither that nor any other proposed explanation is free from difficulty. **Arcturus,** *R. V.*, "the bear with her train," around the pole star.[b] **his sons,** the three stars in the tail of Arcturus. "The force of this question is, Canst thou command the seasons of the year, leading them in each in its turn with their rich and varied blessings for mankind." — *Cox.* (33) **ordinances,** refers to the astrological ideas "that the heavens and the stars exercise an influence over the earth and the destinies of man." — *Cam. Bib.*

The ordinances of heaven. — I. The place whence they are promulgated. Suggestive of power, holiness, righteousness, wisdom, mercy, love. II. The sphere of their operation. The earth. III. Their superiority to and independence of, all human control: "canst thou set," *etc.* IV. Their various effects. Day and night, the seasons, *etc.*

A lesson from the stars. — God's sky has many stars, though differing from one another in glory. A glory belongs to Christ, the central sun, that none of us may claim as our own. Another glory belongs to the church, the moon, that none of us may inherit, a borrowed splendor that covers the whole company of Saints. But there is glory that belongs to the individual "glitterers" of the firmament different in degree; and it is ours so to turn many to righteousness as that neither Alcyone's sheen, nor the stars that burn in Orion's belt, shall surpass our brightness in the resurrection of the just. What a miracle of splendor that will be when sun, moon, and stars all shine in the firmament at the same time! We shall each have our own peculiar glory while yet lost in the "Greater Light" who rules that golden day; for "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." — *Nathaniel West.*

a Delitsch explains as "lodging-houses, or strongholds," in wh. one after another the sun lodges as it describes the circle of the year.

b "The Great and Less Bear are called by the Arabs 'Daughters of the Bier,' the quadrangle being the *bier*, the three others the mourners." — *Fausset.*

Dillmann connects with the root *zahar*, to be bright, and refers to a star of peculiar brightness.

"The innumerable stars shining in order, like a living hymn written in light."—*Willis.*

man cannot command the rain, or rule the lightning

34, 35. (34) **thy voice,** commanding the clouds to send down rain. (35) **send lightnings,**[c] "If Job cannot command the clouds, much less can he send (or rather *send forth*) lightnings — those marvellous and terrible evidences of almighty power."

Two worlds united by the Atlantic cable (*vs.* 35).— I. The first thought this subject suggests is, that we should give thanks to God for the success that crowned the labors of our fellow-men engaged in this work. II. I look upon this achievement as a most happy illustration of the power of mind over mind, and of mind over matter. III. As one that will have a great moral result. IV. The termini of the telegraph are every shop, counting room, and fireside on both continents. V. The text is connected with a time of trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation; and yet, at that time, the prophet says, Jehovah shall deliver His people. VI. There is something our *savants* are not able to explain in the working of the electric current.— *W. A. Scott.*

Lightning and light.— "Professor Kohlbranch, who has been making some curious experiments with lightning, finds that the amount of electricity in an ordinary flash is so small that it would require 37 flashes to keep a common incandescent lamp burning one hour." — *Boston Journal.* So it takes much more grace and faith, a stronger hold on the promises, and more piety, to go on steadily doing God's work, and building up His kingdom, than to flash for a time with great enthusiasm, or to do some great deed in a moment of excite-

c "Even now, with all our command of electricity, our *savants* would, from the best electrical machines, find it difficult to produce the effects which often result from a single flash of lightning." —*Rawlinson.*

vs. 34. "This probably refers to thunder, and its effects in producing rain. It is said, 'Why, fellow, are you making such a noise? Are

ment. *Wires and electricity.*— Joseph Parker, in a sermon preached while they were putting the electric light in his church in London, said, "I see before me at this moment certain pieces of cord. What is wanted is but to connect these cords with a motive power, but until the connection is established they are but dead, useless things. Connect them, set the engine going, let it cause the necessary rotations to fly, and presently an arrangement may be made by which from these cords we shall receive a dazzling glory. They are nothing in themselves, and yet without them, the engine might go for a thousand ages and we should get no light. It is even so with us. We are here, men educated, intelligent, well-appointed, and what is it that we need but connection with the heavens, direct communication with the source of light and fire?"

36—38. (36) **inward parts,** *R. V.*, marg. "dark clouds."[a] Th translation of the *A. V.* may be certainly set aside, because the introduction of a reference to the "inward parts" and "heart" of man in the middle of a description of celestial phenomena is not to be thought of.— *Cam. Bib.* **heart,** in harmony with the previous clause, "celestial phenomena." "These, fulfilling the purposes of God, seem themselves endowed with wisdom." (37) **number the clouds,** wh. are so broken up, and in so many layers. **stay,** *R. V.*, "pour out."[b] "Who can slant the bottles of heaven? *i. e.* tip up the clouds so that they discharge their contents?"— *Cox.* (38) **dust,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "When the dust runneth into a mass." Effect of rain on loose dust.

Riches and wisdom. — We are reminded of the luckless king of Persia who, when the Moslems overran his empire, and made him prisoner, was left to starve in his own treasury. All round that Persian monarch were heaped diamonds and emeralds and topazes and pearls of inestimable value. Wherever he turned, he saw nothing except gold and silver and precious stones; but with the wealth of Ormuz and the East about him, the wretched man perished of hunger and thirst. — *W. H. Stead.* Such are those who seek riches without wisdom. But the riches that flow from wisdom are rather like those which Siddârtha scattered among the people, building libraries and hospitals and schools and giving work to many. The power of doing good, of enjoying and helping others to enjoy, is the test of true riches. — *Peloubet.*— *God-given wisdom.* — A Watt and an Arkwright were enabled to produce machines by which, with a little water and fuel, one man is able to do the work of twenty or a hundred, and the strength of draught-horses can be entirely dispensed with. By a simple apparatus, provided through the human intellect, man is enabled to employ the lightning to convey his messages, and to hold almost immediate fellowship with distant countries and continents. As a co-worker with his Maker, he is enabled, by the faculties which God has given him, to convert the wilderness into a fruitful field, and to cause the desert to "rejoice and blossom as the rose." If God thus puts wisdom and understanding into man, and endows him with so much power, how great the wisdom and power of the Creator Himself! — *Hom. Com.*

who is the giver of wisdom, etc.?

a Umbreit trans. "Who hath put wisdom in the dark clouds, and given understanding to the meteor."

b "The clouds are called the 'urns,' or water-skins of heaven, in several passages of Arabian poets; and by the utres, bladders, or water-skins, are always meant the more bulky clouds." — *Schultens.*

39—41. The next chapter should begin here where the animal world is introduced. (39) **thou hunt,** *etc.*, the instincts of animals are as far beyond human control as the forces of nature.[c] **lion,** "lioness," in search of prey for her whelps. (40) **abide,** *etc.*, *lurk*, the attitude of the lion in its lair.[d] (41) **raven,** a carnivorous bird; bird of ill omen, which men dislike, but for which God cares. Throughout this chapter Job is made to feel that there is even greater mystery *around him* than the mystery of God's dealing *with him.*

God's tender care for the lower creation. — I. How much more will He care for man? II. How much more for His children? (Matt. vi. 26.) III. Does not this Divine example teach us to have a proper regard for dumb creatures? IV. He provides for the ravens through the instrumentality of instinct, and for man by use of reason. V. The raven's instinct teaches it where to find its food; and our reason should guide us to the house of God, and the throne of grace, for the nourishment of our higher life.

Francke's school at Halle. — The conduct of the eminent and justly celebrated Francke, in the establishment of the hospital and school for the poor, at Halle, in Saxony, is well known. Having no permanent funds to meet the expenses, it may be easily supposed that the good man would frequently be reduced to great difficulties: at such times the interpositions of the providence of God were truly remarkable. About Easter, 1696, he knew not

who is the guardian of animated nature?

c Ps. civ. 21.

d Ps. x. 9, 10; xvii. 12.

vs. 39. "To a man who is boasting of the speed of his foot, or his prowess, it is said, 'Yes, there is no doubt thou wilt hunt the prey for the tiger.' When a person does a favor for a cruel man it is asked, 'What! give food to the tiger?' 'O yes; give milk to the serpent.' 'Here comes the sports-

you going to shake the clouds? Is it rain you are going to produce?' 'What is all this noise about! Is it rain you want?' 'Cease, cease, your roaring; the rain will not come.' 'Listen to that elephant, rain is coming.'" — *Roberts.*

vs. 38. "As we moved northwards, we came upon some ploughed fields, where there was a man with an axe cleaving the baked soil — 'breaking up the fallow ground,' or rather, cutting up the ground when brought by rain and sun into that state described in the Book of Job." — *Bonar.*

man; he has been hunting prey for the tiger."—*Roberts.*

"Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."—*Pope.*

"God sendeth and giveth, both mouth and the meat."—*Tusser.*

where to obtain money for the expenses of the ensuing week; but when their food was reduced to the very last morsel, one thousand crowns were contributed by some entirely unknown person. At another time all their provisions were exhausted, and the good minister wisely presented his request to the God of mercy, who careth even for the ravens when they cry. When prayer was over, just as he was taking his seat, a friend from a distance arrived with fifty crowns, which was shortly followed by twenty more.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-NINTH.

1—4. (1) **wild goats,**[a] *lit.* rock-climbers; the ibex or mountain-goat. **hinds,** fawns; most timid and defenseless animals. **calve?** Ps. xxix. 9. (2) **Canst . . forth?** are all the mysteries of breeding within man's control[b] (3) **bow themselves,** in the pain of giving birth to their young. A time of exceeding peril, in wh. God preserves them. **sorrows,** "infants are called 'pangs' by the Arab poets." (4) **good liking,** well-conditioned, though no *man* cares for them. **with corn,** *R. V.*, "in the open field."[c] "These shy, solitary creatures, inhabiting the rocks, are without care in bearing their young; yet they grow up in the desert and rapidly provide for themselves The care of God suffices for them."—*Cam. Bib.*

Man's need greater than that of animals.—Why should man, because he can think of the providence of God, be alone suspicious of the justice and wisdom on which all creatures rely? Is not his power of thought given to him that he may pass beyond the animals and praise the Divine Provider on their behalf and his own? Man needs more than the raven, the lion, the mountain goat, and the eagle. He has higher instincts and cravings. Daily food for the body will not suffice him, nor the liberty of the wilderness. He would not be satisfied if, like the hawk and eagle, he could soar above the hills. His desires for righteousness, for truth, for fulness of that spiritual life by which he is allied to God Himself, are his distinction. So, then, He who has created the soul will bring it to perfectness. Where or how its longings shall be fulfilled may not be for man to know. But he can trust God. That is his privilege when knowledge fails. Let him lay aside all vain thoughts and ignorant doubts. Let him say: God is inconceivably great, unsearchably wise, infinitely just and true; I am in His hands, and all is well. —*Exp. Bib.* *God's care for us.*—"I need oil," said a monk; so he planted him an olive sapling. "Lord," he prayed, "it needs rain," and the Lord sent a gentle shower. "Lord, my tree needs sun;" and the sun shone. "Now frost," my Lord; and behold the little tree stood sparkling with frost. But at even-song, it died. Then the monk sought a brother monk and told his strange experience: "I, too, have planted a little tree," and see, it thrives well; but I prayed: "Lord, send it what it needs, storm or sunshine. Thou hast made it and Thou dost know."—*Christian Age.*

who determines the increase of animals?

[a] "Observation of nature is a special characteristic of Heb. poetry and thought."—*Dillmann.*

[b] "It inhabits exclusively the more rocky and desolate parts of the country."—*Tristram.*

1 Sa. xxiv. 2; Ps. civ. 18.

[c] "The young forsake their dams very early."—*Spk. Com.*

vs. 4 *Liking:* the Anglo-Saxon *lician* to "please," gave rise to the impersonal "it likes me," "an it likes your majority," and the idea of "pleasing" is no doubt an ingredient in the noun.

5—8. (5) **wild ass,** two Heb. words are used for this animal—*ferâ*, the swift-footed; and *arôd*, the shy, or untamable. Both names are employed in the verse. Its speed is beyond that of the fastest horse. (6) **barren land,** or the salt wastes, incapable of culture.[d] (7) **scorneth,** so will not come near. **driver,** "the Arab driver of a long line of camels, or other animals." He is altogether beyond restraint. (8) **range,** the region he freely finds for himself. It especially loves desolate hills as its abode.[e]

The wild ass.—Every natural historian has recorded the extreme wildness of this animal. He is so jealous of his liberty that on the slightest alarm or the first appearance of danger he flies with amazing swiftness into the desert. His senses are so acute that it is impossible to approach him in the open country. But, in spite of all his vigilance, the hunter often incloses him in his toils, and leads him away into captivity. Even in this unhappy state he never submits his neck to the yoke of man without a determined resistance. "Sent out free" by Him that made him, he is tenacious of his independence, and opposes, to the extraordinary methods which his captors are forced to employ, the most savage obstinacy: and for the most part, he baffles all their endeavors to tame him: still he "scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regards he the crying of the driver."—*Paxton.*

the wild ass

[d] "The wild ass gladly licks the salt or natron of the desert; all wild animals that feed on plants have a partiality, which is based on chemical laws of life, for licking salt."—*Delitzsch.*

[e] "The main emphasis of the poet is laid on the most characteristic features of this beautiful creature: its intractable temper, its disdain of man, its wide and incessant quest of the food it loves."—*Cox.*

9—12. (9) **unicorn,** *R. V.*, "wild ox," often represented in Assyrian sculpture.[f] **thy crib,** as the domestic oxen will. (10) **bind,** so that he will work

the unicorn

[f] "The word *unicorn* ought to be

at ploughing and harrowing the fields. (11) **trust him,** as you do the horse or ox: trust him to work steadily. **strength is great,** and so would be very useful to you if you could only tame it. **thy labour,** or the results of thy labor, *i. e.* thy harvest. (12) **believe him,** "the point of the passage lies in the contrast between him and the tame ox, which he externally resembled. Who is the author of this strange diversity of disposition in creatures so like in outward form?" — *Cam. Bib.*

Strength. — The urus is wild, senseless, untamable, and not suseeptible to educative influences: therefore he cannot use his strength for profitable work. Human strength needs Divine guidance. So long as the soul is wild and self-willed, the powers of mind and body cannot be spent fruitfully. The humble ox looks a less noble beast than the wild and daring bison, with his shaggy mane, his flashing eye, his powerful neck, his thunderous charge; yet the former is useful because it is obedient. The first lesson we have to learn in life is to obey; this, too, is the last lesson. As the ox looks to its master, we have to look to our Master; and when we follow His guidance, whether our strength be great or small, it will not be fruitless. — *Pul. Com.*

Creation of beasts. —

"God said,
Let the earth bring forth soul living in her kind,
Cattle and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
Each in their kind." The earth obey'd, and straight
Op'ning her fertile womb, teem'd at a birth.
The cattle in the fields and meadows green;
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks,
Past'ring at once, and in broad herds up-sprung.
The libbard, and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks: scarce from his mold
Behemoth, biggest born of earth, upheaved
His vastness; fleeced the flocks, and bleating rose;
As plants ambiguous between sea and land,
The river-horse, and scaly crocodile. — *Milton.*

expunged fr. our version in all places where it occurs. (Nu. xxiii. 22; xxiv. 8; De. xxxiii. 17; Is. xxxiv. 7)." — *Wordsworth.*

"After discussing the claims of the oryx, buffalo, rhinocerous, and supposed unicorn, the *Bib. Dict.* decides in favor of a gigantic species of *urus*, or wild ox. 'Beyond all doubt the Beëm is the *Urus* of Cæsar, *i. e.* the Auerochs.'" —*Tristram.*

"Nature's great law, and law of all men's minds? —
To its own impulse every creature stirs;
Live by thy light, and earth will live by her's!" —
Matthew Arnold.

"Nature — the living visible garment of God." — *Goethe.*

13–15. (13) **peacocks,** *R. V.*, "The wing of the ostrich rejoiceth. But are her pinions and feathers kindly?"[a] Here also is a strange creature. "How interpret the wisdom that would see fit to create a bird at once wonderfully swift, to escape her enemies, and yet so foolish as to leave her young at the mercy of every hostile foot." — *Genung.* (14) **leaveth,**[b] *etc.*, it is the natural habit of the ostrich to make its nest in the sand, with layers of eggs, about thirty; these the sun's rays aid in their incubation. (15) **foot,** of passing rider. **wild beast,** such as the jackal.

the ostrich

Compensations. — Things are not so bad with the ostrich as they appear to us at first sight. Although the ostrich-eggs are left in the sand, they do not perish as the eggs of most birds under ordinary circumstances would do. Beneath the tropical heat of the sun they can be deserted during the day, the bird returning to sit on them at night. Thus by the wonderful balancing of influences in nature the careless maternity of the ostrich does not seriously endanger its offspring. If God has not given the bird wisdom, it does not need it. So long as we keep to the lines that God has laid down, we shall see that most defects have ample compensation in other directions. The culpable carelessness is that which goes against the laws of God; the fatal folly is that which departs from His ways. This carelessness and this folly are not found in the ostrich; they are only seen in man. — *Pul. Com.* — *The ostrich.* — The ostrich, too, has goodly feathers. and is yet a foolish bird; for wisdom does not always go along with beauty and gaiety. Other birds do not envy the peacock or the ostrich their gaudy colors, nor complain for want of them; why, then, should we repine if we see others wearing better clothes than we can afford to wear? God bestows His gifts variously, and those gifts are not always the most valuable that make the finest show. Who would not rather have the voice of the nightingale than the tail of the peacock? the eye of the eagle, and her soaring wing, and the natural affection of the stork, than the beautiful wings and feathers of the ostrich. that can never rise above the earth, and is without natural affection. — *M. Henry.*

[a] "She makes a great display of her flaunting plumage, but does she use her wings for purposes of natural affection for her offspring?" — *Wordsworth.*

[b] "Leaving does not here mean forsaking. The female incubates alone by day, but at night she is joined by the male."—*Spk. Com.*

The word rendered peacock, means "a wild, tremulous cry," and denotes the female ostrich.

16—18. (16) **hardened,** *etc.*, for at a slight disturbance she will quite forsake her nest; and it seems that she also lays some eggs on which she never sits.[a] **without fear,** *R. V.*, "though her labour be in vain, she is without fear;" *i. e.* "though she is often disappointed of her immediate hope of offspring, yet she grows no wiser, she does not fear for the future." (17) **God,**[b] *etc.*, *i. e.* here is a mystery, like yours, Job, of which you can only say, God has done it. For it, however, there is wise reason. (18) **lifteth up herself,** by the aid of her pinions skimming swiftly along. **scorneth,** *etc.*, distancing the very swiftest rider. "Its speed has been calculated at twenty-six miles an hour by Dr. Livingstone."

The ostrich. — The natural science of the Book of Job has been criticised, because in the reply of the Lord to Job we are told of the ostrich that she "leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them;" "she is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers," — whereas it has long been familiarly known that, though the eggs of the ostrich are, at least in the hotter regions, left buried in the sand during the day, where the heat of the sun retained in the sand is sufficient to continue the process of incubation, yet that at night the ostrich does incubate, and will, on occasion, vigorously defend its young. But it has only recently been ascertained that the ostrich has this peculiarity in common with the other struthious or wingless birds of South America and Australia, as the rhea, emu and cassowary, that it is only the male parent which performed domestic duties; that the female, so soon as she has deposited her eggs, does neglect and utterly ignore her offspring. Here, then, we find the language of the oldest book in the world in strict accordance with a fact of natural history which remained till yesterday unknown. — *Tristram.*

10—20. (19) **horse,** it should be understood here that the reference is to the war-horse, under all the excitement of approaching battle. At the time of Job the horse was probably used for war rather than for domestic purposes.[c] **thunder,** *Cam. Bib.* "trembling." The word "trembling" hardly refers to the mane alone, but rather describes the quivering of the neck, when the animal is roused, which erects the mane.[d] (20) **afraid,** *R. V.*, "to leap as a locust," referring to the terrible rush of the moment of charging. **nostrils,** *R. V.*, "snorting."[e]

The Arabian war-horse. — Here we arrive at one of the most glorious descriptions in the Book of Job — a description which no translation has been able to disfigure, and which in all translations has been admired. It is unnecessary to explain the figures employed, the force and beauty of which will be felt by every reader. There is a well-known description of the horse in Virgil, which is unquestionably the finest in classical antiquity. It is exceedingly noble, but is not comparable to that which the sacred text offers. The following is Sotheby's translation:

> "But at the clash of arms, his ear afar
> Drinks the deep sound and vibrates to the war;
> Flames from each nostril roll in gathered stream;
> His quivering limbs with restless motion gleam:
> O'er his right shoulder, floating full and fair,
> Sweeps his thick mane and spreads his pomp of hair:
> Swift works his double spine; and earth around
> Rings to the solid hoof that wears the ground." — *Kitto.*

21—23. (21) **paweth,** reference is to the restless movement of the restrained horse. **valley,** or plain, which alone is suitable for the evolutions of cavalry or chariots. **armed men,** heavy armed infantry. (22) **at fear,** that which one would expect to affright him. (23) **quiver,** *etc.*, the arms or weapons of its rider may be referred to.[f] **shield,** javelin or lance.

Note on vs. 23. — The poet does not seek to describe the actual conflict; it is a picture of the horse that he gives, and the movement before the conflict is that at which the animal's extraordinary attributes are most strongly exhibited. "Although docile as a lamb, and requiring no other guide then the halter, when the Arab mare hears the war-cry of the tribe (cf. *vs.* 25), and sees the quivering spear of her rider (cf. *vs.* 23), her eyes glitter with fire, her blood-red nostrils open wide, her neck is nobly arched, and her tail and mane are raised and spread out to the wind (cf. *vs.* 19). A Bedouin proverb says,

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[a] La. iv. 3.

[b] The Arab proverb is, "Foolish as an ostrich."

"The poor wren, the most diminutive of birds, will fight, her young ones in her nest, against the owl." —*Shakespeare.*

"Our sweetest experiences of affection are meant to be suggestions of that realm which is the home of the heart."— *Beecher.*

Hang the sweetest grass around a pig's neck, it will still go and wallow in its native mire.

the war-horse

[c] "This passage is at once the most ancient and the most beautiful description of the noblest of quadrupeds."—*Delitzsch.*

[d] "The point wh. struck those who saw for the first time the mighty war-horse in battle must have been the terror of the neck with its quivering muscles and tossing mane, and the word here used denotes, most probably, that impression."—*Spk. Com.*

[e] Jer. viii. 16.

the war-horse

[f] "The rattling of the quiver was caused by the fact that the arrows were thrown somewhat loosely into the case or the quiver, and that in the rapid motion of the warrior they were shaken against each other."—*Barnes.*

Pr. xxi. 31; Je. viii. 6.

that a high-bred mare when at full speed should hide her rider between her neck and her tail." — *Layard.*

Enthusiasm. — The life of the picture is its enthusiasm. The horse is impatient for the rage of the battle, excited by the distant sound of it to a strong desire to rush into it. That is the spirit which will give him strength and courage to go right into the midst of the danger. Nothing succeeds like enthusiasm. Nothing is so beautiful, so inspiring, so full of life and hope. It needs guidance or it may plunge into disaster; it is not enough without the direction of wisdom. But wisdom is vain without enthusiasm. In the Christian life men are uplifted and borne onward when they are reached by a wave of enthusiasm. Christ inspires the "enthusiasm of humanity," because He first inspires an enthusiasm for Himself. Now, the first essential in a worthy enthusiasm is the perception of a worthy object. The horse scents the battle, and the horse knows its master. We see the great battle of sin and misery, and we have a glorious Captain of salvation. The need of the world calls us to the fight; the presence of our Lord gives us strength and courage, and ensures the victory. — *Pul. Com.*

"I can't understand how any man can realize his standing before God and not be on fire 365 days in a year." — *D. L. Moody.*

"The time vesture of God, that reveals Him to the wise, and hides Him from the foolish." — *Carlyle.*

24, 25. (24) **swalloweth,** *etc.*, so rapid is his motion it is as if the ground were swallowed. A common Arabic figure. "He seemed in running to devour the way." — *Shakespeare.* **believeth he,** *Pul. Com.*, "He standeth not still when the trumpet soundeth." (25) **ha ha,** *R. V.*, "As oft as the trumpet soundeth he saith, Aha!" Imitation of his neighing response to the trumpets. **smelleth,** snuffeth, discerneth. **thunder,** thundering voice of command.

the war-horse

The war-horse. — We read in the Book of Job a good deal concerning horses, and surely no better or more faithful description can we find anywhere than that given in this chapter. Whether in or out of battle, the horse loves not only the sound of the trumpet, but also the quivering of the sword and spear, and all the martial accoutrements. A circumstance of not uncommon occurrence was witnessed by the writer. A cavalry regiment was going through its manœuvres, when a soldier in the foremost ranks was thrown. The troops seemed to pass over him; but as the dust cleared off he was discovered unhurt. Where was his horse? In its place, at the head of the regiment, going through all the manœuvres, answering to the trumpet and the "thunder of the captains." It was a curious sight to see this sensible animal as he trotted, galloped and charged — all in time and place. *Strength.* — There are two kinds of strength — mere brute strength of muscle, and the strength that is vitalized by nervous and mental influence. The urus is an instance of the former. In simple contractility of muscle he may exceed the horse. But the strength of the horse is nervous strength. It cannot well be measured, for it is continually fluctuating. It varies in degree according to the extent to which the sensitive animal is excited. We meet with the two kinds of strength in men, and especially in women. When the mind fires the body, unheard-of feats are performed. In moments of heroism naturally feeble people seem to have the strength of a giant. God gives strength through spiritual influences. — *Pul. Com.*

"I will not change my horse with any that treads on four pasterns. When I bestride him I soar, I am a hawk, he trots the air: the earth sings when he touches it." — *Shakespeare.*

"Steed threatens steed, in high and boastful neighs, piercing the night's dull ear." — *Ibid.*

Action. —

> In peace, there's nothing so becomes a man
> As modest stillness, and humility:
> But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
> Then imitate the action of the tiger;
> Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood. — *Shakespeare.*

"Nature is the essential properties of a thing, or that by which it is distinguished from all others. It is used, also, for the system of the world, and the Creator of it; the aggregate powers of the human body, and common sense (Rom. i. 26, 27; 1 Cor. xi. 14). The word is also used in reference to a variety of other objects." — *C. Buck.*

the hawk and the eagle

26, 27. (26) **hawk,**[a] a migratory bird of prey. **fly,** the hawk's strength of wing is extraordinary, and one of the greatest of natural marvels.[b] **south,** as to warmer clime. Moved by an instinct wholly unconnected with human wants. (27) **mount up,** high flying is the characteristic of the eagle. **nest on high,** on some inaccessible piece of rock,

A hint from the birds. — I. Consider the wonderful fact that they migrate annually. This is not by thy wisdom: *i. e.* reason akin to human; but by instinct. As surely as there is the instinct compelling the southern flight, so surely there is the southern land. II. Consider what that fact teaches. Hope, like a Divine and irrepressible instinct, urges us to seek a far-off clime. Does not hope point as unerringly to another world as the birds' instinct to a warmer clime?

[a] "Heb. *netz.* prob. a generic term, including the various species of the falcon or hawk tribe, as as the jer-falcon, the goose-hawk, the sparrow-hawk, the lanner, the sacre, the hobby, the kestril, and the merlin." — *Barnes.*

[b] "A falcon wh. belonged to Henry

IV. of France, having escaped from Fountainebleau, was found 24 hours after in Malta, the space traversed being not less than 1,350 miles, being a velocity of about 57 miles an hour, on the supposition that the bird was on the wing the whole time." — *Barnes.*

The captive set free. — Many years had a noble eagle been confined in such a manner that no one had seen it even attempt to raise a wing. Perfectly subdued, unconscious now of its native power, it remained inactive and apparently contented. But its owner was about to leave for a far country, never to return. He could not take the eagle with him. "I will do one act of kindness before I go," said he, and unloosed the chain from the captive bird. His neighbors and children looked on, with regret that they should see the eagle no more. A moment, and it would be gone for ever! But no; the bird walked the usual round, which had been the length of his chain, unconscious that he was free. The gazers looked on in wonder and in pity. The slow rustling of a wing was heard. It was stretched, and then folded. Anon it was stretched to its full expansion, and then folded softly again. Now, slowly and cautiously, the eagle expands both wings and looks up into the blue sky. One effort to mount, then another, and the wings have found their lost skill; and upward, higher, and speedier he mounts his way, until lost to view. Hast thou, O child of God, been pinioned long to the cares and toils of earth, so that thy wings of faith and love have lost all power to rise? Once thou couldst soar, and thou mayest soar again. His "grace is sufficient for thee." — *Old Test. Anec.*

the eagle's flight

a 1 Sam. xiv. 4.

b "Thus does God work exceeding strangely, but wondrously, apparently by contradictions, but in truth most harmoniously and wisely, in the natural world." — *Delitzsch.*

"Souls want wings. We can only live our fullest life when we rise. The hawk mounts in a spiral. We cannot reach the altitude of spiritual experience at a bound; and we, too, may have to work our way up laboriously." — *Pul. Com.*

28—30. (28) **abideth,** term carries the idea of securely, safely (Ps. xci. 1). **crag,** Heb. *shen*, tooth.[a] **strong place,** kind of citadel or fastness. (29) **seeketh,** looks out for. **afar off,** the eagle discerns its prey by sight rather than by smell. (30) **blood,** brought to the eyries by the mothers. **slain,** *etc.*, man's battle-fields provide the eagle's prey.[b]

The eagle's prey. — Sir Robert Sibbald relates that a woman in the Orkney Islands, having left her child of about one year old in a field, while she went to some distance, an eagle passing by took up the infant by its clothes, and took it to her nest on a neighboring rock; which being observed by some fisherman, they instantly pursued the eagle, attacked her nest, and brought back the child unhurt. — *Whitecross.*

The Eagle. —

He clasps the crag with hooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls. — *Tennyson.*

CHAPTER THE FORTIETH.

contending with God

c "Contending shall the reprover of God contend with the Almighty." — *Gesenius.*

Job xxiii. 3-7; xxxiii. 13; Is. xlv. 9

"Pride slays thanksgiving; but a humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grow. A proud man is seldom a grateful man; for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves. When any mercy falls, he says 'Yes; but it ought to be more. It is only manna

1, 2. (1) **Moreover,** this expression introduces the point or application of the speech. **the Lord,** Heb. *Jehovah.* (2) **contendeth,**[c] *R. V.*, "Shall he that cavilleth contend with the Almighty? He that argueth with God, let him answer it." **answer it,** *viz.*, the many questions asked concerning the inexplicable arrangements of Div. providence in nature. "God's ways are not man's ways, nor within his competence to judge."

The sin of reproving God. — As it may be thought that there are none at this day so presumptuous as to "reprove God," I will inquire — I. Who they are that are obnoxious to this charge. Impious as such conduct is, there are multitudes who are guilty of it. 1. Those who dispute His word; 2. Those who arraign His providence; 3. Those who condemn His grace. Seeing, then, that so many are obnoxious to the charge here exhibited, I will show — II. What is meant by the warning here given to them. God, in reply to Job's challenge, bids the offender, if he can, to answer Him. There are only two ways in which any answer can be given. 1. In the way of self-approving vindication; 2. In a way of self-abasing humiliation. It was in this way that Job replied. — *C. Simeon.*

Trusting God. — We are not left with the doleful prospect of simply submitting to the inevitable. Although we cannot see the good in God's action, if we only have faith in Him we may rest assured that He is doing just the very best thing for us and all His creatures. This assurance depends on His nature and character. He is a just God and a Saviour, and therefore He cannot be acting unjustly and injuriously. Our indictment of God's goodness is a huge blunder from beginning to end. Let us but trust His goodness in the dark

and in the face of the most distressful events, and in the end we shall see that our safety lies in submission. — *Pul. Com.*

I know He holds my hand;
So, whether led in green or desert land,
I trust, although I may not understand. — *H. H. Barry.*

The worth of humility. —

Oh! I would walk
A weary journey, to the farthest verge
Of the big world, to kiss that good man's hand
Who, in the blaze of wisdom and of art,
Preserves a lowly mind; and to his God,
Feeling the sense of his own littleness,
Is as a child in meek simplicity.
What is the pomp of learning? the parade
Of letters and of tongues? Even as the mists
Of the gray morn before the rising sun,
That pass away and perish. Earthly things
Are but the transient pageants of an hour;
And earthly pride is like the passing flower,
That springs to fall, and blossoms but to die. — *H. K. White.*

as large as a coriander-seed, whereas it ought to be like a baker's loaf.'"— *Beecher.*

"The sufficiency of my merit is to know that my merit is not sufficient."—*Augustine.*

"The Christian should be like a little bird, which sits on its twig, and sings, and lets God think for it." —*Martin Luther.*

3—5. (3) **Lord,** Heb. *Jehovah.* (4) **vile,**[a] *R. V.*, "of small account." Job recognizes his humble position. But "it is to be observed that he does not retract what he has said: he simply returns with humility and awe, to let it remain before God just as it was spoken."[b] — *Genung.* **answer thee,** however he felt he could answer the three friends, it was altogether a different thing to answer God. **lay . . mouth,**[c] a familiar mode of expressing proposed silence. (5) **Once . . twice,** a figure for "oftentimes," as Ps. lxii. 11.

Job confesses he is vile

A threefold estimate of a good man's character.— Taken in connection with i. 8 and i. 11. I. Job's character estimated by God. 1. God estimated his character; 2. Regarded it as perfect; 3. As upright note the blessedness of this character: it included domestic protection, business prosperity. II. Job's character estimated by Satan. 1. His test was severe; 2. He was deceived and defeated. III. Job's character estimated by himself. 1. He calls attention to his vileness; 2. He takes the blame of his vileness.— *J. S. Exell.*

Silent humility is a preparation for exaltation.— At the end of the book we discover that God exalts Job and loads him with favor and prosperity. But he must be humbled first. The later honor is only possible after Job has abased himself. So long as he justified himself and arraigned the justice of God, he could not be restored and exalted. Thus the poem shows to us the way in which God disciplines his servants and prepares them to enjoy his goodness. Humility is the door to honor. This is a very Christian truth. It is taught by Christ: "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." It is gloriously illustrated in the life and death and exaltation of Christ. —*Pul. Com.* I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves, one above another, and that the taller we grew in Christian character the easier we should reach them. I find now that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other, and that it is not a question of growing taller, but of stooping lower, and that we have to go down, always down, to get his best gifts.— *F. B. Meyer. A word from Robert Hall.* —When a monument was erected at Leicester in memory of the Rev. Thomas Robinson, the late Rev. Robert Hall went, accompanied by a friend, to see it. Mr. R. is represented in a standing position, receiving a Bible from the hands of the Saviour. Mr. Hall's friend expressed his admiration of the figure. Mr. Hall replied, with his usual promptitude and discrimination, "No, sir, he ought to have been prostrate at the Redeemer's feet."

[a] "The first effects are humiliation and submission: but silence and submission are not enough. What is wanted is teachableness, and perfect trust, of wh. this first confession of Job does not give any clear indication: hence the occasion for a second address."— *Spk. Com.*

[b] Comp. Ge. xxxii. 10; Ezr. ix. 6; Ne. ix. 33; Ps. li. 3-5; Is. liii. 6, lxiv. 6; Da. ix. 5-8; Lu. xv. 21, xviii. 13.

[c] Job xxi. 5; Jud. xviii. 19; Ps. xxxix. 9; Ro. iii. 19.

He who has other graces without humility, is like one who carries a box of precious powder without a cover, on a windy day.

6, 7. (6) **whirlwind,** "Job had not only presumed to contend with God, he had charged Him with unrighteousness in His rule of the world and in His treatment of himself. This is the point to which the second speech from the storm is directed."—*Cam. Bib.* (7) **gird,** *etc.*, ch. xxxviii. 3. **demand,** "Since Job has accused Him of injustice, God challenges him to try: could he govern the world, as God by His power doth, and punish the proud and wicked?" — *Fausset.*

God speaks from the whirlwind

"This second time Jehovah speaks, not in wrath, but in the profound

condescension of His majesty, in order to deliver His servant fr. dark imaginings, and to bring him to free and joyous knowledge. . . It becomes manifest that God is much more forbearing and compassionate then men."— *Delitzsch*.

"Not all the whispers that the soft winds utter speak earthly things. There mingleth there, sometimes, a gentle flutter of angels' wings."— *Amy Loterop*.

Humility. — In proportion as the Christian grows in grace, he grows also in humility. Humility is, indeed, the vital principle of Christianity; that principle by which, from first to last, she lives and thrives, and in proportion to the growth or decline of which she must decline or flourish. This first disposes the sinner in deep self-abasement to accept the offers of the Gospel: this, during his whole progress is the very ground and basis of his feelings and conduct, in relation to God, his fellow-creatures and himself, and when at length he shall be translated into the realms of glory, this principle shall still subsist in undiminished force. He shall "fall down and cast his crown before the Lamb, and ascribe blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." The practical benefits of this habitual lowliness of spirit are too numerous, and at the same time too obvious, to require enumeration. It will lead you to dread the beginnings, and fly from the occasions of sin, as that man would shun some infectious distemper who should know that he was predisposed to take the contagion. It will prevent a thousand difficulties and decide a thousand questions concerning worldly compliances, by which those persons are apt to be embarrassed who are not duly sensible of their own exceeding frailty, whose views of the Christian character are not sufficiently elevated, and who are not enough possessed with a continual fear of "grieving the Holy Spirit of God," and of thus provoking Him to withdraw His gracious influence.

and asks Job to answer truly

8, 9. (8) **disannul,**[a] set aside; render void. **judgment,** decisions and arrangements in the government of the world. **condemn me,** make sweeping accusations.[b] **righteous,** "This was the real sin of Job, that he claimed his righteousness *as his own;* and that, in order to maintain his own righteousness, he had dared to call in question the righteousness of God, condemning Him to clear himself."— *Cox.* (9) **arm,** art thou omnipotent? for this is necessary in the Ruler of all men, that He may keep evil in check.[c]

Happy influence of dangers. — A friend of mine happened to be in a boat, by which a poor simple-hearted man from St. Kilda was advancing, for the first time in his life, from his native rock to visit the world. A person in the boat asked him if he ever heard of God in St. Kilda. Immediately he became grave and collected. "To what land do you belong?" said he; "describe it to me." "I," said the other, "come from a place very different from your barren rock; I come from the land of flood and field, the land of wheat and barley, where nature spreads her bounty in abundance and luxuriance before us." "Is that," said the St. Kilda man, "the kind of land you come from? Ah, then, you may forget God, but a St. Kilda man never can. Elevated on his rock, suspended over a precipice, tossed on the wild ocean, he never can forget his God — he hangs continually on His arm." All were silent in the boat, and not a word more was asked him regarding his religion. — *McLeod.*

Reverence. — Your true-hearted, fine-grained man puts off his shoes at the door of a mosque, as devoutly as any Moslem; he treads the aisles of a cathedral as softly as any Romanist; he despises no incense, he sneers at no idol. He may deny, but he will not jest. The sneer is crucial; being one who indulges in it, to the test, and you will find him crude in thought and coarse in feeling. . . . I like to hear one pronounce the name of God with a subdued awe and to see the cast of thought overspread the features when eternal things are named. I like to see a delicate and quiet handling of sacred truths, as you speak the name of your mother in heaven. I might say that this is the way a gentleman bears himself towards religion, but I would rather have you feel that it is the treatment due to the majesty of the subject. — *T. T. Munger.*

and say if he has power and majesty

10, 11. (10) **Deck thyself,** *etc.*, at thy very best canst thou compare with the majesty of God?[d] **glory,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "honour and majesty." (11) **rage of thy wrath,** *R. V.*, "Pour forth the overflowings of thine anger;" see if you can produce such effects as God does. **behold,** with a withering glance.[e] These sentences must be read as a Divine challenge, intending to humble the presumptuous Job.

The assumption of man. — When the force of the current had carried away the temporary bridge which Xerxes had caused to be thrown over the Hellespont, on his grand expedition into Greece, he was so enraged, that he not only ordered the heads of the workmen to be struck off, but, like a madman, inflicted lashes upon the sea, to punish it for its insolence: he, moreover,

a From Lat. *annullare;* made up of *ad*, to; *nullum*, nothing; to make of no effect, specially applied to laws.

b Job xiii. 24; xvi. 9; xix. 12, 22.

"Let us call to mind these words of God, when it pleases Him to visit us with loss of children or estate, or bodily sickness; for none of these things can happen to us without the just judgment of God."— *Origen.*

Ro. iii. 4.

c Is. liii. 1.

"Who best
Bears his mild yoke, they serve him best; His state
Is kingly, thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest."— *Milton.*

d Ps. civ. 1; 1 Chr. xxix. 11.

e Ex. xviii. 11; Is. ii. 12, 17.

"Pride is not a bad thing when it only urges us to

affected to hold it in future under his control by throwing fetters into it. *God's resistance of pride.* — Nimrod thought that Babel should get him a name, but God resisted his pride, and the name of the building was called Confusion ever since. Shebna builded a sepulchre for his memorial (Isa. xxii.), but God resisted his pride, and buried him in another country. Herod hoped when the people cried at his words, "It is the voice of God," that he should be worshipped ever after as God; but God resisted his pride, and before he descended from his throne, the worms so defaced his pomp, that none which called him God would be like unto him. But God resisteth their pride. As Balaam was stopped and knew not who stopped him; so they are resisted, and know not who resisteth them. They please not God, for God resisteth them; they please not the humble, for the humble are contrary to them; they please not the proud, for the proud do envy them which strive to be as proud as they; they please not themselves, because that they cannot be so proud and brave as they would be. — *Venning.*

Pride. —

Know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself, doth look on one,
The least of nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful ever. O, be wiser thou,
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of thought. — *Wordsworth.*

hide our own hurts, not to hurt others." —*George Eliot.*

"As thou desirest the love of God and man, beware of pride. It is a tumour in the mind that breaks and poisons all thy actions; it is a worm in thy treasure, which eats and ruins thy estate; it loves no man—is beloved of no man; it disparages virtue in another by detraction; it disrewards goodness in itself by vain glory; the friend of the flatterer, the mother of envy, the nurse of fury, the sin of devils, and the devil of mankind; it hates superiors, it scorns inferiors, it owns no equals; in short, till thou hate it, God hates thee."—*Quarles.*

12—14. (12) **low,** as God did Nebuchadnezzar.[a] **in their place,** where they are standing in their confidence and pride. "Let Job manifest himself as a power among men. Then he may claim to be heard with respect to the moral government of God." — *Rawlinson.* (13) **dust,** of the grave. **bind their faces,**[b] as those of mummies ready for the tomb. (14) **confess unto thee,** "praise thee," if Job will shew himself worthy of that place to which he aspires when he reproves the rule of God in the universe, then even Jehovah Himself will admit his independent might, and laud him as one whose own right hand can save him. — *Cam. Bib.*

The conditions of salvation by self. — I. What are those conditions? The possession of Divine qualities — wisdom (*vs.* 8), power (*vs.* 9), moral majesty (*vs.* 10), holy indignation against sin (*vs.* 11), the will and power to detect and punish crime (*vs.* 12). II. These conditions are wanting to man. His right hand (symbol of power, wisdom, etc.) is perishing, weak, etc., and therefore cannot save. III. God possesses these conditions; He alone is the hope of Israel and Saviour.

Humbling the proud. — God humbles the proud man because he loves him. The abasement is not a vindictive act, but a merciful preparation for salvation. The goodness of God leads him to cast down all pretense and self-importance, so that he may raise up a new and more stable structure of solid merit in place of these empty shows. The proud but useless forest is cleared that the precious grain of wheat may be sown in its place. God cuts down man's pride to make room for Christ's grace. — *Pulp. Com.*

or if he can humble the proud, etc.

a Da. iv. 37.

b "Or it may refer to the custom of binding a cloth over the faces of persons about to be executed, Job ix. 24; Est. vii. 8." —*Fausset.*

15, 16. (15) **behemoth,** an Egyptian name (Hebraized,) for the water or river-ox.[c] Some however, think the term should be regarded as a poetical personification of the great *Pachydermata.*[d] **eateth grass,** this struck attention as remarkable in a creature living so much in the water. This animal feeds on herbage, roots, *etc.* (16) **strength,** the characteristic of this creature. **navel,** *R. V.*, "muscles." The skin of that part being even thicker than of other parts through dragging over the stones of the river-beds.[e]

The strength of animals. — The loins are the seat of strength in every animal; hence, in the language of Scripture, to strengthen the loins denotes an augmentation of power. A very decisive instance occurs in the second chapter

behemoth

c De. xxxii. 24; Ps. xlix. 12, 20, l. 10; Je. xii. 4.

d So called bec. of their thick skins.

e "The belly of the elephant is the weakest and most vulnerable part

Is. lix 16; lxiii. 5.

"There is no creature on Earth that does not fulfil its mission except man; none but what promotes God's love, except the one that boasts His image." — *H. Gill.*

owing to the comparative thinness and softness of the skin." — *Kitto.*

"It is clear that the description suits the hippopotamus exactly, and it alone." — *Tristram.*

"My sandals are his strength
And his great love
The staff that helps me toward
The home above."
—*Millie Colcord.*

of Nahum: "Make thy loins strong;" fortify thy power mightily. The same idea is involved in the prayer of the Psalmist, that the power which the wicked had so greatly abused might be diminished, till it became consistent with the peace and safety of others, or entirely taken away: "Make their loins continually to shake." *Strength.*— There is a great difference between strength and power. Strength implies ability; but power implies activity and efficiency. A man may be a strong man, even a giant, and yet be powerless because he is bound by fetters — unable to exercise his strength. The great lack in our entire spiritual life is want of power: We cannot do the things that we would. Rom. 7: 19, is too often the experience not only of the Christian but of every man: "the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." Therefore the great requirement of man is power. — Power in two directions: power to overcome evil; power to help others to effect the same thing.— *A. T. Pierson.*

"Father, hear the prayer we offer;
Not for ease that prayer shall be,
But for *strength* that we may ever
Live our lives courageously."

17—19. (17) **moveth,** or setteth rigidly up. The hippo.'s tail is but short, about half a cubit in length. The point of comparison appears to be the bending of this short, thick, and apparently firm tail. **sinews,** *etc.*, the clause should be read, "the sinews of his thighs are twisted together like a rope." (18) **strong pieces,** *R. V.*, "tubes." **bones . . iron,** these may be his *ribs,* as contrasted with the hollow bones of the limbs. (19) **chief,** "the masterpiece, as it were, of creation;" better, **he . . approach,** "He that made him hath furnished him with a sword;" referring to his great, sharp, sword-like teeth.[a]

The lessons of created strength. — I. The strength of the strongest is derived from God. This true not only of kings among beasts, but of kings of men. The strength of arm, will, intellect, is from God. II. God has strength to overmaster the strong. The folly of fighting against God. Who has done this, and prospered? God has a sword. The wicked are His sword. He, too, wields the sword of the Spirit. The hand that holds the sword is Omnipotence. He knows when, where, how, to strike.

The bones of animals. — The idea of his prodigious strength is increased by the account given of his bones, which are compared to strong pieces of brass, and bars of iron. Such figures are commonly employed by the sacred writers to express great hardness and strength, of which a striking example occurs in the prophecies of Micah: "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people." So hard and strong are the bones of the hippopotamus. The cutting, and particularly the canine teeth of the lower jaw, says Buffon, are very long, and so hard and strong that they strike fire with steel; a circumstance which probably gave rise to the fable of the ancients, that the hippopotamus vomited fire.— *Paxton.*— *Strength.* — To those who "wait upon the Lord" there is always given strength to meet the trials of the day, and there ought to be no anxiety as to the trials of the morrow. O the peace which a true Christian might possess if he would take God at His word and trust Him to make good His promises! It is hard to say what could then ruffle him, or what at least, could permanently disturb. Day by day his studies might be more arduous, his temptations stronger, his trials more severe; but he would ascertain that the imparted strength grew at the same rate, so that he was always equal to the duties, victorious over the temptations, and sustained under the trials. — *Anon.*

20—22. (20) **mountains,** "to satisfy his hunger the animal depastures whole mountains." **play,** not frightened by him, though he was so great.[b] (21) **shady trees,** the wild lotus tree, wh. grows abundantly on the hot banks of the Upper Nile. The habits of the hippo. are lazy. (22) **willows,** wh. flourish in marshy places. **brook,** Heb. *wady,* or river bed.[c]

The hippopotamus. — Around the hippopotamus the beasts of the field may sport in safety; for although he feeds on fishes, crocodiles, and even cadaverous flesh, he is not known to prey on other animals. It is not even difficult to drive him away from the cultivated fields, for he is more timid on land than in the water. His only resource in danger is to plunge into the deep, and

a The sickle-like teeth with wh. he cuts down grain.

"According to the *A. V.* the sense is that God had power over him, notwithstanding his great strength and size, and could take his life when he pleased." — *Barnes.*

"If I can only place one little brick in the pavement of the Lord's pathway, I will place it there, that coming generations may walk thereon to the heavenly city." — *Phillips Brooks.*

"O, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant."
—*Shakespeare.*

"I follow Nature as the surest guide, and resign myself with implicit obedience to her sacred ordinance." —*Cicero.*

b "He searches the rising ground near the river for his sustenance, in company with the animals of the land."— *Tristram.*

c Is. xxxv. 7.

travel under it a great way before he ventures again to appear. The Indians, according to Dampier, are accustomed to throw him a part of their fish when he comes near their canoes, and then he passes on without doing them any harm. The same voyager relates an anecdote which remarkably displays the mildness of his disposition. As their boat lay near the shore he went under her, and with his back lifted her out of the water and overset her, with six men on board, but did them no personal injury. These facts prove, at once, his incredible strength and his habitual gentleness. — *Paxton.*

"The singularity of the land habits of our aquatic animals may account for their being specially noticed."—*Kitto.*

23, 24. drinketh, *etc., R. V.*, "Behold, if a river overflow, he trembled not; he is confident, though Jordan swell even to his mouth."[a] The fig. is of a large animal swimming against a flooded river, with only its head above water. (24) **He . . eyes,** *R. V.*, "Shall any take him when he is on the watch, or pierce through his nose with a snare?" Can he be captured when on his guard: or shall any one lead him around with a ring in his nostrils? Referring to the almost insuperable difficulty of capturing the behemoth.[b]

Note on vs. 24. — The inspired writer thus concludes his description: — "He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares." Bochart renders the words, "who shall take him in his sight, and perforate his nose with hooks? that is, who shall come before him, and attack him with open violence?" It is found extremely difficult to subdue him in fair combat, and therefore the Egyptians have recourse to stratagem. They watch near the banks of the Nile, till he leaves the river to feed in the adjacent fields; they then make a large ditch in the way by which he passed, and cover it with thin planks, earth and herbage. Passing without suspicion on his return to the flood over the deceitful covering, he falls into the ditch, and is immediately despatched by the hunters, who rush from their ambush and pour their shot into his head. — *Paxton.*— *Harmony in God's works.* — Behemoth is suited to his home among the coarse grasses of the Nile. There his voracious appetite can find ample sustenance. God provides for all His creatures, and He suits all His creatures for the spheres in which He has called them to live. Behemoth is naturally of a low and stupid nature, and he has all that his nature requires. Man is of a higher nature. He must not be content to dream his existence away in the sleepy land where soul-life is stifled. The true "lotus-eaters" are not refined sybarites, but hippopotami. — *Pul. Com.*

behemoth

a "The quiet confidence with wh. the heavy brute bears the rush of the formidable inundation may be contrasted with the terror and flight of beasts of prey."— *Spk. Com.*

b "They take him before his eyes, his nose is pierced with cords."— *Ewald.*

Representations of the capture of the hippo. are common on Egyp. monuments of the remotest age. The trident of the hunter was hurled against the nose of the hippo.

"It is a hard climb, my child, sunshine and shadow; but at the darkest always He has fulfilled His promise, 'At evening time it shall be light.'"— *Rose Porter.*

CHAPTER THE FORTY-FIRST.

1, 2. (1) **leviathan,**[c] a generic term, implying a large, lithe, marine animal with closely serried scales. Of such creatures the crocodile[d] may be regarded as the type. **hook,** as you would a fish. **tongue,** *R. V.*, "Or press down his tongue with a cord," *i. e.* tie a rope around his lower jaw, fastening down the tongue. Many savage animals are represented in the Assyrian sculptures as led along by a rope attached to their mouths." — *Rawlinson.* (12) **bore . . thorn,**[e] "the Nile fishermen first put a ring through the gills or nose of valuable fish; they then draw a cord made of rushes through it, in order to put them thus bound into the river."

The crocodile. — The crocodile is the natural inhabitant of the Nile and other Asiatic and African rivers. It is of enormous voracity and strength; it swims very swiftly, and does not hesitate to attack either man or the largest animals. Its form is that of the common lizard of our own fields. Its mouth is proportionally larger than that of most other animals, consisting of an immense opening between two jaws, which move both ways, up and down. The lower jaw has commonly as many as thirty-eight sharp, large teeth; the upper, forty; these teeth are speedily renewed, in case by accident any of them should be lost. The neck and back and sides, down to the extremity of the tail, are covered with thick, firm-set, and almost impenetrable scales. The animal is amphibious; swimming, when in the water, for the most part considerably below the surface, except when looking for prey, and then it may be seen on the surface, with its back raised above the water and floating with the stream, as if desirous of being taken, by an unwary victim for a log of wood, from which it is not needful to attempt to escape.

leviathan

c Job. iii. 8, marg.; Ps. lxxiv. 14; civ. 26; Is. xxvii. 1.

d "It is generally admitted that whatever be the animals specially referred to in other places, in this place it does mean and can mean no other than the crocodile."—*Kitto.*

Egypt. name of the crocodile is *Emsah*, Arab, *temseh*, from a root meaning, to draw out.

e Is. xxxvii. 29.

3, 5. (3) **supplications,** as a captive begging for his life.[f] (4) **covenant,** submit himself to conditions; yield himself to be tamed. **servant,** as you do

leviathan

f "As dolphins are said to do, with a plaintive sound."—*Lee.*

the domestic animals. It is wholly an untamable animal. (5) **play . . bird?** trained to thy pleasure. **for thy maidens?**[a] like household cat or dog.

Note on vs. 5. — "Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?" It cannot be; he is a truculent animal, and particularly hostile to children of both sexes, that, by approaching the banks of the Nile without sufficient circumspection, fall a prey to this vigilant devourer. He will even rush upon a full-grown person, and drag him in a moment to the bottom of the stream. Maximus Tyrius mentions an Egyptian woman who brought up a young crocodile of the same age with her son, and permitted them to live together in the most familiar manner. The crocodile was gentle and harmless during his early youth, but his natural disposition gradually unfolded as he advanced to maturity, till at last he seized upon his unsuspecting associate and devoured him. Ancient authors record many instances of crocodiles entering the houses of the inhabitants near the Nile and destroying their children. These are are sufficient to justify the interrogation of the Almighty, and to show that the terrible animal in question never can be completely tamed, nor safely trusted. — *Paxton.*

[a] "Nothing could be more incongruous than the idea of securing so rough and unsightly a monster for the amusement of tender and delicate females."—*Barnes.*

Vs. 3. "An elegant prosopopœia, which expresses, with great force and beauty, the difficulty with which he is overcome."—*Paxton.*

6—8. (6) **companions,** *R. V.* "shall the bands of fishermen make traffic of him?" *i. e.* selling him as they sell fish in their markets.[b] **merchants,** Heb. *cenaanim, lit.* Canaanitish merchants.[c] "The Canaanites, or Phœnicians, were the typical merchants of antiquity; so that the words Canaanite and merchant became almost synonomous."—*Genung.* (7) **his skin,** which is too thick to be pierced. Fish were, and still are, sometimes taken with the spear. **barbed,** from *barba*, beard. The barb is the point that stands backward in an arrow or fish hook. Reference here is to the harpoon. (8) **Lay,** *etc.*, take hold of him once; you will never do it again! **battle,** the fierce struggle that will ensue.

[b] "Fishermen in Eg. formed a caste, or guild: hence they are called fellows, or companions."—*Spk. Com.*

[c] Comp. Is. xxiii. 8; Pr. xxxi; 24; Zec. xiv. 21.

Nature is advancing in beauty and joy. — Both behemoth and leviathan — the idealized hippopotamus and the idealized crocodile — are survivals of a more ancient order of creatures than those which now inhabit our globe. Geology teaches us that once such creatures, and greater ones, were the chief if not the sole inhabitants of the earth. They are really akin to the huge mastodon, a monster that would dwarf an elephant; and the dinosaurus and ichthyosaurus, in comparison with which the most tremendous reptile of our own day is an insignificant animal. While these monsters crashed through the forests or plunged in the rivers the world was no fit place for man. But since their time God has peopled the earth with a fairer and more docile fauna. At all events, with such animals as now inhabit it, He has made it possible for so weak a being as man to rule the world. The older ugly and fearful creatures remain to bear witness to the past. But by their contrast with the general life of the present they show how God is improving the earth — *Pul. Com.*

"As the man is to the animal in the slowness of his evolution, so is the spiritual man to the natural man." — *Drummond.*

9, 10. (9) **the hope,** of catching him by any ordinary means. **even at the sight,** there is, perhaps, scarcely any animal whose appearance would be more likely to deter one from attacking him. (10) **so fierce,** or courageous; he will daunt even the hardiest hunter. **before me,**[d] the point God would impress is this. If Job cannot restrain one of God's creatures, how can he presume to set conditions upon God Himself?

The fierceness of the crocodile. — When the crocodile is satiated with prey he leaves the deeps to repose on the banks of the river, or on the shore of the sea. At such a time none are so bold as to disturb his slumbers, or provoke his vengeance; or if any one, disregarding the dictates of prudence, or eager to display his intrepidity, ventures in such circumstances to attack him, it is at the imminent hazard of his life, and is for the most part attended with fatal consequences. Diodorus assigns this as the reason that he was worshiped by the Egyptians, that their enemies, for fear of him, durst not cross the river to attack them. — *Paxton.*

[d] Je. xii. 5.

"We ought to be thankful to nature for having made those things which are necessary easy to be discovered; while other things that are difficult to be known are not necessary."—*Epicurus.*

11, 12. (11) **prevented me,**[e] *R. V.*, "first given unto me," who has bestowed anything upon me? done me a favor first; anticipated me with service.[f] **mine,**[g] God possesses all things, even man himself. (12) **parts,** *R. V.*, "I will not keep silence concerning his limbs." A new and more elaborate description is now entered on. **comely proportion,** *lit.* the comeliness of his apparatus, or armor. Attention being directed to his weapons

[e] Fr. Lat. *prœvenire*, to be beforehand with; to get the start of.

[f] Ps. xxi. 3.

[g] De. x. 14; Ps. l. 12; Ro. xi. 34, 35; 1 Co. x. 26.

of offense and defense;[a] his mouth, teeth, scales, eyelids, nostrils, neck, and heart.

All creation belongs to God. — I. Therefore man is His creature. II. Therefore he should regard himself as the property and servant of the Most High. III. Therefore he should treat the rest of creation as the property of another, and should use as not abusing the things that are God's. IV. Therefore he should try to discover the best uses and application of created things for the glory of the Creator. V. Therefore he should live and act as one that shall give account.

God's rule over the physical universe. — All nature is as much under the hand and power of God to-day as when it first appeared at the dawn of creation. Even the disorder and confusion that have entered into nature have not been able to tear it away from the rule of God. God rules through terror and confusion and death as truly as through beauty and life. God does not confine Himself to what we call the spiritual. He is not only concerned with that which, in the narrow sense of the word, we understand as "the religious." He is the great Architect, Mechanic, Engineer, of the universe.— *Pul. Com.*

13, 14. (13) **discover the face,** *R. V.*, "who can strip off his outer garment? Who shall come within his double bridle?" *i. e.* who can detach his tough, scaly covering? **double bridle,** the double row of teeth. Heb. *resen*, his bit or curb.[b] (14) **doors,** the two enormous jaws. **teeth,** *R. V.*, "round about his teeth is terror."[c]

The jaws of the crocodile (*vs.* 14).— The doors of his face are his immense jaws, which he opens with a great and horrible hiatus. This feature of the crocodile has been mentioned by all naturalists. On the land his motions are slow, but in the river he springs eagerly on his prey, and either knocks it down with his tail or opens a wide mouth for its destruction, armed with numerous sharp teeth of various lengths, with which, like the shark, he sometimes severs the human body at a single bite. Peter Martyr saw one whose mouth was seven feet in width. Tatius affirms that, in seizing the prey, he becomes all mouth, and Albert, that the opening of his mouth extends as far back as his ears. Leo Africanus and Scaliger affirm that he can receive within his mouth a young heifer. The vast capacity of his jaws is attested also by Martial. "His teeth are terrible round about:" or, in every respect, calculated to inspire the beholder with terror. They are sixty in number, and larger than the proportion of his body seems to require. Some of them project from his mouth like the tusks of a boar; others are serrated and connected like the teeth of a comb; hence, the bite is very retentive, and not less difficult to cure than the wound inflicted by the teeth of a mad dog. All the ancients agree that his bite is most tenacious and horrible.— *Paxton.*

15—17. (15) **His scales are his pride,** *better* "the rows of his shields are a pride." Each of his scales is a shield, and they are disposed in rows, or courses. Of these rows there are said to be seventeen.— *Cam. Bib.* **shut up,** fitting as close as if sealed with wax. (16) **so near,** so exactly fitted to its neighbor scale. (17) **joined,** there is no natural fastening, but they lie so close and compact they seem as if fastened. "A musket-ball cannot penetrate him, save in the eye, throat or belly."

The mysterious sovereignty of God in the formation of His creatures. — The same Divine hand was the former of the harmless dove and the terrible dragon. The Creator of the lamb pleased also to produce the leviathan. The useful ox and the destructive crocodile were made to inhabit the same locality. Why God should have formed creatures of such terrible aspect and ferocious dispositions, clothed them with such impenetrable armor, and furnished them with such destructive weapons are among the secrets of His Divine wisdom. All things are made for Himself; even the wicked for the day of evil. For His pleasure all things are and were created. There is no creature but is made to show forth, in some way or other, the glory of His divine perfections, and to secure some purpose or other in His all-comprehensive government. Variety is everywhere displayed in the works of the Creator's hands, and that variety, directed by infinite wisdom, goodness and justice.— *Hom. Com.*

18—21. (18) **neesings,** or sneezings, snortings. *R. V.*, "His neesings flash forth light." Reference is supposed to be that the sun's rays making the creature sneeze, the sunlight flashes on the breath he sends forth.[d] (19) **burn-**

[a] The grace of his armature.

"To every man who truly studies Nature there is a God. Call him by whatever name—science has a God, and he who believes in this, in spite of all protest, possesses a theology."— *Drummond.*

[b] "The crocodile's jaw, with its double row of jagged teeth, is so called on account of their sharpness, which gall and wound as a curb in a horse's mouth."—*Wordsworth.*

[c] "It has 60 teeth; some of these stand out, some of them are serrated, or like a saw, fitting into each other when the mouth is closed; and some come together in the manner of a comb, so that the grasp of the animal is very tenacious and fearful."— *Bochart.*

Pr. xxx. 14; Da. vii. 7.

"The back of the crocodile," says Thevenot, "is covered with scales, resembling a door studded with large nails, and so hard that it cannot be pierced with a halberd." Betram says "that the whole back of the crocodile is covered with horny flakes, or scales, which no musket-ball can pierce." *Burder.*

"Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem; to copy nature is to copy them."—*Pope.*

[d] "Ref. may, however, be to the fact that the crocodile, rising fr. the water,

ing lamps, fig. for the long suppressed breath which rushes out like flames from his mouth and nostrils. (20) **smoke,** a thick vapor. **seething,** boiling. **or caldron,** *R. V.*, "and burning rushes." The water which he blows from mouth and nostrils when coming up from under the water is like steam or smoke, which suggests the further idea of fire within.

Note on vss. 19—21. — Tatius gives a similar account of the hippopotamus. His nostrils are very broad, and emit an ignited smoke, as from a furnace of fire. The very same remark is made by Eustathius: He has a broad nose, expiring an ignited smoke as out of a furnace. These two animals live in the same element, and have the same mode of respiration. The longer they continue under water without breathing, they respire the more quickly when they begin to emerge. As the torrent rushes along with greater impetuosity when the obstacle which opposed its progress is removed, so their breath, long repressed, effervesces and breaks out with so much violence, that they seem to vomit flame from their mouth and nostrils. The language of the inspired writer is highly figurative and hyperbolical, painting in the most vivid colors the heat and force with which the breath of the crocodile rushes from his expanded nostrils. — *Paxton.*

gives notice of his approach by his sneezings and snortings, wh. shed a bright light on the foam and spray of the water, raised by his puffing it upwards in his rising to the surface. And next his glaring eyes appear and alarm the beholder."—*Wordsworth.*

"Nothing in nature, much less conscious being,
Was e'er created solely for itself."
—*Young.*

22—24. (22) **remaineth,** permanently resideth. **sorrow,** "Terror danceth before him." *R. V.*, in his presence everything starts up affrighted and seeks to escape. (23) **flakes,** the softer muscles, which in most animals are yielding, in the crocodile are, as it were, soldered together. **they are firm in themselves;** *fused upon him.* like detached pieces of metal, which are melted one into another. **they cannot be moved,** his whole body is so firmly compacted together that it is all one piece; the separate parts cannot be moved separately.—*Rawlinson.* (24) **firm,** "the heart of the great saurians is not liable to sudden contractions and expansions."[a] **nether,**[b] wh. does not move fr. its place, and is especially hard.

The muscles of leviathan. — As the scales of leviathan present a coat of mail nearly impenetrable to the attacks of his enemies, so his flesh, or as it is rendered by some, the prominent parts of his body, are like molten brass, the particles of which adhere so closely, that they cannot be separated. In all creatures, the heart is extremely firm and compact; in the leviathan it is firm as a stone; and to give us the highest idea of its hardness, Jehovah compares it to the nether millstone, which, having the principle part of the work to perform, is required to be peculiarly hard and solid. Some writers imagine that the Almighty refers not so much to the natural hardness of the heart, as to the cruel temper of the animal, or to his fearless intrepidity; he feels no pity, he fears no danger, he is insensible to external impressions as the hardest stone. — *Paxton.*

a "In large beasts wh. are less acute in feeling, there is great firmness of the heart, and slower motion."—*Bochart.*

b Matt xxiv. 41.

"Nature will be reported. All things are engaged in writing their history. The planet, the pebble, goes attended by its shadow. The rolling rock leaves its scratches on the mountains; the river, its channel in the soil: the animal its bones in the stratum; the fern and leaf, their modest epitaph in the coal. The falling drop makes its sculpture in the sand or the stone."—*Emerson.*

25—27. (25) **raiseth up himself,** to make an attack. **breakings,** *R. V.*, "by reason of consternation they are beside themselves." They know not where to turn, they flee away with alarm. (26) *R. V.*, "If one lay at him with the sword, it cannot avail." **cannot hold,** get any hold in the tough, scaly skin. **habergeon,** some kind of missile weapon,[c] perhaps the harpoon or trident. (27) **iron as straw,** snapping the iron weapons with his teeth.

Note on vss. 26—29. — In this glowing description it is plainly the design of the Almighty to show that the skin of the crocodile is impenetrable to these offensive weapons. This entirely accords with the accounts which natural historians give of that animal. Peter Martyr asserts that his skin is so hard it cannot be pierced with arrows; and according to other writers, he can be wounded only in the belly. The back is defended by an impenetrable buckler of large, extremely hard, and closely compacted scales. On this armor of proof the edge of the sword is blunted, and its point is broken; the spear falls harmless to the ground, and the dart rebounds from his impenetrable covering. A shower of arrows makes no impression upon him; and the blow of a stone, slung by the most powerful hand, is no more to him than the stroke of a feather, or bit of stubble. Nor do the more dangerous weapons which the warrior hurls from his military engines depress his courage or interrupt his assault; for he laughs at the shaking of a spear, he regards it not, when, in token of defiance, it is brandished before him. — *Paxton.*

c The root of the word is *sharah*, to shine, to glitter.

vs. 25. "They feel a secret horror shoot through the whole soul; they become as it were incapable of reflection and know not whither to turn, when they see the monster emerging from the deep thirsting for blood, and displaying the terrors of his opening jaws."—*Paxton.*

28—30. (28) **slingstones,** wh. were a formidable weapon in the East.[d] (29) **Darts,** clubs. (30) *R. V.*, "His under parts are like sharp potsherds: he

d Ju. xx. 16; 1 Sa. xvii. 40, 49.

spreadeth as it were a threshing wain upon the mire." "The scales of the belly are sharp, particularly those under the tail, and leave an impression on the mire where he has lain as if a sharp threshing-sledge with teeth has stood on it or gone over it." — *Cam. Bib.*

Note on vs. 30. — What is extremely incommodious, or even painful to other creatures, occasions no uneasiness to him. Criminals were punished among the ancients by being compelled to lie on sharp stones; but so insensible is he to pain, that he can stretch his enormous bulk upon them without inconvenience. "Sharp stones are under him; he spreadeth sharp-pointed things upon the mire." Such a place of repose is his choice, not his punishment. Or the words may refer to the scales of leviathan, which are hard and sharp as a potsherd; and to his skin, which resembles a board set with sharp stones, or iron spikes. So rough is the skin of the crocodile, so hard are his scales, and so high and pointed the protuberances which rise on his back, that a more apt similitude could not be chosen than the *tribula*, or sharp thrashing instrument with iron teeth, to represent in the liveliest manner the appearance of this terrible animal, as he lies reposing in the mud of the Nile. — *Paxton.*

"Nature never deceives us; the rocks, the mountains, the streams, always speak the same language; a shower of snow may hide the verdant woods in spring, a thunderstorm may render the blue limpid streams foul and turbulent; but these effects are rare and transient; in a few hours, or at most in a few days all the sources of beauty are renovated." — *Sir H. Davey.*

31—34. (31) **deep to boil,** the waters swirl as he moves through them. **the sea,** "the Nile is still called a sea by the Arabs, and its inundations often give it that appearance." **ointment,** like a foaming mixture. (32) **to shine,** the white foam catching the sunlight. **hoary,** or silver hair. Agitated water takes a silvery look. (33) **who,** *i. e.* being one who is made without fear. (34) **He beholdeth,** looks them boldly in the face without terror. **children of pride,** all animals regarded as being bold, proud, courageous, such as the lion, panther, *etc.* All sorts of mighty beasts of prey.

God is king of kings. — It would be a fearful thing if the power and supremacy that are entrusted to the larger animals had been given to them without limits or restraints. But the kingly animals, the lion and the eagle, as well as leviathan himself, are all obedient subjects of the Lord, who rules over all the works of nature. They could not rebel against their suzerain if they would. Their kingdoms are but satrapies of the grand empire of nature which God rules absolutely. Hence the order of the world in spite of the power of these monstrous creatures. Man alone is able to rebel. Yet God overrules the rebellion even of the human world, and brings kings to do His will although they may recognize Him as little as leviathan recognizes his lord and maker. —*Pul. Com.*

leviathan

Ex. v. 2; Eze. xxix. 3; Re. xx. 2, 3.

"To humble the *pride* of man, and to teach implicit submission, is the aim of Jehovah's speech, and of the book; therefore with this reference to leviathan, the type of God's lordship over creation, He closes."— *Fausst.*

"Verily, methinks wisdom is ofttimes nearer when we stoop than when we soar."—*Wordsworth.*

CHAPTER THE FORTY-SECOND.

1—3. (2) **do everything,** therefore man ought to be submissive unto God.[a] **no thought,** *R. V.*, "And that no purpose of Thine can be restrained." Job felt that he had taken a wrong attitude in attempting to resist the Divine will, or question the Divine righteousness. His wrong lay not so much in the things he had said as in the *spirit he had cherished.* (3) **Who is he that hideth,** "that is, that *obscures* counsel. As one that obscured counsel Job had uttered that which he understood not. The reference is to his former judgments regarding God's operations in the world, and the rashness of his own language." — *Cam. Bib.*

Lack of perception. — A lady once said to Turner when he was painting "Why do you put such extravagant colors into your pictures? I never see anything like them in nature." "Don't you wish you did, madam?" said he. It was a sufficient answer. He saw them if she did not. So believers see many divine wonders which worldlings cannot perceive. — *Spurgeon.* — *Kingdom of God.* — The world will never be right till the mind of God is the measure of things, and the will of God the law of things. In that kingdom of heaven nothing else is acknowledged, and till that kingdom come the mind and will of God must, with those who look for the kingdom, override every other way of feeling, thinking and judging. — *Geo. MacDonald.* — *God's mysterious dealings.* — There is a striking passage in which a great philosopher, the famous Bishop Berkeley, describes the thought which occurred to him of the inscrutable schemes of Providence, as he saw in St. Paul's cathedral a fly moving on one of the pillars. He says: "It requires some comprehension in the eye of an intelligent spectator to take in at one view the various parts of

the power and knowledge of God unlimited

a "Job does not learn a different truth fr. that wh. he held previously, but he learns it in a different way; he realizes it spiritually, together with its consequences."— *Spk. Com.*

Ge. xviii. 14; Je. xxxii. 17; Mar. xiv. 36; Lu. xviii. 27.

"I saw not long since a sign in the heavens. I was looking out of my window at night, and beheld the stars and the whole majestic vault of God held up without my being able

to see the pillars on which the Master had caused it to rest. Men fear that the sky may fall. Poor fools! Is not God always there?" — *Luther.*

the building in order to observe their symmetry and design. But to the fly, whose prospect was confined to a little part of one of the stones of a single pillar, the joint beauty of the whole or the distant use of its parts, was inconspicuous. To that limited view, the small irregularities on the surface of the hewn stone seemed to be so many deformed rocks and precipices." That fly on the pillar, of which the philosopher spoke, is the likeness of each human being as he creeps along the vast pillars which support the universe. — *Dean Stanley.*

God in everything. —

"God does not live in the Bible or in the closet, alone. He lives wherever you go; He lives in your soul, and His providence is manifest in your daily experience." —*H. W. Beecher.*

One Spirit — His
Who wore the plated thorns with bleeding brows —
Rules universal nature. Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of His unrival'd pencil. He inspires their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
The forms with which He sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with Him; which what he finds
Of flavor or of scent in fruit or flower,
Or what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak,
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts the remembrance of a present God. — *Cowper.*

Job humbles himself before God

4–6. (4) **Hear,** *etc.*, Job still quotes God's words; ch. **xxxviii. 3; xl. 7.** Translate: "Hear now." Thou sayest "And I will speak; I will ask thee; and inform me thou;" He recites the challenge only to put it humbly away from him. "I did not know and cannot answer Thee." (5) **hearing of the ear,** all that I knew was but hearsay. Now I have seen Thee. **mine eye,** the inward eye of faith.[a] (6) **abhor myself,** *R. V., marg.* "I loathe my words;" the rash speeches I have made. **dust and ashes,** already humbled by affliction to sit in dust and ashes, I further repent and humble myself spiritually. Job now bewails not his suffering, but his sin.[b] Still note that he does not retract his statements concerning his integrity. It is his mistaken speech which now causes his sorrow and shame.

A view of God's glory humbling to the soul. — I. Illustrate and confirm the proposition that clear discoveries of God lead to repentance. 1. It brings to light the hidden evils of the heart; 2. It points out the evil of sin — its aggravations — and strips of all excuses; 3. It points out the danger of sin; 4. It sets forth God's infinite mercy. II. Practical improvement. 1. Learn the force of those passages of Scripture in which religion is described as the "knowledge of God;" 2. The great danger of a state of ignorance; 3. See the necessity of regeneration; 4. Observe that as men grow in religion, they grow in humility. — *Witherspoon.* — *The second-hand and primary knowledge of God.* — I. Here is implied a second-hand knowledge of God. I have heard, *etc.* 1. It is very common; 2. It is very worthless. II. Here is implied a primary knowledge of God. 1. It silenced all controversy; 2. It subdued all pride. — *C. Calloway.*

Seeing God in nature. — One of the saddest conditions of a human creature is to read God's word with a veil upon the heart, to pass blindfolded through all the wondrous testimonies of redeeming love and grace which the Scriptures contain. And it is sad, also, if not actually censurable, to pass blindfolded through the works of God, to live in a world of flowers, and stars, and sunsets, and a thousand glorious objects of nature, and never to have a passing interest awakened by any of them. — *Dean Goulbourn.* — *A hearsay knowledge of God.* — This is what Job possessed in the old days. Not that he was without any religious experience in those prosperous times. But the shallowness of it in comparison with what he has now attained makes it look of little worth. Most of us begin in this way. We hear of God "by the hearing of the ear." This is especially true in a Christian country. Here we seem to breathe a Christian atmosphere, and Christian ideas float in upon us unsought. But the faint perception of God that is acquired in this way cannot be of very great value to us. Historical facts can only be known by testimony, and the facts of the gospel must reach us through "the hearing of the ear." But we have got a very little way when we have only come to understand and believe in the historical character of those facts. We are still

[a] "We are not to suppose that Job means to say he actually saw God, but that his apprehensions of Him were clear and bright as if he did. There was no evidence that God appeared to Job in any visible form." —*Barnes.*

[b] Is. vi. 5; Eze. xx. 43; xxxvi. 31; Jno. iii. 5, 10; Ja. iv. 7–10.

Job xxix. 11; Ps. xlviii. 8.

"Besides his literal seeing of God in the symbol of the tempest, Job now saw spiritually what he had indistinctly taken on hearsay before, even God's infinite wisdom." — *Fausset.*

The dying prayer of William Tyndale, the martyr, uttered "with a fervent zeal and a loud voice," was this; "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

"God is like the sun at noon, that casts down straight rays, and so throws down the shadows upon the ground underneath each tree; but He never,

only among the antiquarian relics at a museum. There is no life in such a knowledge, and it has little influence over us. — *Pul. Com.*

The unsearchableness of God. —

O Thou eternal One! whose presence bright
All space doth occupy, all motion guide;
Unchanged through time's all-devastating flight,
Thou only God! for there is none beside;
Being above all things! mighty One
Whom none can comprehend, and none explore;
Who fill'st existence with Thyself alone,
Embracing all, supporting, ruling o'er;
Being whom we call God, and know no more!

like the sun, goes westward towards his setting, turning all shadows from under the trees, and slanting them upon the ground. God stands in eternal fulness, like a sun that knows neither morning nor evening nor night, but only noon, and noon always." — *H. W. Beecher.*

7—9. (7) **right,**[a] Job was right on the whole, in his steadfast truthfulness, his hope in God however desperate it seemed, and his indignant scorn of the friends' willingness to believe evil of him, and their misinterpretation of Providence. **my servant,** used several times of Job to intimate his gracious reconciliation with God. (8) **seven,** *etc.*, a patriarchal rather than a Levitical sin-offering.[b] **him,** *lit.* his face, his person. **folly,** a term used in the Bible with idea of wickedness. (9) **did,** as *vs.* 8. They being also humbled under God's mighty hand.

Note on vs. 7. — The three friends had really inculpated the providence of God by their professed defense of it. By disingenuously covering up and ignoring its enigmas and seeming contradictions, they had cast more discredit upon it than Job by honestly holding them up to the light. Their denial of its apparent inequalities was more untrue and more dishonoring to the divine administration, as it is in fact conducted, than Job's bold affirmation of them. Even his most startling utterances wrung from him in his bewilderment and sore perplexity were less reprehensible than their false statements and false inferences. — *Green, Book of Job.*

Job intercedes for his friends

a "The difference was that the friends spoke to defend a tenet, Job spoke what he believed to be true. Their great fault was their breach of charity." — *Spk. Com.*

b Nu. xxiii. 1.

10, 11. (10) **turn the captivity,** restored him. A proverbial expression. Amply indemnified him for all that he had lost.[c] **when he prayed,** *etc.*, for this also was a revelation of Job's character and temper of mind. His willingness to forgive them was followed by the evidence of divine forgiveness. **gave,** *etc.*, as *marg. Added all that he had been to Job unto the double*, as *vs.* 12. (11) **came . . sisters,** brothers and sisters, all had deserted him (xix. 3) in his poverty and sickness. Now they flock about him again. **eat bread,** the E. sign of reconciliation. **piece of money,** Heb. *kesitah*,[d] a much more ancient word than *shekel.* **ear-ring,**[e] *R. V.*, "a ring."

The prayer of Job (*vs.* 10). — I. The text reminds us of the manifold blessings of prayer. 1. Hereby Job was restored to health and prosperity; 2. Hereby his friends were restored to the Divine favor. II. Of the salutary influence of prayer. 1. This exercise tended to purge Job's heart of all resentment towards those he prayed for; 2. It also prepared him for the return of fortune. III. The testimony of this prayer. 1. Job showed affliction had not soured his nature; 2. Affliction had ennobled his heart.

God's blessing. — Job's fortune is doubled. God never blesses imperfectly. He does not simply mend and patch up the broken life. He heals and renews and blesses with superabundant kindness. Job's fortune was but external. This was according to the ideas of primitive times. Christ has led us to look for higher blessings. The Christian Job may never recover his property or his health; and yet in his afflictions he may receive his greatest heritage of blessing from Heaven. But whatever be the form of God's blessing, it is great and wonderful. The Christian has more than a Paradise regained. The second Adam brings a kingdom of heaven that is more precious than the lost Eden. The soul that has been tried by fire has a richer inheritance in God than it ever had in the old days of peace. The discipline of sorrow is the key to wonderful treasures of heavenly joy. — *Pul. Com.* — *Discipline — a blessing.* — There is a story told in the *Choir Boy of York Cathedral* of a man named Theodorus, who went to Athens, and fell asleep in the temple of Minerva. He dreamed that he went to another place, where there was a Palace of Destiny. This was in the form of a pyramid. Each story represented a world. Theodorus saw a friend of his, "called Sextus, in each one of the three stories, or worlds." In one world he was prosperous and good;

the return of prosperity to Job

c Ps. xiv. 7; lii. 6; cxxvi. 4.

d This word is used Ge. xxxiii. 19; Jos. xxiv. 32.

e Ge. xxiv. 47. xxxv. 4; Ex. xxxii. 3.

"Presents are usual in visiting a man of rank in the E., especially after a calamity."— *Fausset.*

"I ask thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles
And wipe the weeping eyes;
A heart a leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize."
— *Anna L. Waring.*

"Whoever has learned to see in suffering a proof of God's love, and beyond the darkness of death a land of light, in which all wrongs

shall be redressed, and all virtue meet its due reward,—a land, in fine, in which the varied discipline of this world shall issue in a life conformed to its fair and high ideal, — h e has a solution of the great problem in which he may rest and rejoice." —*Samuel Cox.*

in another, he was contented with a very humble lot; in still another, he was a king, and a good king, too. Finally, Theodorus entered the highest apartment of all, and was so delighted that he nearly fainted for joy. But here he saw Sextus, a wicked man, and ruined forever. "This," said his guide, "is the very best world of all;" but Theodorus was puzzled to know how it could be the best, and yet make his friend Sextus worse off in it than in any of the others. "It is the best possible world," said his guide, "and Sextus might have made the best out of it." "The best possible world" is best only for those who have learned to love and obey God perfectly. Adam was driven from Paradise because it was not the best place for him. A world of discipline is the best then. But when men are fully redeemed from sin, then they can also dwell in Paradise Regained, the glorious city of God. — *Peloubet.*

Job's possessions and family

12, 13. (12) **latter end,** closing period of his life. **more,** by giving him double measure of prosperity. **fourteen,**[a] *etc.*, comp. ch. i. 3. (13) **seven sons,** *etc.*,[b] the same number that he lost in the time of his calamities; ch. i. 2.

The end of a good man's life better than the beginning. — I. For the beginning was like that of all men — sinful. II. For the course was overruled by Divine grace, and a sense of Divine discipline. III. For the end manifests Divine mercy, and is in the beginning of joys unspeakable and full of glory. Application: — Many are at the end of life, without being at the beginning of anything better.

Spiritual poverty. — Think what God is trying all the while to do for us, and see if it is not beyond our greatest thought. Christ is more than teacher. He is our divine Lord and Saviour, able to save to the uttermost. Oh, if the world were willing to take what He is so ready to bestow! If we desired more, we should receive more. It is because our prayers are too narrow, because we want only to fill the cup within an inch of the top, that we are poor. When we are willing that the cup shall run over, there comes a springing out from heaven, a pouring down from above, of that which fills the cup from the great wealth and mercy of God. — *Alexander McKenzie.*

a "The exact doubling of Job's former possessions shows that we are not reading literal history here." — *Cam. Bib.*

b Ps. cvii. 41.

"The merchant who towards spicy regions sails, smells their perfume far off, in adverse gales; with blasts which thus against the faithful blow, fresh odorous breathings of God's goodness flow."— *Bishop Ken.*

Job's daughters

14, 15. (14) **Jemima,** *dove.* **Kezia,** *cassia*, sweet and gracious as this favorite plant. **Keren-happuch,** *a horn or vase of pigment*, such as was used for enhancing the beauty of the eyes.[c] (15) **inheritance,** this was unusual in the case of daughters. "The Hebrew practice was that the daughters inherited only when there was no son, Numb. xvii. 1 *seq.* The disposition of his property made by Job would retain the sisters in the midst of their brethren even after marriage, and allow the affectionate relations existing among Job's children to continue." — *Cam. Bib.*

Names of Job's daughters. — These names are very characteristic, and are exactly of the same class as are at the present day given to women in the East. The first name, *Jemima*, may probably have the signification of "turtle" or "dove," which it bears in the Arabic language. The second is *cassia* — the aromatic of that name. And the third appears to be correctly rendered by the Vulgate, *cornu-stibii* — "the horn or vessel of *stibium*," that is, of paint, such paint as the eyes were adorned with. All these names are in exact conformity with the present usages, in which the names of females are taken from whatever is considered agreeable and beautiful — flowers, fruit, gums, perfumes, precious stones, and the like. The last name is the most singular. It is one of the characteristics of the Orientals that they do not keep in the background the materials and instruments of personal adornment, but obtrude them on every occasion, as objects calculated to suggest agreeable ideas. Hence the vessels containing paints, unguents, and perfumes, give names to females, supply images to poetry; and painted representations of them, with their names inscribed upon them, occur, equally with representations of flowers, on the walls of palaces in the East. It is also remarkable that this custom of painting the eyes should have existed at so very early a period as the name of Job's daughter intimates. Yet we know that it existed in the time of the kings (see 2 Kings ix. 30); as also among the ancient Egyptians, as appears from their paintings and mummies, as well as from the fact that vessels with remains of the black powder, and the probes or pencils for applying it to eye, have often been found in the ancient tombs. — *Kitto.*

c "The names indicate great beauty and grace both of person and of character."— *Spk. Com.*

"The names of the daughters but not of the sons of Job are given. Some have supposed that certain districts of Arabia derived their names fr. these daughters of Job." — *Wordsworth.*

Ps. cxliv. 12.

"A small circle of usefulness is not to be despised A light that doesn't shine beautifully around the family table at home, is not fit to take a long way off to do a great service somewhere else."— *J. Hudson Taylor.*

16, 17. (16) **lived . . years,** some have concluded from this that he was 70 when his calamities came upon him. But the inference is not necessary. Prolonged life, length of days, was another sign of gracious Div. acceptance.[a]

The evening of life. — Amid life's varied streams and sources of transport and pain, often mingled and often alternating, we learn at last to prefer those milder and more certain or enduring pleasures which calmly soothe us, to the bustle, the labor, and the excitement that engage and animate our youth and maturer strength. Agitation and emotion at length lose their charm; they disturb more than they amuse us. As age advances to its sober evening, we perceive and appreciate the value of conscious life without pain; of sedative tranquillity; of reposing, yet not inactive thought; of sensibility without perturbation; of patient hope; of resting movability; of sensations that please, but do not agitate; of intellectual rumination; and of those solemn aspirations of sacred foresight, of prospective gratitude, and of humble reliance on the great mediatoral Benefactor, which close our mortal days with true dignity and make even dissolution an inestimable blessing. — *Sharon Turner.*

The value of life depends on the use that is made of it. In Christ the poorest earthly life is rich; and the most unfortunate life is well worth living when it is given to God. But the Old Testament blessedness of long life is enlarged in the New Testament, and appears as the gift of eternal life — the greatest blessing enjoyed by God's redeemed children. — *Pul. Com.*

the death of Job

[a] Ge. 1. 23; Ps. cxxviii. 6; Pr. xvii. 6.

Ps. xci 16; He. ix. 27; Jno. xi. 25.

"The translators of the LXX. add 'And it is written that He will rise again with those whom the Lord will rise up, etc.'" — *Barnes.*

"Life is the thing we seek, and man finds it in the fulfilment of his life by Jesus Christ." — *Brooks.*

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

[4477]

Synopsis.

(According to Bickersteth.)

I.—Didactic Psalms.

1. Human character, happiness and misery, i., v., vii. ix.–xii., xiv., xv., xvii., xxiv., xxv., xxxii., xxxiv., xxxvi., xxxvii., l., lii., liii., lviii., lxxiii., lxxv., lxxxiv., xc., xcii., xciv., cxii., cxix., cxxi., cxxv., cxxvii., cxxviii., cxxxiii.
2. Excellency of the Divine Law.... xix., cxix.
3. Vanity of human life.....xxxix., xlix., lxix.
4. The duty of rulers.....lxxxii., ci.
5. Humility .....cxxx.

II.— Psalms of Praise and Adoration.

1. God's goodness, mercy, and providential care of the good... ...xxiii., xxxiv., xxxvi., xci., c., ciii. cvii., cxvii., cxxi., cxlv., cxlvi.
2. God's power, glory, *etc*.....viii., xix., xxiv., xxix., xxxiii., xlvii., l., lxv., lxvi., lxxvi., lxxvii., xciii., xcv.–xcvii., xcix., civ., cxi. cxiii.–cxv., cxxxiv., cxxxix., cxlvii., cxlviii. cl.

III. Psalms of Thanksgiving.

1. Mercies to individuals.....ix., xviii., xxii., xxx., xxxiv., xl., lxxv., ciii., cviii., cxvi., cxviii., cxxxviii., cxliv.
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IV.—Devotional Psalms.

1. Penitence...vi., xxv., xxxii., xxxviii., li., cii., cxxx., cxliii,
2. —Trust under affliction.....iii., xvi., xxvii., xxxi., liv., lvi., lvii., lxi., lxii., lxxi., lxxxvi.
3. Extreme dejection, but not without hope, xiii., xxii., lxix., lxxvii., lxxxviii., cxliii.
4. Prayers in distress..iv., v., xi., xxviii., xli., lv., lix., lxiv., lxx., cix., cxx., cxl., cxli., cxliii.
5. Prayers when deprived of public worship.....xlii., xliii., lxxiii., lxxxiv.
6. Prayers seeking help in uprightness.... vii., xvii., xxvi., xxxv.
7. Prayers in time of persecution, *etc*..... xliv., lx., lxxiv., lxxix., lxxx., lxxxiii., lxxxix., xciv., cii., cxxix., cxxxvii.
8. Prayers of intercession.....xx., lxvii., cxxii., cxxxii., cxliv.

V.—Psalms Eminently Prophetical..ii., xvi., xxii., xl., xlv., lxviii., lxix., lxxii., xcvii., cx., cxviii., mostly Messianic.

VI.—Psalms Historical..lxxviii., cv., cvi.

The Psalms as related to Jewish History.

Rev. W. E. Barton, D. D., in The Psalms and their Story, (Boston, 1898), assigns the several Psalms to the periods in which they may probably have been written. He is careful to claim no certainty for his results, but believes they are as nearly accurate as thorough study of all the evidence will allow. His classification is here given.

I.—The One Pre-Davidic Psalm.
Psalm xc.

II.—The Early Life of David as Reflected in the Psalms.
Psalms viii., xix., xxix.

III.—Psalms of David's Exile.
Psalms xi., lix., lii., lvi., liv., vii., xiii., xxxv., lvii.

IV.—Psalms of David's Middle Life.
Psalms xviii., li., xxxii., ci., xv., xxiv.

V.—Psalms Connected with Absalom's Rebellion.
Psalms lxii., xli., xxxviii., lv., iii., iv., xxiii.

VI.—Other Songs of David.
Psalms xxi., lx. 6–8, cviii. 7–9, cxliv. 12–14, cx.

VII.—From Solomon to Ahaz.
Psalms ii., lxxii., xlv., xii., xxxix., vi., xxx.

VIII.—Psalms of Sennacherib's Invasion.
Psalms xlvi., xlvii., xlviii., lxxv., lxxvi., lxv., lxvi., lxvii.

IX.—From Ahaz to Josiah.
Psalms v., xxxvi., lxiv., cxl., cxli., cxlii., lxi., lxiii., xxvi., lviii., xxvii., l., i.

X.—The Beginning of the End.
Psalms xx., xxxi., ix., x., xxxvii.

XI.—Psalms of the Decline and Fall of Judah.
Psalms xxii., xlii., xliii., xxv., xxxiv., lxxxiv., xxvii.

XII.—The Harp on the Willows.
Psalms xiv., liii., xl., lxx., lxxi., lxix., cix., xciv., lxxxvi., lxxvii., lxxxii., lxxxviii., lxxxix.

XIII.—Later Psalms of the Exile.
Psalms cii., lxxiii., cxxx., cxx. cxxiii., cxxxi., cxliii., xlix., xvi., xvii., xci., cxxxix.

XIV.—Early Psalms of the Restoration.
Psalms cxxiv., cxxv., cxxi., cxxii., cxxvi., cxxxvii., xcii., cxxix., cxxxiii., cxxxiv., lxxxv.

XV.—Songs of the Rebuilt Temple.
Psalms lxxxi., cxxvii., cxxviii., cxxxii., cxxxviii., lxxxvii., xxxiii., lxviii.

XVI.—Later Psalms of the Restoration.
Psalms cxliv., lxxviii., cv., ciii., civ.

XVII.—The Hallel and Other Restoration Song Groups.
Psalms cxiii-cxviii., cxxxv., cxxxvi., cvi., cvii., xciii. xcv.-c.

XVIII.—Late Acrostic Psalms.
Psalms cxi., cxii., cxlv., cxix.

XIX.—Maccabaean Psalms.
Psalms xliv., lxxiv., lxxix., lx., lxxx., lxxxiii.. cviii., cxlvi.-cl.

PSALM THE FIRST.

1—3. (1) Negatively stated. **Blessed,** abrupt and exclamatory, *lit.*, "Felicities of the man," *etc.* **counsel,**[a] *i. e.* according to the plan, purpose, design, advice of. **ungodly,**[b] turbulent, *R. V.*, "wicked." **scornful,** not found elsewhere in the Psalter. mockers. **walketh,** the outgoings of the life, liveth. **standeth,** submissive, inactive. **sitteth,** settling permanently into. (2) The positive picture. **But,** on the other hand. **delight,** pleasure, choice, or business by inclination. **law,** precepts, instruction, teachings of God, written or unwritten, of the portion of the Bible then written, or truth personally revealed. **meditate,** dwell upon, ponder. (3) **planted,**[c] set. **rivers,** streams, brooks, natural or artificial. **his,** *R. V.*, "its." **season,** appropriate time. Rom. iv. 22. Matt. xii. 33. **doeth,** produceth, yieldeth, continuing the figure of the tree; the fruit of the life in action and influence. **prosper,** bring to perfection.

The word of God (*vs.* 2).— I. The word of God in the authority with which it comes to the believer. 1. It is law to the life in its mode of acting; 2. To the mind in its mode of thinking; 3. To the heart in its mode of loving. II. The Word of God in the feeling with which it is regarded by the believer. He delights in it — 1. Because of the life which it reveals to him; 2. Of the counsel by which it guides him; 3. Of the promises by which it cheers him. III. The Word of God in the attention which it receives from the believer. 1. He privately studies and meditates upon it. 2. He speaks of it, — this is Luther's translation. — *Study.— A good man like a fruitful tree.* — It is spring time. Around us are orchard trees in bloom, or with fruit about to form. A sight full of beauty, full of promise. See what the text says of the fruitful tree. I. Where it grows. Rivers of water. Needful to life of tree. The Bible, a well of water. The Gospel, a running stream. "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." The Sabbath, a quiet lake. The sanctuary, a pool of Bethesda. The good man will be near all these. II. How it came there. Planted. This is the work of another. "Ye are God's husbandry." Providence plants us near the river. III. What it yields. Fruit. Such a tree should not bring forth leaves only. Fruit in his season. Different kinds of fruit in different times of life. But all good fruit. IV. How to be like it. Ask God to plant us by the river; to make us thirst for the water; to teach us to drink of the living stream. Then we shall presently be transplanted to the margin of the river of life. — *Stoughton.*

Not in the way. — According to a custom which is generally recognized in Central Africa, whenever a caravan mistakes its way and is obliged to retrace its steps and return to a road from which it has deviated, a bough is thrown across the wrong path, and a furrow is scratched in the ground by means of the feet, so that no succeeding caravan may fall into the same error. Thus the generations which have gone astray have declared that the ways of ungodliness and sin are ways of bitterness and disappointment, and they have left their emphatic and sorrowful testimonies as boughs and furrows across these false ways, to demonish us to seek another and a truer path. — *Hom. Com.*

4—6. (4) **wind,** of temptation, trial, judgment. **driveth away,** scattereth. (5) **Therefore,** because they are not like the righteous, firmly set, planted, *vs.* 3. **stand,** continue, endure. **judgment,** here, or hereafter, sifting the wicked from the righteous. **congregation,** company, assembly. (6) **knoweth,** respecteth, approveth. **way,** career, course of life. **perish,** vanish, disappear, be undone

Results.— I. The destinies of men are various. II. The destinies of men are decided by their moral character and conduct. III. The destinies of men are as widely contrasted as their character. — *Spurgeon.*

Chaff. — "What is in yonder vessel?" I inquire of a passing stranger. "Chaff," he replies, turning a hasty glance in the direction to which I point, and passes on. His answer is all that you could expect him to give, and yet it is not correct. The vessel was filled with wheat and chaff, mingled together as they were threshed from the sheaf; but it has been shaken from side to side for some time, and the wheat has all sunk to the bottom, while the chaff has all risen to the top. In like manner many real, though not perfect Christians, are set down as hypocrites by careless observers, because the things of the Spirit gravitate downward, lie unseen, while the vanities that perish in

author, — uncertain

[a] "Three kinds of wickedness descr. — active participation in evil counsels,— quiet acquiescence in sin,— association with scoffers."—*Spk Com.*

[b] Job. xxi. 16.

[c] Jer. xvii. 7, 8.

"A well-governed mind learns in time to find pleasure in nothing but the true and the just." — *Amiel.*

"Honor must grow out of humility, freedom out of discipline, righteous joy out of righteous sorrow, true strength out of true knowledge of our own weakness, sound peace of mind out of sound contrition."—*Chas. Kingsley.*

"Where the word blessed is hung out as a sign, we may be sure that we shall find a godly man within."—*Sir Richard Baker.*

"The Lord's trees are all evergreens. No winter's cold can destroy their verdure; and yet, unlike evergreens in our country, they are all fruit bearers." — *C. H. Spurgeon.*

"Righteousness is God's first requirement and our first need. For this the hypocrite toils as he clothes his nakedness with filthy rags; for this the humble hunger and thirst; for this the law rages like the sea in a storm; and this in Divine perfection the Lord Jesus has wrought out, and brought in and offered free."—*Arnot.*

the using occupy almost all the visible surface of the life. That which is Christ-like in Christians should not be small, but large and full-grown; should not sink out of sight, but stand forth visible to all. — *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

PSALM THE SECOND.

author, — prob. David

1—3. The plot. (1) **heathen,** nations, non-Israelite races. **rage,** "tumultuously assemble." **people,** *R. V.*, "peoples." **imagine,** meditate, Ps. i. 2. (2) **set themselves,**[a] oppose, take a stand. (3) The conspiracy in the supposed words of the rebels. **bands,**[b] *i. e.*, of Jehovah and the Messiah; bands of justice, love, mercy.

The second Psalm. — We shall not greatly err in our summary of this sublime Psalm if we call it The Psalm of Messiah the Prince; for it sets forth, as in a wondrous vision, the tumult of the people against the Lord's anointed, the determinate purpose of God to exalt his own Son, and the ultimate reign of that Son over all His enemies. Let us read it with the eye of faith, beholding, as in a glass, the final triumph of our Lord Jesus Christ over all His enemies. — *Spurgeon.*

"*A vain thing.*" — A medal was struck by Diocletian, which still remains, bearing the inscription, "The name of Christians being extinguished." And in Spain, two monumental pillars were raised, on which were written: — I. "Diocletian Jovian Maximian Herculeus Cæsares Augusti, for having extended the Roman Empire in the east and the west, and for having extinguished the name of Christians, who brought the Republic to ruin." II. "Diocletian Jovian Maximian Herculeus Cæsares Augusti, for having adopted Galerius in the east, for having everywhere abolished the superstition of Christ, for having extended the worship of the gods." As a modern writer has elegantly observed: "We have here a monument raised by Paganism, over the grave of its vanquished foe. But in this, 'the people imagined a vain thing;' so far from being deceased, Christianity was on the eve of its final and permanent triumph, and the stone guarded a sepulchre empty as the urn which Electra washed with her tears. Neither in Spain, nor elsewhere, can be pointed out the burial place of Christianity; it is not, for the living have no tomb." — *Spurgeon.*

4—6. The plot thwarted. (4) **He . . heavens,** quietly, and with dignity on His throne, watching and controlling all; the serene power of heaven contrasted with the weak turbulence of men. **laugh,**[c] fig. of the opposition of the Eternal God. **Lord . . derision,** He allows the devices of wicked men to work out their infinite folly to their own shame and derision. (5) **Then,**[d] when they see the outcome of their folly. **wrath,** God's righteous indignation at their presumptuous wickedness. **vex,** *marg.* "trouble." (6) Jehovah's words. **king,** his earthly representative. **upon . . Zion,** *lit.*, "upon Zion, the hill of my holiness." "Zion is mentioned as the royal seat of the Anointed One." — *Delitzsch.*

Christ's government in and over His people (*vs.* 6). — I. Jesus Christ is, by designation of the Father, a King to rule and govern all whom He hath redeemed. 1. He reigns in us, giving laws of life, working grace in the heart, imparting new supplies of the Sacred Spirit, purifying the heart, creating peace, *etc.*; 2. He reigns over us, subduing all enemies, bestowing all blessings, sanctifying all conditions, settling all ecclesiastical polity. II. The kingdom of Jesus Christ shall be firmly established notwithstanding all opposition; there are three kingdoms opposed to it — Sin, Satan and Antichrist; but Jesus can plant His sceptre where no earthly king can set his foot. — *T. Temple.*

The wrath of God. — Of thirty Roman emperors, governors of provinces, and others high in office, who distinguished themselves by their zeal and bitterness in persecuting the early Christians, one became speedily deranged after some atrocious cruelty, one was slain by his own son, one became blind, one was drowned, one was strangled, one died in a miserable captivity, two committed suicide, five were assassinated by their own people or servants, five others died the most miserable and excruciating deaths, several of them having an untold complication of diseases, and eight were killed in battle, or after being taken prisoners. Among these was Julian the apostate. In the days of his prosperity he is said to have pointed his dagger to heaven defying the Son of God, whom he commonly called the Galilean. But when he was wounded in

[a] As Goliath, 1 Sa. xvii. 4-10.

[b] Isa. x. 27; Jer. xxx. 8; Nah. i. 13.

"Blessed is the man whose will and life are thoroughly identified with the Divine law; for the law shall stand for ever, and none shall suffer loss who enjoy its shelter!"—*Watkinson.*

"Falsehood is in a hurry, it may be at any moment detected and punished: truth is calm, serene; its judgment is on high; its King cometh out of the chambers of eternity."—*Jos. Parker.*

[c] Ps. xxxvii. 13.

[d] Deut. xxix. 19, 20.

"He that believeth truly in Christ, succoreth the poor members of Christ, He leaveth no man comfortless. He goeth about to hurt no man, but studieth to profit all men. He wisheth and procureth no less goodness to others than he doth to himself. For out of sincere faith cometh charity, insomuch that he which believeth truly in God can never be without it." — *Bacon.*

"Queen Mary was so much attached to her beautiful Calais, that when in the exigencies of war, she lost it, she affirmed in her grief that the name would be

battle, he saw that all was over with him, and he gathered up his clotted blood, and threw it into the air, exclaiming, "Thou hast conquered, O thou Galilean." Voltaire has told us of the agonies of Charles IX. of France, which drove the blood through the pores of the skin of that miserable monarch, after his cruelties and treachery to the Huguenots. — *W. S. Plumer.*

7—9. The decree. (7) 2 Sam. vii. 12 *ff.* **I,** the Anointed One. **decree,** by which the plot (*vss.* 1–3) should be wholly overthrown through the institution of the Messianic kingdom. **Thou . . thee,**[a] "the speaker wishes to make known: (1) That he and no one else, is the one to whom this appointment applies; (2) That he has not been made the son by it for the first time, but declared to be the son; (3) that this declaration was in time and not in eternity, and has the meaning of a historical recognition." — *Lange.* (8) **Ask,**[b] "inheritance is the natural night of sonship." **heathen,** *R. V.*, "nations." (9) **break,** crush, shatter. **rod,** staff, flail, sceptre. **dash . . pieces,** the utter overthrow of the plot, *vss.* 1–3.

The reign of Christ. — I. Its sovereignty. II. Its authority. III. Its universality. IV. Its irresistibility. V. Its graciousness. — *Hom. Com.*

Christ the power of God. — Christ is called the power of God as well as the wisdom of God (1 Cor. i. 24). Not only in the fruits of the gospel upon the hearts of men, but in His office, wherein was manifested the power of God in redeeming the world. It was in Him God overthrew the false conceits of the world, knocked off the fetters of their captivity, demolished the power of death, prepared everlasting mansions; the foundations of a happy eternity in the misery, afflictions, death, blood of His only Son. By a crucified man, and a weak flesh encompassed with infirmity, the God of heaven subdues the god of the world, destroys the empire of the proud spirits, and subdues principalities and powers under His feet. It is seen in raising Christ from the dead, after he had sustained the weight of the sin of the world upon Him, and bringing Him forth with success and glory after that great encounter with the powers of hell; in powerfully raising a church to Him from the seed of His blood, in spite of all spiritual and secular enemies, defending it and supporting it under the most terrible waves of the world, that He might be acknowledged, adored, and praised in this world, and that which is to come. — *S. Charnock.*

10—12. Address of Psalmist who has heard the words of Jehovah and Messiah. (10) **wise,** prudent, considerate. **kings . . judges,** all ruling powers and authorities. (11) **Serve,** "labor for." **rejoice,** variously rendered, "exult," "tremble," "worship," "submit yourselves." (12) **Kiss,** *R. V., marg.* "some ancient versions render, *Lay hold of (or, receive) instruction*; others, *Worship in purity.*" "Adopt a modest demeanor, lest He be angry, and ruin seize you!" — *Polychr. Bib.* "Pay homage." — *Delitzsch.* **lest . . angry,** not the Son, but Jehovah. **from . . way,** *R. V.*, "in the way." **when . . little,** *R. V.*, "For His wrath will soon be kindled."

Reconciliation to Christ (*vs.* 12). — I. The exhortation. It implies — 1. Submission to Christ's authority (1 Sam. x. 1); 2. Love to His Person (Luke vii. 38); 3. Devotion to His service (1 Ki. xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2). II. The arguments by which the exhortation is enforced. 1. The danger of disobeying it (Rev. vi. 15–17); 2. The benefit arising from obedience to it. — *G. Brooks.*

Dash in pieces. — I remember, away up in a lonely Highland valley, where, beneath a tall black cliff, all weather-worn, and cracked, and seamed, there lies at the foot, resting on the greensward that creeps round its base, a huge rock that has fallen from the face of the precipice. A shepherd was passing beneath it; and suddenly, when the finger of God's will touched it, and rent it from its ancient bed in the everlasting rock, it came down, leaping and bounding from pinnacle to pinnacle — and it fell; and the man that was beneath it is there now! "Ground to powder." Ah, my brethren! that is not *my* illustration — that is Christ's. Therefore I say to *you*, since all that stand against Him shall become as "the chaff of the summer threshing-floor," and be swept utterly away, make Him the foundation on which you build; and when the storm sweeps away every "refuge of lies," you will be safe and serene, builded upon the Rock of Ages. — *Maclaren.*

found written on her heart. The precious name of Christ will be found on every Christian's heart."

[a] Ac. xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5.

[b] Ps. lxxii. 8.

Bishop Butler, the great thinker, was lying on his deathbed; and, so lying, he looked at his chaplain and said, "I know that Jesus Christ is a Saviour, but how am I to know that he is a Saviour to me?" The chaplain answered simply, "My lord, it is written, 'Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.'" The dying bishop was silent for a minute, and then he said, "I have often read and thought of that scripture, but never till this moment did I feel its full power, and now I die happy."

"Fools do that at last which wise men do at first."

"The fear of God promotes spiritual joy; it is the morning star which ushers in the sunlight of comfort." — *T. Watson.*

"Kiss," a sign of love among equals. Gen. xxxiii. 4; Rom. xvi. 16. Of subjection in inferiors; 1 Sam. x. 1 Of religious adoration in worshipers; 1 Kings xix. 18; Job xxxi. 27. — *John Richardson.*

Jesus sat at meat with publicans and sinners; those whose sins came from the baser passions, and were abominable to all men, so that no man should say that it was not for such that He came.

PSALM THE THIRD.

author,— prob. David

A morning Ps. for one in distress, associated with David, on the occasion of Absalom's rebellion.

1—5. (1) **increased,** the Ps. seems inspired by hearing of one and another joining the rebellious party of Absalom.[a] (2) **of my soul,** *Heb.* idiom for "of me." **help,** *lit.* "salvation." **in God,** the strongest reliance of the Psalmist, indicating his utter helplessness. **Selah,** a musical sign not understood.[b] (3) **shield,**[c] Gen. xv. i. **for me,** *R. V.*, "about me." **glory,** riches, majesty, abundance, an enlargement of "reward," in Gen. xv. 1; see De. xxxiii. 29. **lifter,** *cf.* 2 Sam. xv. 30. (4) **cried,** *R. V.*, "cry." **he heard me,** *lit.* "he answers me." **out . . hill,** *i. e.* Zion, the seat of the ark, 2 Sa. xv. 24–29. (5) I, emphatic. This is my experience. **slept,** even the very night of the flight from Jerusalem. **sustained me,** better, *sustaineth*, does so continually.

Mistaken verdicts. — I. The verdict of sense. 1. This verdict was popular; 2. Plausible; 3. Confident. II. The judgment of faith. *Lessons*: 1. Human judgments are not infallible; 2. Despair not of the worst of men; 3. Despair not of yourselves in life's darkest moments. — *Hom. Com.*

"*Selah.*" — This a musical pause, the precise meaning of which is not known. Some think it simply a rest, a pause in the music: others say it means, "Lift up the strain — sing more loudly — pitch the tune upon a higher key — there is nobler matter to come, therefore retune your harps." Harp-strings soon get out of order and need to be screwed up again to their proper tightness, and certainly our heart-strings are evermore getting out of tune. Let "Selah" teach us to pray

> "O may my heart in tune be found,
> Like David's harp of solemn sound."

At least, we may learn that wherever we see "Selah," we should look upon it as a note of observation. Let us read the passage which precedes and succeeds it with greater earnestness, for surely there is always something excellent where we are required to rest and pause and meditate, or when we are required to lift up our hearts in graceful song. "SELAH." — *Spurgeon.*

The Lord a shield. — Luther, when making his way into the presence of Cardinal Cajetan, who had summoned him to answer for his heretical opinions at Augsburg, was asked by one of the cardinal's minions where he should find a shelter, if his patron, the elector of Saxony, should desert him? "Under the shield of heaven!" was the reply. The silenced minion turned round and went his way. — *Whitecross.*

All right by and by. — A woman, with sad face and doleful voice, was once complaining bitterly of her hard lot in life, and of the trials and misfortunes which she was called to pass through, when the sweet voice of a child, of only five years, broke in with: "It will all come right by-and-by, mother." Those words, coming as they did from childish lips, made an impression on my mind which will never be erased. Many times since, amid the conflicts of life, I have seemed to hear a childish voice saying, "It will all come right by-and-by." Oh, that we might always have the love and confidence of a little child. Then we should ever trust in our heavenly Father's tender care, feeling that He will bring us safely through all the troubles of this life, and that all things shall work together for our good and the glory of God. — *S. W. W.*

6—8. (6) **set themselves,** arrayed themselves for battle. This verse is "a quiet, meek expression of believing confidence. That God will protect him is pledged by the protection of the night." (7) **arise,** *etc.*, confidence taking shape as prayer. **smitten . . bone,** denoting violence and humiliation.[d] **broken the teeth,** fig. taken fr. wild animals.[e] (8) **salvation,** fr. all kinds of trouble. **blessing is,** *R. V.*, "thy blessing *be* upon thy people."

Minorities and majorities. — I. Do not always trust in the verdict of majorities. II. Do not confide in majorities. III. Do not fear to be in a minority with God. IV. Remember that the majority will be against you when God is. V. The way to conquer majorities is through penitence and prayer.—*Hom. Com.*

Salvation. — The text is true in respect to salvation in every sense of the term. I. Temporally. II. Spiritually, the soul's salvation is of the Lord. 1. He is its author, prompted by His goodness, planned by His wisdom, wrought out by His power; 2. He is the finisher of it; 3. He is the preacher of it. III. Physically, in the resurrection.—*The Study.*

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[a] 2 Sa. xv. 12; xvi. 15.

[b] "A word of doubtful origin, probably meaning a sweep of harp strings marking a pause." — *Spk. Com.*

[c] "The hero accustomed to battle and victory lives and breathes in warlike thoughts and associations." —*Ewald.*

"The title of this Psalm is as a key hung ready at the door, to open it and let us into the entertainments of it. When we know on what occasion this Ps. was penned we know the better how to expound it." — *M. Henry.*

"The French Protestants, in the time of their persecution, had psalms adapted to their varied circumstances. The 3d Psalm was for the stationing of sentinels to keep watch against sudden attack; when the danger was over, and they could worship in safety, they sang Psalm 122d."—*Ker.*

Dav.'s extreme danger was past when Absalom's pursuit of him was delayed.

[d] 1 Ki. xxii. 24.

[e] "To break the teeth of any one means to out an end to their power of doing harm."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

From certain early fathers of the Christian Church it would seem that in their times the

The Book of Psalms.—The Psalms is a theatre where God allows us to behold both Himself and His works; a most pleasant green field; a vast garden, where we see all manner of flowers, a paradise, where we see the most delicious flowers and fruits; a great sea, in which are hid costly pearls; a heavenly school, in which we have God for our teacher; a compend of all Scripture; a mirror of Divine grace, reflecting the lovely face of our heavenly Father, and the anatomy of our souls.—*Gerhard.*

Psalter was generally committed to memory; and that it was particularly expected ministers would be able to repeat the same.

PSALM THE FOURTH.

1—4. (1) **Hear me,** *R. V.*, "Answer me." **God of my righteousness,** or my righteous God.[a] **enlarged,** *R. V.*, "set me at large."—*Polych. Bib.* "In the throng of afflictions. Thou makest room for me."[b] (2) **sons of men,** the Heb. term used signifies "men in high station," the leaders among his enemies. **how . . shame,** *R. V.*, "how long shall my glory be turned into dishonor?"—*Polych. Bib.* "How long will ye be obstinate?" **my glory,** both royal dignity and personal honor, which had been affronted. **leasing,** *R. V.*, "falsehood." (3) **But,** strong antithesis, the eternal law of the Divine government absolutely opposed to the conduct of his enemies. **hath . . him,** Perowne says, "hath *marvelously* chosen; for the notion of something wonderful is found in the root." **godly,** O. T. designa. of the pious. (4) **stand,** *cf.* Eph. iv. 26. If they appreciated God's character they would be afraid of His chastisement.

Man appealing to God.—I. He appeals to the Divine righteousness. II. To the Divine faithfulness. III. To the Divine mercy. Observe:—1. The blessedness of appealing to God. 2. The condition of appealing to God.—*Alexander.*

Vanity.—Chrysostom said once, "That if he were the fittest in the world to preach a sermon to the whole world, gathered together in one congregation, and had some high mountain for his pulpit, from whence he might have a prospect of all the world in his view, and were furnished with a voice of brass, a voice as loud as the trumpets of the archangel, that all the world might hear him, he would choose to preach upon no other text than that in the Psalms, O mortal men, 'How long will ye love vanity, and follow after leasing?'"

author,—David

This Ps. was prob. composed as an evening Ps., on the same occasion as Ps. iii.

a "Thou, who maintainest my right and my cause. But not to be confined to this; it also means, Who knowest the righteousness, the sincerity of my heart and life."—*Perowne.*

b "A common salutation in Arabic is 'Space and ease to thee.'"—*Spk. Com.*

5—8. (5) **offer,** *etc.*, this is best regarded as Dav.'s advice to his followers.[c] **sacrifices,** used here generally for relig. worship.[d] (6–8) A calm expression of David's joy in perfect trust in God. **Who . . good?** apply to Dav.'s followers, whose condition many regarded as desperate.[e] **the light,** *etc.* wh. would abundantly cheer despondent hearts. (7) **more . . increased,** *R. V.*, "more than they have when their corn and their wine are increased."—*Polych. Bib.* "More than in time of the harvests of grain and of wine." **corn and wine,**[f] this is said bec. shortness of provision was a chief cause of their distress. (8) **in peace,** even in the face of all the dangers of another night. Both should be rendered at once; as soon as I lie down calm sleep will come. **only,** *R. V., marg.* "in solitude."

The light of God's countenance (*vs.* 6).—What is the meaning of this prayer? I. That the mind is decided in seeking happiness in God alone. II. A desire to have a full manifestation of the Divine favor. III. That the mind seeks for clearer evidence of its reconciliation to God. IV. That the soul has already had such a taste of the blessing sought as to regard its full bestowment as the highest enjoyment.—*Evang. Preacher. The two cries and the two answers* (*vs.* 6).—I. The cry of the sons of men. It is the cry of—1. Emptiness; 2. Weariness; 3. Darkness; 4. Helplessness; 5. Earnestness; 6. Despair; 7. It is loud and universal. II. The cry of the sons of God. It is the cry—1. Of the few and not of the many; 2. It is a certain and definite cry; 3. It is a cry to go; 4. It is a cry for right; 5. A cry which will be answered.—*Bonar.*

Safety.—When one asked Alexander how he could sleep so soundly and securely in the midst of danger, he told him that Parmenio watched. Oh, how securely may they sleep over whom He watcheth that never slumbers nor sleeps! *Safety.*—Happy is the Christian, who having nightly with this verse, committed himself to his bed as to his grave, shall at last, with the same words resign himself to his grave as to his bed, from which he expects in due time to arise, and sing a morning hymn with the children of the resurrection.—*George Horne. Providential Interpositions.*—The goodness or

c "Though now excluded from the privilege of access to God's altar on Mount Zion, you may still offer the sacrifice of the heart."—*Wordsworth.*

d Comp. 2 Sa. xv. 7–9; and for the general application, Ps. l. 14; li. 19; De. xxxiii. 19.

e "The situation gives this the character of a despondent question arising from a disheartened view of the future."—*Delitzsch.*

f For joy of harvest and vintage seasons, see Is. ix. 3; Je. xlviii. 33.

The answer of a Christian sailor, who was not sure that he could swim, when asked why he remained so calm in a fearful storm, was, "Though I sink, I

shall only drop into the hollow of my Father's hand; for He holds all these waters there." Another says, "My life hangs by a single thread; but that thread is in a Father's hand."

"Since every day by Thee we live,
May grateful hearts Thy gifts receive!
And may the hand be pure from stain
With which our daily bread we gain!" —*Samuel Longfellow.*

"It was wise advice of Sydney Smith, when he said that those who desire to go hopefully and cheerfully through their work in this life should 'take short views;' not plan too far ahead; take the present blessing, and be thankful for it."—*Boyd.*

Nehiloth: — an accompaniment of flutes

a 1 Sa 1. 13; Ps. xxxix. 3.

b Ps. x. 16; comp. 1 Sa. viii. 7.

c "Every one that eateth and drinketh, and after that says his prayers, of him the Scrip. saith, 'But Me thou hast cast behind thy back.'"—*Talmud.*

d Eph. vi. 18.

"Rest assured, Christ will not live in the parlor of our hearts if we entertain the devil in the cellar of our thoughts."—*Spurgeon.*

e Ps. lxxiii. 3; lxxv. 4, 5

f Pr. xxii. 29.

g "Men who make evil their business or trade."—*Spk. Com.*

h Fr Lat. *abhorrere*, to bristle,

mercy of God is seen when it interposes for the help of man. The ravens, in a time of famine, bring Elijah bread and flesh (1 Kings xvii. 6). The story is known how Du Moulin, during the massacre of the Huguenots, in Paris, was cherished for a fortnight by a hen, which came constantly and laid her eggs where he was concealed. Also how at Calais an Englishman, who crept into a hole under a staircase, was there preserved by means of a spider, which had woven its web over the hole, and so the soldiers slighted the search there. Camerarius relates how, in the time of a siege, when the inhabitants, who were sorely pressed by the Turks, placed a large store of bee-hives on the walls of the besieged place, and furiously tumbling down the hives on their enemies, the latter were so desperately stung, that in a pang of indignation they gave up the siege, to the inexpressible joy of the besieged Christians, who were holpen by these new and wonderful recruits! — *Crane.*

The bell of the angels.—

It is said that in heaven at twilight a great bell softly swings,
And man may listen and hearken to the wondrous music that rings,
If he put from his heart's inner chamber all the passions, pain, and strife,
Heart-ache and weary longing that throb in the pulses of life—
If he thrust from his soul all hatred, all thoughts of wicked things—
He can hear in the holy twilight how the bell of the angels rings.

. . . . . .

So, then, let us ponder a little—let us look to our hearts and see
If the twilight bell of the angels could ring for you and me.
—*Atlanta Constitution.*

PSALM THE FIFTH.

1—4. (1) **meditation,** a word used of thoughts expressed in low tones, or "but spoken in the heart."[a] (2) **cry,** when heart-thought gains utterance in prayer. **my King,** God was true King of Israel.[b] David only vicegerent. **will,** *R. V.*, "do." (3) **in the morning,** *i. e.* early, repeated for emphasis. Sign of pious earnestness.[c] **direct,** *R. V.*, "order," indic. careful preparation. **look up,** *R. V.*, "keep watch," *i. e.* "watching unto prayer."[d] (4) **God,** El, a mighty being, like the fetich deities the heathen worship. **dwell,** as if under Div. protection. "Evil cannot be guest of Thine."

True prayer.—I. True prayer is passionate—1. It begins with words; 2. It deepens into sighs; 3. It rises into cries. II. True prayer is personal. III. True prayer is resolute. IV. True prayer is obedient. V. True prayer is expectant.—*Hom. Com.*

Look up! (*vs.* 3).—"Look up!" thundered the captain of a vessel, as his boy grew giddy while gazing from the topmast. "Look up!" The boy looked up, and returned in safety. Young man, look up and you will succeed. Never look down and despair. Leave dangers uncared for, and push on. If you falter, you lose. Look up! Do right, and trust in God.—"*Neither shall evil dwell with thee.*"—Many would teach us that God does tolerate evil—that He employs it to perfect man, to develop the universe. No; He cannot dwell with it, cannot tolerate it. Remember this in the church. History relates that Redwald, King of East Anglia, built a church, at one end of which was an altar for the sacrifice of the mass, and at the other end an altar for sacrifice to the old British idols How frequently the church is in danger of making analogous compromises allowing certain evils to exist within its borders for the sake of gold, or popularity, or peace. It must not be, or God will not dwell with us. And we must remember this in our personal life.—*Hom Com. In the morning.*—"In the days of our fathers," says Bishop Burnet, "when a person came early to the door of his neighbor, and desired to speak with the master of the house, it was as common a thing for the servants to tell him with freedom, 'My master is at prayer,' as it is now to say, 'My master is not up.'"

5—7. (5) **foolish,**[e] *R. V.*, "arrogant." **stand,**[f] as courtiers in presence of the King of kings. **in . . sight,** Heb. "before thine eyes." **workers of iniquity,**[g] Mat. vii. 23. (6) **leasing,** Ps. iv. 2. **abhor,** regard with detestation.[h] **bloody,** *R. V.*, "bloodthirsty." Ref. may be to Ahithophel, the adviser of the Absalomic revolt. (7) **house,** or tabernacle. Trans. "in the

abundance of thy loving kindness I will come into thy house." **temple,** applied to the sanctuary before Sol.'s temple was reared.[a]

The psalmist's resolution in regard to the house of God (*vs.* 7).—I. Observe the singularity of the resolution. II. Mark the object of the resolution: it regards the service of God in the sanctuary. III. The manner in which he would accomplish the resolution. 1. Impressed with a sense of the Divine goodness; 2. Filled with holy veneration. — *W. Jay.*

"*Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing,*" *etc.* — In the same field wherein Absalom raised battle against his father, stood the oak that was his gibbet. The mule whereon he rode was his hangman, for the mule carried him to the tree, and the hair wherein he gloried served for a rope to hang. Little know the wicked how everything which now they have shall be a snare to trap them when God begins to punish them. — *William Cowper.*

shiver from or at the presence of any one.

a 1 Sa. i. 9; iii. 3; 2 Sa. xxii. 7.

"Save us, O God, from having our hearts hammered to the hardness of steel by sin; and daily keep us by Thy grace sensible and tender before Thee, trembling at Thy word."—*Spurgeon.*

8—12. (8) **Lead me,** as a shepherd.[b] **righteousness,** "wh. is pledged to succor those who worship Him, and seek His guidance." **enemies,** *lit.* watchers. **way straight,** the way of Thy providential leadings make plain. (9) **faithfulness,** met worthiness, *marg.* "stedfastness." **inward part,** the seat of life and all its springs. **wickedness,** Heb. is plural. **throat,** *etc.*, out of it comes moral putridness. **flatter,** *lit.* make their tongue smooth.[c] (10) **Destroy . . them,** *R. V.*, "Hold them guilty." **by,** *lit.* "from," *i. e.* on account of.[d] **cast . . out,** or "thrust down." (11) **defendest,** *marg.* "thou coverest over, or, protectest them." (12) **wilt bless,** *lit.* dost bless. **shield,** *tsinnah,* Heb. for the large shield wh. covered the whole body.

b Ps. xxiii. 2, 3; xxxi. 3.

The righteous (*vs.* 11).—I. Observe the character of the righteous. 1. They are men of faith; 2. They are men of love. II. The privileges of the righteous. 1. They have joy — great, pure, satisfying, triumphant, and constant; 2. They have defense by power, providence, angels, and grace. — *Spurgeon.*

God's promise fulfilled. — The Reformed churches in France, whose history exhibits a series of the most atrocious perfidy on the part of their oppressors, were yet, whilst in the possession of the city of Rochelle and the free institutions of Protestantism, always too formidable for their enemies either to suppress their religion, or to subdue them as a body. The papacy made various attempts, through its tools, the reigning monarchs of France, to dispossess the Reformed churches of this their stronghold; and consequently it underwent several memorable sieges, the last of which occurred in the years 1627 and 1628, when, after a noble resistance, it finally surrendered to the besiegers, who demolished its fortifications, and confiscated its municipal rights. During this siege there were numerous examples of great and liberal generosity among the inhabitants. The following example is narrated: "The Sieur De la Goute, an honorary king's advocate, had a sister, the widow of a merchant named Prosni, who, being a very religious and benevolent woman, at the time when the famine became more severe than it had before been, freely assisted the poor with her present surplus. Her sister-in-law, the wife of her brother De la Goute, being differently inclined, reproved her for her conduct, asking her in anger, 'What she would do when her all should be expended?' Her reply was, 'My sister, the Lord will provide for me.' The siege was continued, and the famine increased its fearful ravages, and poor widow Prosni, who had four children, found herself in a great strait — all her store of provisions being exhausted. She applied to her sister for relief, who, in the stead of comforting, reproached her for her improvidence; tauntingly adding that as she had done mighty well to be so reduced under all her great faith and fine words that 'the Lord would provide for her,' so in good time He might provide for her. Wounded to the heart by these words, poor widow Prosni returned to her house in sad distress, resolving, nevertheless, to meet death patiently. On reaching her home, her children met her with gladdened hearts and joyous faces, and told her that a man, to them an entire stranger, had knocked at the door, it being late, and, on it being opened, he threw in a sack of about two bushels of wheat, and then, without saying a word, suddenly departed. By means of this unexpected relief, conveyed to her so opportunely, she was enabled to support herself and family until the end of the seige, and she never knew to whom she was instrumentally indebted for this timely and merciful assistance."

c "The climax appears to be,—their inner parts are a very place of destruction, their throat is a yawning sepulchral passage to it, their tongue is a smooth and easy entrance."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

d 2 Sa. xv. 31; xvii. 14, 23.

There is a peculiar manifestation of the power of God in those that believe. All creatures manifest His creative power. Angels display His power to govern and uphold in unsullied holiness. But only those who believe know the exceeding greatness and mighty working of His power to recover from a fallen state, and then to maintain.

A poor widow was weeping in the room where lay the body of her husband. Their only child came in, and said, "Why do you weep so, mother?" The mother told him of their loss, and especially referred to their poverty. Looking into her face, the little fellow said, "Is God dead, mother?"

PSALM THE SIXTH.

author,— unknown

a sick man's prayer

Sheminith : —with a bass accompaniment.

1—5. (1) **O Lord,** Heb. *Jehovah.* **rebuke . . anger,** the Psalmist asks the entire removal of God's chastisement. Some comp. with Jer. x. 24. (2) **Have mercy,** be gracious. **weak,** *R. V.*, "withered away." **heal me,** *cf.* Jer. xvii. 14; Job v. 18. **vexed,** shaken, see ii. 5. (3) **My . . vexed,** "mind as well as body, the inner self as well as the outer organism is dismayed." — *Kirkpatrick.* **how long?** the sentence ends abruptly; feelings too strong for words. (4) **Return,** to my relief. In suffering God seems to be absent, but is not.[a] **mercies,** *R. V.*, "loving kindness." (5) **death,** the climax of sickness.[b] The state after death was generally regarded by the Heb. as one of utter inactivity. **grave,** *Sheol*, the unseen world.

This psalm might have a history to itself. It has a wail of pain and sorrow, deepening into anguish, running through it; but comfort dawns at the close, like an angel turning the key of the prison. It is the first of the seven penitential psalms, the others being the 32d, 38th, 51st, 102d, 130th, 143d. One of the strangest things, though not the happiest, in its records is, that, along with Psalm 142d, it was the choice of Catherine de Medici, the Jezebel and Athaliah of the French monarchy. She was irreligious and superstitious, profligate and devoured by ambition; and the fact that she had no children, seemed likely to deprive her of the control which she hoped to gain in the counsels of the kingdom. The psalm was the expression of mere worldly disappointment. She became at last the mother of Francis II. (the first husband of Mary Stuart) and of Charles IX., whose character she corrupted by ministering to his vices, and whom she urged to the massacre of St. Bartholomew. "Her desire was realized," says a French historian, "for the misery of France; and that family, which then took pleasure in Psalms, put to death thousands of the Reformed for singing them." — *Ker.*

"I indeed confess that I deserve nothing but destruction; but because I could not endure the severity of Thy judgment, deal with me after my deserts; yea, rather forgive the sins whereby I have provoked Thine anger against me." —*Calvin.* "Soul-trouble is the very soul of trouble."—*Spurgeon.*

6—10. (6) **all the night,** or every night. **bed to swim,** a strong fig. for the his constant weeping. **water,** drench, or flood. (7) **consumed,**[c] *R. V.*, "wasteth." "The look of the eye is a sure indication of the state of health mental and bodily." — *Cam. Bib.* (8) **workers,** *etc.*, Ps. v. 5. **hath heard,** this change of tense indicates a renewal of confidence and hope. (9) **will receive,** the Psalmist felt sure that hearing pledged acceptance. *Receive* means favorably accept and regard. (10) **Let all,** or better, *I know that all, etc.* **return,** *R. V.*, "be turned back." Certain that his prayer is heard, he no longer fears his enemies.

c Job xvii. 7; Ps. xxxi. 9.

A man of prayer. — Of Mr. Thomas Hooker, of New England, his biographer says, "He was a man of prayer;" which, indeed, was a ready way to become a man of God. He would say, "that prayer was the principal part of a minister's work: it was by this that he was to carry on the rest." Accordingly, he devoted one day in a month to prayer, with fasting, before the Lord, besides the public fasts, which often occurred. He would say, "that such extraordinary favors as the life of religion and the power of godliness, must be preserved by the frequent use of such extraordinary means as prayer, with fasting, and that if professors grew negligent of these means, iniquity would abound, and the love of many wax cold." When he lay dying, a friend standing by his bed said, "You are going to receive the reward of all your labors." He replied, "Brother, I am going to receive mercy."

A priest, by the name of John, is mentioned as having been rejected from the bishopric of Ravenna, for inability to repeat the Psalms without a book.

"Let us pray, with our whole hearts, for mercy; and if the answer to our prayers be tardy, because we have deeply transgressed, let us knock; for to him that knocketh it shall be opened when prayers, groans and tears beat at the door." —*St. Cyprian.*

PSALM THE SEVENTH.

author,— prob. David

1—6. (1) **put my trust,** *lit.* "have I taken refuge." **persecute,** *R. V.*, "pursue;" an expression connecting the Ps. with the time of the enmity of Saul. **lest he,**[d] one person stood out prominently as leader among his enemies. Prob. Saul is meant but Dav. respectfully avoids naming him. **soul,** *i. e.* life. **like a lion,** whose habits Dav. knew; 1 Sam. xvii. 34–37. (3) **done this,**[e] some specific charge was brought ag. him; prob. treason ag. Saul. (4) **delivered,** perhaps reference 1 Sam. xxiv. 4–7; xxvi. 9.[f] (5) **my life,** *i. e.* "me."

d Ps. xxxv. 15.

e 1 Sa. xxiv. 12, 13; xxvi. 18; Comp. 2 Sa. xvi. 7, 8.

f "And if I have plundered him who is without cause my enemy." — *Delitzsch.*

The extremity and asylum of God's people.— I. Their extremity. 1. The enemies of the righteous are multiplied; 2. These enemies are malign; 3. These enemies are resistless. II. Their shelter. 1. The security of this

shelter; 2. The condition of its enjoyment. (1) A personal relationship to God. (2) A constant faith in God.— *Hom. Com.*

"*Mine honor in the dust.*"— When Achilles dragged the body of Hector in the dust around the walls of Troy, he did but carry out the usual manners of those barbarous ages. David dares in his conscious innocence to imprecate such an ignominious fate upon himself if indeed the accusation of the black Benjamite be true. He had need have a golden character who dares to challenge such an ordeal.— *C. H. Spurgeon.*

6—9. (6) **Arise,** *etc.*, I appeal fr. their slanders to Thee, as judge.[a] **because of,** *R. V.*, "*against.*" **awake,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "awake for me, thou hast commanded judgment." (7) **so shall,** *R. V.*, "and let," in that case, the case of granting me public vindication. **compass thee,** coming round Thee to acknowledge Thy righteousness. **return . . high,** *R. V.*, "and over them return thou on high" to Thy judgment-throne.[b] (8) **shall judge,** *R. V.*, "ministereth judgment to." **judge me,** only conscious integrity could make such an appeal. Dav. refers to the crime with wh. he was charged, not to any absolute sinlessness.[c] (9) **wickedness,** of slander and plotting. **just,** righteous. **trieth,** in specific sense of testing, assaying. **hearts,** the seat of thought and volition. **reins,** the seat of the emotions, both words including the whole man.

Christian integrity. — An interesting instance of Christian integrity is recorded in the life of the late Rev. John Cooke, of Maidenhead. The circumstance has reference to property which had originally belonged to Mr. Cooke's mother, but had been illegally alienated from him by his father: — "A gentleman of very respectable appearance called at his house rather early one morning, and requested to see the Rev. Mr. Cooke. As soon as Mr. Cooke entered the room, he said, 'Sir, I am an entire stranger to you; and it is business of no very pleasant or ordinary kind that has brought me to Maidenhead. Some years ago, an estate was purchased by my father, for which an adequate value was given at the time; but,' continued the gentleman, 'I find on looking over the deeds, that although it has been in the possession of my family for many years, the sale is not valid, nor my title good, until it is signed by one John Cooke, who was, at the time of the sale, a minor. After much search, by the aid of my legal advisers, I have ascertained that you are that John Cooke; and now it depends on you, whether what my father honorably purchased, but your father dishonestly sold, shall continue in the possession of my family or not.' The gentleman then most frankly opened and exposed to Mr. Cooke a bundle of parchments containing all the particulars of the sale, with the deeds that had been executed. It is believed that the estate had greatly increased in value, and at the time of his application was worth between three and four hundred pounds per annum." *Pardon.* — A legal writer says: "So completely does a pardon of treason or felony extinguish the crime, that when granted to a man, even after conviction or attainder, it will enable him to have an action of slander against another for calling him traitor or felon; because the pardon makes him as it were a new man, and gives him a new capacity and credit. In the eye of the law, the offender is as innocent as if he had never committed the offense." So completely does the blood and righteousness of Christ absolve us from sin. — *Hom. Com.*

10—13. (10) **My defence,** *R. V.*, "my shield is with God," *i. e.* it is for God to defend me.[d] **which,** who. (11) **judgeth the righteous,** better as *marg.* "God is a righteous judge." **and . . day,** *R. V.*, "Yea, a God that hath indignation every day."[e] (12) **If he,** *R. V.* "If a man." **turn not,** in penitent submission. **whet,** sharpen.[f] **ready,** aiming it in act of shooting. (13) **instruments of death,** military weapons. **he . . persecutors,** *R. V.*, "He maketh his arrows fiery shafts," *i. e.* lightning bolts.

God's indignation against the wicked (*vss.* 11–13). — We see the conduct of God — I. In His moral government here. 1. The righteous are the objects of His tender care; 2. The wicked are the objects of His merited displeasure. II. In His judicial proceedings at the last day. 1. Then He will approve and reward the righteous; 2. He will consign the wicked to merited shame and punishment. Learn — (1) The importance of ascertaining your real character; (2) The blessedness of having God for your friend. — *C. Simeon.*

A sure defence (*vs.* 10.) — During the seventeenth century, while the Rev. John Cotton was minister of Boston, in America, intelligence reached that

"**The phrases** 'tread down,' 'lay in the dust,' refer to a death of ignominy." - *Hengstenberg.*

"The door is closed to prayer unless it is opened with the key of trust."— *Calvin.*

a Ps. xciv. 2; Is. xxxiii. 10.

b "Vindicate Thy dignity by no longer allowing it to appear as though the wicked were to have the upper hand."— *Jennings and Lowe.*

c Ps. xviii. 20, 24; xxvi. 1; Job xxix. 14.

The French proverb says, "The tongue cuts deeper than the lance," and David felt it to be so.

"Hitherto Dav. has protested his innocence; now in the full consciousness of that innocence he comes before the very judgment seat of God, and demands the fullest and most public vindication."— *Perowne.*

"And awake for me: Thou hast indeed enjoined the maintaining of right."— *Hupfeld.*

"When Thou hast delivered Thy judicial sentence, return on high above the gathering of Thy people to Thy heavenly throne." —*Wordsworth.*

d "He bears my shield, has undertaken to defend me."—*Jennings.* Ps. lxii. 7.

e "The word means not merely that God feels, but that He manifests, wrath, not by occasional outbursts, but by continuous indications of His intent to punish those who continually provoke Him."— *Spk. Com.*

f De. vi. 7, *marg.*, xxxii. 41.

"The sword of Heaven is not in haste to smite, nor doth it linger."

town of the distress of the poor Christians of Sigatea, where a small church existed, the members of which were reduced to great extremity by persecution. Mr. Cotton immediately began to collect for them, and sent the sum of £700 for their relief. It is remarkable, that this relief arrived the very day after they had divided their last portion of meal, without any other prospect but that of dying a lingering death; and immediately after their pastor, Mr. White, had preached to them from Psalm xxiii. 1, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

14—17. The plans of the wicked frustrate themselves. (14) **travaileth,** *etc.*, fig. indic. that the bad resolves of the wicked man's heart, he was at this time trying to work out in mischievous acts. **falsehood,** "Heb. word includes the meanings of emptiness and failure."[a] (15) **digged it,** or hollowed it out, *i. e.* made it deep. **is fallen,** *etc.*, historically illus. in Saul's personal peril in the cave (1 Sa. xxvi. 7–12), and in case of Haman. (16) **return,** *etc.*, the very scoopings out of the pit shall tumble down on him as he lies in the pit. **pate,** top of the head.[b] (17) **righteousness,** shown in his own vindication and in the judgment of the wicked.

a "He conceives trouble or mischief, and when it is brought forth it turns out to be but a deception which does but mock its would-be perpetrator."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

b Etymology uncertain. Possibly Sanscrit *patri*, top of a vessel.

Retribution. — That was a very remarkable instance of Dr. Story, who, escaping out of prison in Queen Elizabeth's days, got to Antwerp, and there thinking himself out of the reach of God's rod, he got commission under the Duke of Alva to search all ships coming thither for English books. But one Parker, an English merchant, trading to Antwerp, laid his snare fair (saith our chronicler), to catch this foul bird, causing secret notice to be given to Story, that in his ship were stores of heretical books, with other intelligence that might stand him in stead. The Canonist conceiving that all was quite sure hastened to the ship, where, with looks very big upon the poor mariners, each cabin, chest and corner above-board were searched, and some things found to draw him further on: so that the hatches must be opened, which seemed to be unwillingly done, and great signs of fear were showed by their faces. This drew on the doctor to descend into the hold, where now in the trap the mouse might well gnaw, but could not get out, for the hatches were down, and the sails hoisted up, which, with a merry gale, were blown into England, where ere long he was arraigned, and condemned of high treason, and accordingly executed at Tyburn, as he had well deserven. — *Trapp.*

"To bless God for mercies is the way to increase them; to bless Him for miseries is the way to remove them; no good lives so long as that which is thankfully improved; no evil dies so soon as that which is patiently endured." — *William Dyer.*

PSALM THE EIGHTH.

author, — prob. David

A Ps. of praise to Jehovah, suggested by the sight of the starry skies. Comp. by David, prob. during his shepherd life. Compare Ps. xx. 29; Ps. civ.

1, 2. (1) **our Lord,** the Psalmist speaks in the name of the nation. **excellent,** *lit.* bright, glorious: like the stars. **who . . heavens,** *lit.* "set Thy glory upon the heavens." Who hast covered the heavens with Thy glory.[c] (2) **babes,** children able to play.[d] **sucklings,** unweaned infants.[e] Hebrews weaned at three years old. **ordained,** *R. V.*, "established." "Thou hast built up a bulwark, a defence." **enemy,** *etc.*, the opponents of the Div. sovereignty. **avenger,** "one who thirsts or breathes revenge."

c "Thou has set Thy glory, *i. e.* hast stamped the image of Thine infinite majesty upon the heavens, and yet dost condescend to reveal Thyself to man by near and, to some, less significant tokens." — *Spk. Com.*

The glory of God as seen in nature is: 1. Unspeakable. "How excellent!" No poet, no saint, can adequately speak of it. It fills us with a wonder and joy too deep for words. 2. Gracious. "How excellent!" The earth, so far as its primitive and essential arrangements are concerned, declares the loving God. The glory of God is His goodness. 3. Universal. "In all the earth." Everywhere, under the whole heavens, we see the glory of God. — *Watkinson.*

Children's prayers. — It is remarkable how at great crises the children have become defenders of Christ and His cause. Notably, Matt. xxi. 16; and again in the Reformation. When Melancthon was greatly depressed about the fortunes of the Reformation, one day he passed a house in which he found some young people praying for the Protestant cause. Coming to Luther, he exclaimed triumphantly, "We are saved: the children are praying for us." And again, in the great revival of religion under Wesley and Whitfield. — *Hom. Com.*

d Jer. vi. 11; ix. 21; La. iv. 4; 1 Cor. i. 18-21.

e Matt. xxi. 16.

3—5. (3) **When,** or as often as. **moon and stars,** absence of reference to the sun fixes this as a *night* meditation. The glory of an oriental night would inspire such feeling in the Psalmist's heart. (4) **man,** lit. *frail man.*[f] (5) **lower than the angels,** Heb. *Elohim*, wh. is never used in the sense of *angels*. *R. V.*, "God." **glory and honour,** the attributes of royal dignity;

f "The term points to the impotence and mortality of

man being placed in authority over God's creation,[a] and to this is to be referred the comparison "but little lower than God."

The dignity of human nature. — I. The apparent weakness of human nature. II. The essential greatness of human nature. 1. In the quality of his being. 2. In the extent of his dominion. III. The source of the greatness of human nature. — *Watkinson.*

The heavens. — There is much in the scenery of a nocturnal sky to lift the soul to pious contemplation. That moon, and these stars, what are they? They are detached from the world, and they lift us above it. We feel withdrawn from the earth, and rise in lofty abstraction from this little theatre of human passions and human anxieties. The mind abandons itself to reverie, and is transferred in the ecstasy of its thought to distant and unexplored regions. It sees Nature in the simplicity of her great elements, and it sees the God of Nature invested with the high attributes of wisdom and majesty. — *Chalmers.*

"*What is man?*"—

> How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
> How complicate, how wonderful is man!
> How passing wonder HE who made him such!
> Who centred in our make such strange extremes!
> From different natures marvelously mix'd,
> Connexion exquisite of distant worlds!
> Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!
> Midway from nothing to the Deity!
> A beam ethereal, sullied and absorb'd,
> Though sullied and dishonor'd, still divine!
> Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
> An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!
> *Helpless*, immortal! insect *infinite!*
> A worm! a god! I tremble at myself,
> And in myself am lost.—*Edward Young.*

6—9. (6) **works . . hands,** those summed up in the earthly sphere of creation.[b] (8) **passeth . . seas,**[c] creatures of the deep not classed with fish. All are subject to man. **paths,** *cf.* Homer's "watery waye," Il. i. 312. (9) **O Lord,** *etc.*, repetition of *vs.* 1, as the impression wh. the meditation had left.

Dominion of the Messiah. — He who rules over the material world is Lord also of the intellectual or spiritual creation represented thereby. The souls of the faithful, lowly and harmless, are the sheep of His pasture; those who, like oxen, are strong to labor in the church, and who, by expounding the Word of Life, tread out the corn for the nourishment of the people, own Him for their kind and beneficent Master; nay, tempers fierce and untractable as the beasts of the desert, are yet subject to His will; spirits of the angelic kind, that like the birds of the air, traverse freely the superior region, move at His command; and those evil ones whose habitation is in the deep abyss, even to the great leviathan himself, all are put under the feet of King Messiah. — *George Horne.*

PSALM THE NINTH.

1—5. (1) **praise . . Lord,** *R. V.*, "give thanks unto the Lord. **shew forth,** recount, or declare.[d] **marvellous works,** the gracious ways in wh. God saves and protects His people. (2) **rejoice,** *R. V.*, "exult." *Wellhausen* translates the future tenses as present. **sing,** as the expression of joyfulness. (3) **When,** or because. This is the reason for the resolve. **they shall,** or because they fall, *etc*, **at thy presence,** on account of Thine angry countenance. (4) **maintained,** *lit.* executed my judgment. **cause,** as a legal case. **judging right,** *R. V.*, "righteously," Prov. xx. 8; Ps. vii. 7. (5) **the heathen,** *R. V.*, "nations." **their name,** as independent nations, and so the individual memory of them.[e]

Praise.— All God's works praise Him, but man is to be the leading singer in the great choir. The Esthonians have a beautiful legend to explain the origin of song. The god of song descended on the Domberg, on which stands a sacred wood, and there played and sang. All creatures were invited to listen, and they each learnt some fragment of the celestial sound; the listening wood learnt its rustling, the stream its roar; the wind caught and learnt

the creature who has been thus honored." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

a Ge. i. 28.

Ps. cxliv. 3-9

"Oh, the grandeur and littleness, the excellence and the corruption, the majesty and meanness of man."—*Pascal.*

"When we behold the light and brightness of the sun, the golden edges of an evening cloud, or the beauteous bow, we behold the adumbrations of this glory and goodness; and in the blue sky, of His mildness and gentleness."—*Jonathan Edwards.*

b 1 Cor. xv. 24–27; Eph. i. 22.

c Ge. i. 20-25.

"When I gazed into these stars, have they not looked down on me as if with pity from their serene spaces, like eyes glistening with heavenly tears over the little lot of man!"—*Carlyle.*

author,— unknown

Resembles Ps. x. in style, language and form, and some versions arrange them as one Ps.

d Ps. xix. 1.

e Comp. De. ix. 14; xxv. 19; 2 Sa. xii. 31.

"As a vessel by the scent thereof tells what liquor is in it, so should our

mouths smell continually of that mercy wherewith our hearts have been refreshed; for we are called vessels of mercy." — *William Cowper.*

to re-echo the shrillest tones, and the birds the prelude of the song. Man only grasped it all, and therefore his song pierces into the depths of the heart, and upwards to the dwellings of the gods. As this legend pictures, man's song is the fullest and the deepest; and whilst creation with her thousand voices praises God, from man comes the music which is sweetest to the throne of God. And each of us ought to find a tongue to bless God. "*I* will praise Thee." "*I* will be glad." "*I* will sing praise." We must not leave the organist and chorister to praise God for us, and ourselves stand dumb images in the pews. No proxy here. He has blessed me, and I will glorify Him. Gratitude ought to make musicians of us all.— *Watkinson.*

6—10. (6) **O thou enemy,** *R. V.*, "The enemy are come to an end, they are desolate forever: And the cities which thou hast overthrown, their very memorial is perished."[a] (7) **endure,** *better*, is calmly, securely seated. *R. V.*, "sitteth as king." **prepared,** firmly established. (8) **And he,** none other than He, for He only is above all things. **judge . . righteousness,** or righteously judge.[b] **in uprightness,** or equity; with impartiality. (9) **refuge,** *R. V.*, "high tower."[c] **times of trouble,** *lit.*, "at times of desperation, *i. e.* on occasions when all hope is cut off."— *Perowne.* (10) **know,** *etc.*, so know as to find full basis of trust (Jno. xvii. 3). **for thou . . thee,** experience is the best exegesis of these words.

Knowledge.— I. All-important knowledge — "know thy name." II. Blessed result — "will put their trust in thee." III. Sufficient reason — "for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." — *T. W. Medhurst.*

Judgment. — The guilty conscience cannot abide this day. The silly sheep, when she is taken, will not bleat, but you may carry her and do what you will with her and she will be subject; but the swine, if she be once taken, she will roar and cry, and thinks she is never taken but to be slain. So of all things the guilty conscience cannot abide to hear of this day, for they know that when they hear of it, they hear of their own condemnation. I think if there were a general collection made through the whole world that there might be no judgment day, then God would be so rich that the world would go a-begging and be a waste wilderness. Then the covetous judge would bring forth his bribes; then the crafty lawyer would fetch out his bags; the usurer would give his gain, and a double thereof. But all the money in the world will not serve for our sin, but the judge must answer his bribes, he that hath money must answer how he came by it, and just condemnation must come upon every soul of them; then shall the sinner be ever dying and never dead, like the salamander, that is ever in the fire and never consumed.— *Henry Smith.*

11, 12. An invitation to praise the Lord for His mercy. (11) **in Zion,** this express. proves the Ps. to have been written after Dav. removed the Ark to Zion.[d] From Zion Jehovah's salv. is to be proclaimed to all the world. **his doings,** His deeds, acts. (12) **inquisition,** requisition. **for blood,** Job xxiv. 2 *ff.* God will surely avenge and rescue His persecuted church, if persecuted even to martyrdom.[e] The verb used means "to demand back fr. any one that wh. he has destroyed, and therefore to demand a reckoning, indemnification, satisfaction for it." **humble,** *R. V.*, "poor," humbled by affliction.

Humility in prayer (*vs.* 12). — The *Times* of June 23, 1858, in recording petitions presented to the House of Lords, remarked of one that it was rejected on the ground of an omission, — after all but a simple one, — the word "humble" was left out. Say, how many petitions to a higher tribunal are rejected for lack, not perhaps of humility in the words employed, but in the heart of the individual employing them?

13—16. (13) **Have mercy,**[f] the cry of the afflicted. **gates,** or regions; gates being the entrance, is put for the bounds. (14) **gates . . Zion,** as the place of public concourse. (15, 16) History proves God's righteousness in judgment. **heathen,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. vii. 16. **is known,** hath made Himself known. **by . . executeth,** *R. V.*, "he hath executed judgment." **is snared,** *R. V.*, *marg.* "He snareth." **Higgaion,** the mark of an interlude: or the indic. of a joyous outburst of the stringed instruments.

"*The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.*" — Not only do we read it in the Word of God, but all history, all experience, records the same righteous justice of God, in snaring the wicked in the work of their own

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a "The enemy is cut off—they are perpetual ruins; and cities which Thou hast rooted out,—the very memorial of them is perished."—*Trans. by Perowne.*

Comp. Ex. xv. 4-6.

b Ac. xvii. 31.

c "A fort on the summit of an inaccessible rock, such as often afforded a refuge to David in early days of exile. Comp. 2 Sa. xxii. 3; Ps. xci. 2."—*Spk. Com.*

"Five scholars of Lausanne, devoted to the Reformation, were taken in France, A. D. 1553, and burned in the Place des Terreaux at Lyons. As they were being carried to execution, they sang with a loud voice this psalm."—*Ker.*

d Comp. Ps. ii. 6; Ps. lxxvi. 3

e Re. vi. 10; Ge. ix. 5.

" *Lit.* He who requireth, demandeth, satisfaction for bloodshed; like the Goel, the next of kin, who was bound to avenge the murder of his kinsman, so God calls the murderer to account."—*Perowne.*

f vss. 13, 14. A model prayer for Divine compassion.

"The man who can pray truly, though languishing in extremest indigence, is richer than all beside, whilst the wretch who never bowed the knee, though

hands. Perhaps the most striking instance on record, next to Haman on his own gallows, is one connected with the horrors of the French Revolution, in which we are told that, "within nine months of the death of the queen Marie Antoinette by the guillotine, every one implicated in her untimely end, her accusers, the judges, the jury, the prosecutors, the witnesses, all, every one at least whose fate is known, perished by the same instrument as their innocent victim." "In the net which they had laid for her was their own foot taken — into the pit which they digged for her did they themselves fall." — *Barton Bouchier.*

17—20. (17, 18) By contrast history also proves the righteousness of God's mercy. **turned,** or turned back.[a] **hell,** *Sheol:* not the place of punishment, but more generally, the place of departed spirits; so a fig. for their death.[b] **not alway,** comp. Is. liv. 7, 8. (19) **man prevail,** "there is an antithesis bet. the word *man*, wh. means *weak*, and his act of prevailing, wh. implies strength."— *Spk. Com.* (20) **Put them in fear,** make them realize their frail nature.[c]

The destiny of the wicked (*vs.* 17). — Who are the wicked? I. Where else can they go? 1. Would themselves or the world be better by their living always on earth? 2. Is it possible that they can be annihilated? 3. Can they go to heaven? II. What else can they expect? 1. Consider, if one act of sin draw down the wrath of God, what must a life? 2. Consider His judgments on whole communities. III. What else do they deserve? 1. Did God ever prevent their seeking His forgiveness? 2. Has He not called, and they refused?— *Stems and Twigs.*

The Greenland missionaries. — When the Moravian missionaries first went, in the last century, to labor in Greenland, they were called to endure the most painful and distressing trials, both in reference to the indifference of the heathen, and the want of food. Famine, of the most afflictive kind, almost constantly threatened them. But in the darkest hours God always appeared, in some way or other, for their help. On one occasion He disposed a Greenlander, a perfect stranger to them, to travel forty leagues to sell them some seals, the flesh of which, with oatmeal and train oil was a delicacy to them compared with the old tallow candles on which they sometimes lived. When they had just returned from a toilsome excursion, in which they could obtain no food, a Greenlander brought them word that a Dutch ship was lying at some distance to the south, the captain of which had letters for them. On sending to the ship, they found a cask of provisions sent them by a kind friend at Amsterdam, with the proposal to send more if they needed. Thus did God keep them alive for their future extensive usefulness.— *R. T. S.*

proudly sitting as monarch of all nations, is of all men most destitute."— *Chrysostom.*

"While the thought of God's searching, judgments gives confidence to the afflicted, it brings hidden sins to remembrance." — *Spk. Com.*

a Ge. iii. 19; Ps. xc. 3.

b "The meaning is, that even now, before the eyes of men, God's righteousness shall be seen in cutting off the wicked by a sudden and premature end, and helping and exalting the righteous." — *Perowne.*

c "Place terror over them." — *Jerome.*

V. Hugo says concerning the sea, "Beware of the gale that has been long delayed. It was Angot who said that 'the sea pays well old debts.'" Sinner, beware of the wrath long delayed; justice pays well old debts.

PSALM THE TENTH.

1—3. (1) **Why,** *etc.*, remonstrance for apparent neglect. **afar off,** seeming unmindful of the crimes and troubles in the Psalmist's own land. **why . . trouble,** "veiling thine eyes in times of distress."— *Polychr. Bib.* (2) **the wicked,** *etc.*, trans. "By reason of the haughtiness of the wicked, the afflicted burns," either with indignation, or with sorrow.[d] (3) **boasteth,** singeth praises, *i. e.* the complaint justified by the character of the wicked. **blesseth the covetous,** *R. V.*, "the covetous renounceth, yea contemneth the Lord."

Man's cry (*vs.* 1). — This cry implies the belief that the distance is — 1. Unnatural; 2. Undesirable. How can this felt distance be explained? There are only three sources to which we can look for light on the subject. I. Philosophy. 1. It may be that God is too great to allow man a close connection with Him; 2. That the case of the felt distance is God's method of agency. II. Speculative theology. 1. Because it is inconsistent with the immutability of the Divine character; 2. Because it is inconsistent with the moral excellence of God. III. Divine revelation. The Bible speaks of sin as the cause of the felt distance (Isa. lix. 2; Col. i. 21).— *Thomas.*

Persecutors. — That famous persecutor, Domitian, like others of the Roman emperors, assumed divine honors, and heated the furnace seven times hotter against Christians because they refused to worship his image. In like manner, when the popes of Rome became decorated with the blasphemous titles of *Masters of the World*, and *Universal Fathers*, they let loose their blood-hounds upon the faithful. Pride is the egg of persecution.— *C. H. Spurgeon.*

author,— unknown

For explanation Comp. Ps. ix.

Ps. x. and xxxiii. are the only anonymous Pss. in Bk. I.

d "Through the pride of the wicked the lowly is hotly persecuted."— *Revised Eng. Bible.*

"Pride is a vice which cleaveth so fast unto the hearts of men, that if we were to strip ourselves of all faults, one by one, we should undoubtedly find it the very last and hardest to put off." —*Richard Hooker.*

4—7. (4) **the pride,** *lit. height of his nostril:* arrogant bearing. **will not seek,** *etc. R. V.*, "saith, He will not require it. All his thoughts are there is no God."[a] (5) **far above,** comp. Ps. xviii. 22. **puffeth,** bloweth at contemptuously, as if they were mere bubbles.[b] (6) **never,** *Heb.* "unto generation and generation."[c] (7) **under his tongue,** the figure from *vss.* 7–10 is of a wild beast, and here cursing, deceit, fraud, mischief and vanity are the dainties the evil enjoy like choice prey[d] (*cf.* Job xx. 12).

Pride of heart (*vs.* 4).—Through pride the wicked are not saved. I. Proud of their own merit, they will not call upon God. II. Proud of their own strength, they will not apply to God for help. III. Proud of their own wisdom, they will not submit to God's teaching. IV. Proud of their own happiness, they will not seek God's favor.—*W. W. Whythe.*

Carnal security opens the door for all impiety to enter into the soul. Pompey, when he had in vain assaulted a city, and could not take it by force, devised this stratagem in way of agreement; he told them he would leave the siege and make peace with them, upon condition that they would let in a few weak, sick and wounded soldiers among them to be cured. They let in the soldiers, and when the city was secure, the soldiers let in Pompey's army. A carnal settled security will let in a whole army of lusts into the soul.—*T. Brooks.* A child instructed in a Sabbath school, on being asked by his teacher, if he could mention a place where God was *not*, made the following beautiful and unexpected reply, "Not in the thoughts of the wicked."—*Whitecross.*

8—11. (8) **lurking places,** ambush, places outside villages. **villages,** the Heb. word means *a covered place*, and the clause is better rendered, "*He sits in a well-covered ambush.*"[e] **poor,** here the sad and sorrowful. (9) **secretly,**[f] in secret places. **catch,** in order to rob. This word changes the fig. from the lion to the hunter and his net. (10) **croucheth,** stoops to spring.[g] **strong ones,** either his claws, or his teeth. *R. V.*, "He croucheth, he boweth down. And the helpless fall by his strong ones." (11) **hideth his face,** = "the keynote of the bad man's refrain."[h]

Religious cruelty.—In 1534, Francis I. ordered an inquisition to be made at Paris against the Protestants; some of whom were discovered by informers, others apprehended on suspicion, and put to the torture, and both sorts burned, after a very barbarous manner; for, being tied to a pulley, they were drawn up a great height, then let down into the fire, presently after snatched up again; and, after torturing them in this manner for some time, the executioner cut the rope, and they dropped into the flames, and were consumed. Those who were thought to be more learned than the rest, had their tongues cut out, and were then brought to the stake and burnt.

Lying in wait.—My companions asked me if I knew the danger I had escaped. "No," I replied; "What danger?" They then told me that, just after they started, they saw a wild Arab skulking after me, crouching to the ground, with a musket in his hand; and that, as soon as he had reached within what appeared to them musket-shot of me, he raised his gun; but, looking wildly around him, as a man will do who is about to perpetrate some desperate act, he caught sight of them and disappeared. Jeremiah knew something of the ways of these Arabs when he wrote (chap. iii. 2), "In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness;" and the simile is used in Psalm x. 9, 10, for the Arabs wait and watch for their prey with the greatest eagerness and perseverance.—*John Gadsby.*

12—15. An appeal for God to succor the oppressed and destroy the evil. (12) **humble,** trans. *poor* in *vs.* 9; the afflicted. (13) **contemn,** the same word is trans. abhorreth in *vs.* 3. (14) **hast seen,** comp. bad man's words, *vs.* 11. "God is not the passive spectator of human affairs wh. these men deem Him." **spite,** *lit.* the impatience or fretting under suffering. **requite,** *etc.*, to set it in Thy hand, *i. e.* to make it the matter of Thy care. **fatherless,** the type of all the desolate. (15) **Break,** *etc.*, shatter his strength.[i] **seek out,** in order to punish.[j]

Future retribution: doubts concerning it. I. By whom indulged: "the wicked." II. Where fostered: "in his heart." III. For what purpose: quieting of conscience, etc. IV. With what practical tendency: "contemn God." He who disbelieves hell distrusts heaven.—*Spurgeon.*

The power of a child's fidelity.—A gentleman, some time ago, sent his two youngest children, with their nurse, to take an airing on the seaside. On the

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a "The other interp. wh. makes the words 'He (*i. e.* God) will not require' the words of the evil-doer, accords better with the clause following, and with *vs.* 13."—*Perowne.*

b "The present life is ordained for those who believe not, and they laugh the faithful to scorn."—*Koran.*

c Job xxi. 8; Ps xvii. 14; xlix. 11.

d "So is the way of the wicked; when he wishes to deceive others, he swears copiously, that it may appear as if he swore with all conviction on his own part."—*Kimchi.*

e "The places in wh. the robbers lurked rather than the places against wh. they plotted, seem to be indicated. Reference may be to nomad encampments of predatory Bedouins."—*Perowne.*

f "He lurks in the covert as a lion in his lair."—*Kay.*

g "As a lion gathers himself into as small a compass as possible to make the greater spring."—*Fausset.*

h Ps. xciv. 7.

Father of all, we urge life's highest plea—
Thou lovest all.
Thy erring child may sometimes be
Lost to himself,
but never lost to Thee.

i Job xxxviii. 15; Ez. xxx. 21, 24.

j "Thou shalt search out and punish his wickedness, until thou shalt not find aught to punish"—*Spk. Com.*

"God governs the world by His wisdom and goodness as a tender father. It is not His greatest pleasure to show His sovereign

way one of them fell down on his knees, and said to his nurse, "O Belle, I came away, and forgot to say my prayers." A young woman who saw him was conscience-struck, and thought, "Here is a babe rebuking me: when did I pray in all my life?" This simple means was the instrument which the Father of spirits was pleased to use to awaken her from the sleep of sin. She remained with the nurse and children all the time they were bathing; when she returned home, she sent for a Christian friend, that she might converse with him, and died, after lingering eight months in a consumption, with a firm trust in the Saviour. — *R. T. S.*

power, but His immense goodness, to which He makes the other attributes subservient." — *Stephen Charnock.*

16—18. (16) **is King,** uttered in an exulting, triumphant tone. **perished,** comp. De. iv. 26.[a] (17) **prepare,** or establish, in the sense of strengthen and comfort; by imparting cheering convictions. (18) **oppress,** cause terror.[b]

The Eternal King (*vs.* 16). — A King, one Jesus. I. He reigns by Divine right. II. He reigns by the popular will. III. He reigns by the right of conquest. IV. He reigns on earth and in heaven, and will reign for ever and ever.

Rev. G. Whitefield. — When the Rev. G. Whitefield was preaching on one occasion at Plymouth, he lodged with Mr. Kinsman, a minister of the town. After breakfast, on Monday, he said to his friend, "Come, let us visit some of your poor people. It is not enough that we labor in the pulpit; we must endeavor to be useful out of it." On entering the dwellings of the afflicted poor, he administered to their temporal as well as spiritual wants. Mr. Kinsman, knowing the low state of his finances, was surprised at his liberality, and suggested that he thought he had been too bountiful. Mr. Whitefield, with some degree of smartness, replied: "It is not enough, young man, to pray, and put on a serious face; true religion, and undefiled, is this — to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to supply their wants. My stock, it is true, is nearly exhausted; but God, whom I serve, and whose saints we have assisted, will, I doubt not, soon give me a supply." His hopes were not disappointed. A stranger called on him in the evening, who addressed him thus: "With great pleasure I have heard you preach; you are on a journey, as well as myself, and traveling is expensive. Do me the honor to accept this," at the same time presenting him with five guineas.—*R. T. S.*

a De. viii. 20.

b "So that frail man, from the earth, may no more cause terror." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"It is with Fortune as with fantastical mistresses — she makes sport with those that are ready to die for her, and throws herself at the feet of others that despise her." — *J. Beaumont.*

"To be thrown upon one's own resources is to be cast in the very lap of fortune; for our faculties then undergo a development and display an energy of which they were previously unsusceptible." — *Franklin.*

PSALM THE ELEVENTH.

author, — prob. David

1—3. (1) **flee,** *etc.*, some prefer a plural form, "flee, ye birds," and refer to Dav. and his company.[c] (2) **bend,** *lit.* "are bending; nay, they have already aimed." **privily,** in secret. (3) **foundations,** of justice and right. The state, or society, is compared to a building. The foundations upon which it rests are the fundamental principles of law and order and justice. When these principles are being subverted, "what," asks the voice of despair, "can the righteous do?" — *Cam. Bib.*

Confidence. — Torstensohn, the great commander to whom Gustavus Adolphus transmitted the prosecution of the Thirty Years' War, was a man so shattered by disease that he had to be carried at the head of his forces in a litter. Yet no commander of his age was so resistless and terrible in his onset and so invariably victorious. Schiller has expressed his leading maxim in these words: he never counted his enemies. Let us not count our enemies, but trust our God, and we shall be more than conquerors. "Flee as sparrows to your mountain." — *Phillips.*

c "The advice here given is that of timid and desponding friends, who would persuade him that all is lost, and that the highest wisdom is to yield to circumstances, and to seek safety not in resistance, but in flight."—*Perowne.*

4—7. (4) **holy temple,** not that at Jerus., but the heavenly temple. As heaven is over the entire world so God's kingdom is over all; He sees all; the rest of the Ps. is suggested by this thought of heaven. **eyelids,** the eyelids are mentioned purposely. When we observe closely or meditate, we bring the eyelids near to one another. Thus men, righteous and unrighteous, lie open to the eyes of Jehovah which search everything through and through.— *Delitzsch.* **try,** test, assay.[d] (5) **soul hateth,** a strong expression for the antagonism of God's ways and nature to those of the wicked. (6) **snares,** some rend. *coals of fire,* raining snares, or cords is an extravagant expression. **horrible tempest,** burning wind; the simoon; a blast of horror. (7) **his countenance,** lifted on them with grace and acceptance.[e]

d Ps. vii. 9, xvii. 3; Job. xxiii. 10.

e Nu. vi. 25; Ps. xxxi. 16; lxvii. 1.

"But, trusting in God, the sparrow becomes an eagle, mounting above the storm, and delighting itself in the eternal sunshine of the Father's face."—*Watkinson.*

"It is interesting to observe how early and how strongly this thought took possession of Dav's. heart."—*Spk. Com.*

God-sent trials (*vs.* 5).—I. All events are under the control of Providence; consequently all the trials of our outward life are traceable at once to the great First Cause. II. The trials which come from God are sent to prove and strengthen our graces, and so at once to illustrate the power of Divine grace, to test the genuineness of our virtues, and add to their energy.—*Spurgeon.*

PSALM THE TWELFTH.

author unknown

A sincere soul's complaint in a hollow age.

1—4. (1) **Help,** save, O Jehovah! **ceaseth,** dieth out.[a] **faithful,** steadfast in piety.[b] **fail,** are dispersed. (2) **vanity,** or untruth. **double heart,** Heb. *a heart and a heart.* (3) **cut off,** by sudden calamity. **proud things,** *Heb.* great boastful things. (4) **our own,** *lit.* are with us, under our command.

Flattering lips.—The philosopher Bion being asked what animal he thought the most hurtful, replied, "That of wild creatures a tyrant, and of tame ones a flatterer." The flatterer is the most dangerous enemy we can have. Raleigh, himself a courtier, and therefore initiated into the whole art of flattery, who discovered in his own career and fate its dangerous and deceptive power, its deep artifice and deeper falsehood, says, "A flatterer is said to be a beast that biteth smiling. But it is hard to know them from friends—they are so obsequious and full of protestations; for as a wolf resembles a dog, so doth a flatterer a friend."—*Book of Symbols.*

5—8. (5) **oppression,** *lit.* for the laying waste of the afflicted. **now,** after what may seem to men a long silence. **set . . him,** render, "I will set (him) in the salvation for which he pants.[c] (6) The Psalmist's confidence restored. **words,** with special reference to the Lord's *promises, e. g. vs.* 5. **furnace of earth,** or furnace placed in the earth, so that it may be heated to any intensity. **seven times,** or thoroughly. (7) **them,** the poor and needy. **generation,** or depraved class. (8) **walk,** or prowl about.

The Divine revelation.—I. The grand characteristic of a Divine revelation:—Purity. II. The Scriptures which profess to be the words of the Lord have been tested, and their divinity established. 1. It has been tried by criticism. 2. It has been tried by science. 3. It has been tried by experience. (1) In relation to man's social necessities. (2.) In relation to man's moral and spiritual necessities. III. The consequent preciousness of the Sacred Scriptures.—*Watkinson.*

The Bible.—The Scripture is the sun: the church is the clock. The sun we know to be sure, and regularly constant in his motions; the clock, as it may fall out, may go too fast or too slow. As then, we should condemn him of folly that should profess to trust the clock rather than the sun, so we cannot but justly tax the credulity of those who would rather trust to the church than to the Scripture.—*Bishop Hall.*

[a] Is. lvii. 1; Mic. vii. 2.

[b] "The honest and true-hearted, *lit.* who are steadfast, unchanged by the evil influences around them: men that may be relied on."—*Perowne.*

Flattery is the sign of the tavern where duplicity is the host.

[c] "The word used here means *to pant with desire*, not *to puff contemptuously*."—*Jennings & Lowe.*

Faith and works are the two oars of a boat. Row with the right oar alone, and the boat describes a useless circle on the water. Row with the left oar alone, and it merely goes in the opposite direction. But use both oars with equal force, and it moves swiftly and evenly forward.

PSALM THE THIRTEENTH.

author,—prob. David

A Ps. of weariness and despair. Comp. perhaps during the persecutions by Saul.

1—6. (1) **How long,** here are really two questions. How long wilt Thou forget me? Forever?[d] **hide thy face,** comp. Job. xiii. 24. (2) **take counsel,** meditate plan after plan. **having sorrow,** or while sorrow is in my heart. **daily,** or in the day. (3) **lighten,** *etc.*,[e] the eyes that were dimmed with anxiety and sorrow. **sleep,** death, sleep an eternal sleep. (4) **Lest,** *etc.*, such boasting would affect the Divine honor and faithfulness. (5) **thy mercy,** not in my merit. (6) **sing,** in anticipation of God's gracious ways with him.[f]

Trust in God (*vs.* 5).—I. The nature of this important duty. 1. It is an enlightened confidence; 2. A universal confidence; 3. It is a holy confidence. II. The motives to its exercise. 1. The infinite wisdom of God; 2. His Almighty power; 3. His boundless goodness. Learn—(1) How miserable are they who have no trust in God; (2) How wise and happy the subjects of this trust.—*F. I. Durand.*

I will sing unto the Lord.—I never knew what it was for God to stand by me at all turns, and at every offer of Satan to afflict me, as I have found him since I came in hither; for look how fears have presented themselves, so have supports and encouragements; yea, when I have started, even as it were at nothing else but my shadow, yet God, as being very tender of me, hath not

[d] "It it natural to a perturbed and doubting heart thus to express itself, in a confused and almost contradictory manner."—*Perowne.*

[e] 1 Sa. xiv. 27, 29.

[f] "While Satan rages and wars about him, he meanwhile sings quietly his little psalm."—*Luther.*

suffered me to be molested, but would with one Scripture or another, strengthen me against all; insomuch that I have often said, were it lawful, I could pray for greater trouble, for the greater comfort's sake.— *John Bunyan.*

The best light for the eyes (*vs.* 3). — When the Princess Anne, daughter of Charles I., who died on the 8th of December, 1640, lay upon her death-bed, and nature was almost spent, she was desired by one of her attendants to pray. She said that she was not able to say her long prayer, meaning the Lord's Prayer, but she would say her short one, "Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, that I sleep not the sleep of death." The little creature had no sooner pronounced these words than she expired; she was not quite four years of age.

"The aggregate of our daily victories and defeats will be the measure of our whole life's success or failure."— *Anon.*

"None live so easily, so pleasantly, as those that live by faith." — *Matthew Henry.*

PSALM THE FOURTEENTH.

A Ps. of complaint over prevailing iniquity. The historical occasion of the composition is not known. It is almost identical with Ps. liii.

1—3. (1) **The fool,** a class of men, not a particular individual.[a] **heart,** used variously as the seat of the intellect, sensibilities, and will, and including all the operations of the mind. **corrupt,** Ge. vi. 11, 12. (2) **The Lord,** Jehovah. **looked down,** as before the flood. **understand,** their duty. **and . . God,** *R. V.*, "That did seek after God." (3) **all . . filthy,** *lit. rancid: see* Rom. iii. 10-12.

Sin. — I. The great source of sin — alienation from God. II. Its place of dominion — the heart. III. Its effect upon the intellect — makes man a fool. IV. Its manifestations in the life — acts of commission and omission. — *Spurgeon.*

Is there no God? —

"Is there no God? — The stars in myriads spread,
If he look up, the blasphemy deny;
While his own features, in the mirror read,
Reflect the image of Divinity.
Is there no God? — The stream that silver flows,
The air he breathes, the ground he treads, the trees,
The flowers, the grass, the sands, each wind that blows,
All speak of God; throughout, one voice agrees,
And, eloquent, His dread existence shows:
Blind to thyself, ah, see Him, fool, in these!"— *Giovanni Cotta.*

a "Heb. *nabal*, imbecile, a vapid, worn-out fool, a word never used of mere natural obtuseness, but of spiritual corruption."— *Spk. Com.*

4—7. (4) **eat up my people,** a fig. common in Heb.[b] **call not,** they are men who do not pray. (5) **There,** when God speaks to them in the terribleness of His judgments:[c] or they were in fear when they saw that God was for the righteous. (6) **shamed,** endeavored to baffle. It was, however, in vain, because, *etc.* (7) **bringeth . . captivity,** this is supposed to indicate th. the Ps. was written during the exile. The fig., however, is used in early Scrip., as in Job xlii. 10.[d]

Trust (*vs.* 6). — An aged Christian, who had long been an invalid, and was dependent on Christian charity for her support, on sending for a new physician, who had just come into the place, and united with the same church of which she was a member, said to him, "Doctor, I wish to put myself under your care, but I cannot do it unless you will trust my Father." "Well, madam," replied the physician, "I believe your Father is rich; I may safely trust Him."— *Whitecross.*

b Nu. xiv. 9; Pr. xxx. 14; La. iii. 16.

c "I judge the meaning of the prophet to be that when all is tranquil and prosperous, on a sudden God hurls His bolts at them."— *Calvin.*

d Ju. v. 12.

author, — David

A Ps. on the conditions of access to God. Comp. prob. on occasion of removing the ark to Zion. 2 Sa. vi. 12-19.

PSALM THE FIFTEENTH.

1—5. (1) **abide,** sojourn.[e] The Jews were sojourners with Jehovah, as oriental guests receive the protection of him in whose tent they sojourn. **tabernacle,** tent set up on Mt. Zion to receive the ark.[f] (2) **walketh,** *etc.*, as Ge. xvi. 1. The Heb. word *uprightly*, or *perfect*, is used to denote a consistent and thoroughly conscientious life.[g] **speaketh,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. xii. 2. (3) **backbiteth,** "allows no slander upon his tongue, representing the slanderous lie as a store of venom." **taketh up,** receiveth, but with the idea of further circulating the slander. (4) **On whose . . contemned,** should be rend. "Despised is he in his own eyes, and worthless," extreme humility.[h] **sweareth . . not,** believes in the sanctity of an oath. (5) **to usury,** extravagant interest. This was forbidden by Mosaic law.[i] **moved,** "The Psalmist's conclusion goes a step further than his opening question." — *Cam. Bib.*

e "There is a fine distinction of the terms: the believer is admitted as a settler, and then takes up his permanent abode in his Father's dwelling." — *Spk. Com.*

f 2 Sa. vi. 17.

g Job i. 1; Ps. ci. 2.

h Matt. v. 3: comp. Is. liii. 3.

i Ex. xxii. 25.

"The footprint of the savage traced in the sand is sufficient to attest the presence of man to the atheist who will not recognize God, whose hand is impressed upon the entire universe."—*Hugh Miller.*

"It is a description of a class of men who, for centuries, and in every rank of life, have been an honor and strength to their Church and country."—*Ker.*

There is three-fold death in the slanderer's tongue—it kills him who slanders, him who is slandered, and him who received the slander.

On tranquillity of mind (*vs.* 5). — We shall point out the line of conduct which, independently of any worldly position, shall tend to make us easy in mind. I. Imitate the character of the man who is described in this psalm. II. Join to that humble trust in the favor of God. III. Attend to the culture and improvement of your minds. IV. Be careful to provide proper employment for our time. V. Learn to govern your passions. VI. Never to expect too much from the world. VII. Mix retreat with the active business of the world, and cultivate habits of serious thought and recollection (Isa. xxxii. 17). — *H. Blair.*

The cure for slander. — It is a most difficult thing to rule the tongue, and refrain from evil-speaking. There is a story told of an illiterate old monk named Pambos. Being unable to read, he came to some one to be taught a psalm. Having learnt the single verse, "I said I would take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue," he went away, saying that was enough if it were practically acquired. When asked six months and again many years after, why he did not come to learn another verse, he answered that he had never been able truly to master this. What is the grand cure for all sins of the lip? — *Watkinson. Tale-bearers.* — Augustine, as Posidonius writeth, showing what hatred he had to tale-bearers and false reporters of others, had two verses written over his table; by translation these:

"He that doth love with bitter speech the absent to defame,
Must surely know that at this board no place is for the same."

PSALM THE SIXTEENTH.

A Ps. of joy in God's presence and love. Its date is unknown.

1—4. (1) **Preserve,** keep, protect. **my trust,** or "I have found refuge in Thee;" "do I hide myself."—*Delitzsch.* "I flee unto Thee,"—*Polych. Bib.* (2) **goodness . . thee,** *R. V.*, "I have no good beyond Thee."[a] (3) **But to** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "as for the saints . . . They are the excellent," *etc.* (4) **hasten after,** *R. V.*, "exchange the Lord for another god." **of blood,** of those whose hands are full of blood-shedding and wickedness.[b] The blood-guiltiness of the offerers is referred to.

The portrait of a God-trusting soul. — I. His experience under the influence of the present. 1. A profound consciousness of his dependence; 2. A delight in the fellowship of the good; 3. An abhorrence of the practices of the wicked; 4. An exultation in the Lord as his portion; 5. A high satisfaction with providential arrangements. II. His experiences in reference to the future. 1. Thankful; 2. Thoughtful; 3. Calm; 4. Happy; 5. Hopeful.—*Thomas.*

The excellent. — Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves, who making a stately feast appointed his nobles, at that time pagans, to sit in the hall below, and commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence-chamber, to sit with him at his table, to eat and drink of his kingly cheer, at which many wondering, he said, he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament to his table, and more worthy of his company than the greatest peers unconverted to the Christian faith; for when these might be thrust down to hell, those might be his comforts and fellow princes in heaven. Although you see the stars sometimes by their reflections in a puddle, in the bottom of a well, or in a ditch, yet the stars have their situation in heaven. So, although you see a godly man in a poor, miserable, low, despised condition, for the things of this world, yet he is fixed in heaven, in the region of heaven: "Who hath raised us up," saith the apostle, "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." — *Charles Bradbury.*

Trust in God. — During the negro rebellion Mr. Francis Gardiner was traveling from one town to another, in Jamaica, in a gig. Some advised him to take firearms to protect himself, and he assented. He went a little way with the firearms, but soon returned, saying, "I am not comfortable with them;" and once more went on his journey without them. Soon he fell among a party of negroes, who stopped his horse. One said, "He is a missionary;" but the others said, "No, he is a government spy." Then they said, "If he be a government spy he will have firearms; if a missionary, he will have no arms." He was searched, and no firearms being found upon him, the negroes, instead of murdering him, led him safely on his journey. We generally have too much policy and too little faith. — *Watkinson.*

[a] "Whatever makes me truly happy is not above Thee, *i. e.* in addition to Thee, or without Thee. Thou alone, without exception, art my chief good."—*Delitzsch.*

[b] "On Egyptian monuments the priest is represented as piercing the head of a kneeling figure, whose blood spurts out as a libation."—*Spk. Com.*

Alexander translates: "As to the saints who are in the land, they are the nobles in whom is all my delight." Thus the people of God are designated as peers, a divine aristocracy.

If other people do not enjoy your religion, you may be sure they will not honor your God.

5—7. This goodness of Jehovah amplified. (5) **The Lord,** Jehovah Himself. **portion,** my share in the division of the territory. To me Jehovah supplies the place of worldly blessings.[a] **my cup,** or part. **maintainest,** as well as givest. "Therefore no creature can rob me of it." (6) **lines,** measuring lines. marking out plots of land.[b] **goodly heritage,** beautiful in itself, and beautiful to me. (7) **reins,** here the workings of conscience. **reins,** in Heb. the seat of feelings and emotion.[c]

The Christian's portion.— Excellent was the answer of Basil the Great to the Emperor Valens, who first essayed him with large proffers of honor and riches to draw him from Christ: "Offer these things to children — I regard them not." Then after threatening, he replied: "He who has but a few books and a wretched garment can suffer nothing from confiscation: banishment is nothing to one to whom all places are alike, and torture cannot be inflicted where there is not a body to bear it. Put me to death, and you do me a favor, for you send me earlier to my rest."— *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.* *The great possession* (*vss.* 5, 6).— A gentleman one day took an acquaintance to the top of his house to show him the extent of his possessions. Waving his hand about, "There," said he, "that is my estate." Then pointing to a great distance on one side, "Do you see that farm?" "Yes." "Well, that is mine." Pointing again on the other side, "Do you see that house?" "Yes." "That also belongs to me." Then said his friend, "Do you see that little village out yonder?" "Yes." "Well, there lives a poor woman in that village who can say more than all this." "Ay! what can she say?" "Why, she can say, 'Christ is mine.'" He looked confounded and said no more.

8—11. The meaning of this goodness to the Psalmist's future. (8) **always,** taking Him as mine forever.[d] **right hand,** the place of the defender and protector. (9) **my glory,** *i. e.* my soul. **rest in hope,** *R. V.*, "dwell in safety." (10) **leave my soul,** *etc.*, *better*, "abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thy beloved one to see the pit." Jehovah will not surrender him to the unseen world, wh. is like some monster gaping for its prey.— *Cam. Bib.* (11) **path of life,** way to eternal life.

The Lord at our right hand (*vs.* 8).— Let us inquire what the effect of such an habitual recognition of God would be. I. It would make life to us a Divine thing. II. It would produce great care and watchfulness against sin. III. It would be our comfort and strength in trouble.— *P. W. Darnton.*

Joy in God's presence (*vs.* 11).— The presence of God in the most miserable places that can be were a greater happiness than the absence of God in the most glorious place that can be. David would not be afraid though he walked in the valley of the shadow of death, so that God were with him. Luther would rather be in hell, with God's presence, than in heaven, God being absent. If the presence of God takes away the dread of the shadow of the valley of death, and makes hell to be more desired than heaven, what will the presence of God make heaven to be! The three children in the fiery furnace, with God's presence, were happy. How happy, then, are the saints with God's presence in heaven! — *J. Burroughs.* *The fulness of God.* — I have found it an interesting thing to stand on the edge of a noble rolling river, and to think that although it has been flowing on for six thousand years, watering the fields, and slaking the thirst of a hundred generations, it shows no sign of waste or want. And when I have watched the rise of the sun as he shot above the crest of the mountain, or, in a sky draped with golden curtains, sprang up from his ocean-bed, I have wondered to think that he has melted the snows of so many winters, and renewed the verdure of so many springs, and planted the flowers of so many summers, and ripened the golden harvests of so many autumns, and yet shines on as brilliantly as ever, his eye not dim nor his natural force abated, nor his floods of lightness full for centuries of boundless profusion. Yet what are these but images of the fulness of God. Let that feed your hopes, and cheer your heart, and brighten your faith, and send you away both happy and rejoicing. O blessed God, in Thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there is pleasure forevermore! What thou hast gone before to prepare, may we at death be called upon to enjoy!

— *T. Guthrie.*

"I shine in the light of God,
His image stamps my brow;
Through the shadows of death my feet have trod,
And I reign in glory now.

a "Tacit allusion is made to the lot of the Levites. De. x. 9; xviii. 1."

b "The expression suggests that the Ps. was composed when Dav. first took up his abode in Jerusalem." — *Spk. Com.*

c Ps. iv. 4; xvii. 8.

"What can we wish for in our heritage that is not to be found in God? Would we have large possessions? He is immensity. Would we have a sure estate? He is immutability. Would we have a term of long continuance? He is eternity itself."— *Arrowsmith.*

d This passage is referred to Messiah by St. Peter. (Ac. ii. 25, 31.)

"There is a wild Indian story which tells of a girl falling in love with a handsome young warrior, who was, however, really, but an image of snow. Immediately after their marriage they took a journey, and as the sun appeared in the horizon the bridegroom melted away. Man, falling in love with earthly things, is wasting his affections upon an image of snow."— *Watkinson.*

"Covetousness is a vice that loves to dwell in an old and ruinous cottage, and yet in age can have no honest color for niggardness and insatiable desire. A young man might plead the uncertainty of his estate, and doubt of his future need; but an old man has his set period before him. Since this humor is so necessarily annexed to age, I will turn it in the right way and nourish it in myself. The older I grow the more covetous will I be, — but of the riches

not of the world I am leaving, but of the world I am entering upon. It is good to covet what I may have and cannot leave behind me."— *Bp. Hall.*

"No breaking heart is here,
No keen and thrilling pain,
No wasted cheek, where the burning tear
Hath rolled and left its stain.

'No sin, no grief, no pain —
Safe in my happy home;
My fears all fled, my doubts all slain,
My hour of triumph come.

"O friends of my mortal years!
The trusted and the true,
You're walking still through the vale of tears,
But I wait to welcome you!"

PSALM THE SEVENTEENTH.

A Ps. of supplication for protection from the evil world and evil men. Assigned to the time of persecution.

Ground of the Psalmist's confidence

1—5. (1) **the right,** or righteous cause.[a] **my cry,** a shrill, piercing cry, "expressive of emotional excitement, such as an oriental scruples not to use in prayer." — *Cheyne.* **feigned,** guileful, deceitful. (2) **let thine,** *etc.*, render as a declar. of God's justice, "Thine eyes do behold rightly." **are equal,** just, or upright, so Thou knowest the uprightness of Thy suppliant. (3) **in the night,** Ps. xvi. 7. **find nothing,**[b] of wh. to complain. **purposed,** he had made a strong resolve under much provocation. (4) **men,** the great mass of men. **word . . destroyer,** he had but one guide and rule of action, God's Word, not the *O. T.* law alone, but the spirit's revealing. (5) **Hold up,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "My steps have held fast to Thy paths, my feet have not slipped."[c]

Divine support. — Let me observe David, and learn to pray as he prayed. I. See his course. He speaks of his goings in God's paths. These are threefold. 1. The path of His commands; 2. His ordinances; 3. Of His dispensations. II. His concern respecting this course. It is the language of — 1. Conviction; 2. Of apprehension; 3. Of weakness; 4. Of confidence. — *W. Jay.*

Hold up my goings. — There is a Catholic story which relates that once a holy painter was painting on the lofty ceiling of a church the image of one of the apostles. Absorbed in his work the artist stepped back to contemplate it, and stepped beyond the edge of the scaffolding; in a moment the figure that he was painting started into life, caught the falling artist, and set him down safely by the altar. If we live in the church, and seek to glorify God, whenever we take a dangerous step, or stand in perilous plight, a Hand stronger than that of Peter, stronger than Gabriel's, shall preserve us, and keep us in safety. — *Watkinson.*

An artless argument (*vs.* 4).— Naimbanna, a black prince, arrived in England from the neighborhood of Sierra Leone, in 1791. The gentleman to whose care he was entrusted, took great pains to convince him that the Bible was the Word of God, and he received it as such, with great reverence and simplicity. Do we ask what it was that satisfied him on this subject? let us listen to his artless words. "When I found," says he, "all good men minding the Bible, and calling it the Word of God, and all bad men disregarding it, I then was sure that the Bible must be what good men call it, the Word of God."

6—9. "Prayer for protection on the ground of Jehovah's relation to him, enforced by a description of the virulence of his enemies." — *Cam. Bib.* (6) **I have called,** *I* is emphatic.[d] The Psalmist makes a personal testimony. (7) **Shew,** *etc.*, *lit. make wonderful;* display in a marked manner. **by thy right hand,** or against Thy right hand.[e] (8) **apple,** *Heb.* pupil; the "daughter of the eye."[f] **shadow,** Ru. iii. 12; Matt. xxiii. 37. (9) **oppress me,** *R. V.*, "that spoil me." **deadly,** the Heb. expresses the eagerness with wh. the enemies pursue their malicious intent.[g]

Bible poetry. — The most obvious feature of Bible poetry is its intense theism. The question of the existence of God is never raised, and an atheist — if there be one — is simply set down as a fool. The Hebrew poet lives and moves in the idea of a living God, as a self-revealing, personal, almighty, holy, omniscient, all-pervading, and merciful Being, and overflows with His adoration and praise. He sees and hears God in the works of creation, and in the events of history. Jehovah is to him the Maker and Preserver of all things. He shines

a "As God knoweth Dav. to have performed his duty rightfully and blamelessly, and therefore to be wrongfully vexed by his enemies, He would look upon him especially, bec. relying on His help he hopes well, and also, in the meanwhile, he prays heartily to Him." — *Calvin.*

b For the fig. comp. Job xxiii. 10; Zec. xiii. 9.

"All that is truly great and truly good lies far above us, as those white mountains of Switzerland lie above the traveler, their tops touching heaven." — *Watkinson.*

c "I owe my safety to the care which I take to tread in Thy footsteps." — *Wordsworth.*

I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.
— *A. H. Clough.*

d "The spirit of the closing portion of the Ps. shows that there was no unworthy boasting in the former portion." — *Perowne.*

e "Thou deliverer of those seeking protection from adversaries with Thy right hand." — *Hitzig.*

f De. xxxii. 10, 11.

g Ps. lxxiv. 19.

in the firmament, He rides on the thunderstorm, He clothes the lilies, He feeds the ravens and young lions, and the cattle on a thousand hills; He gives rain and fruitful seasons; He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of Moses, David and the prophets. He dwells with Israel, He is their ever-present help and shield, their comfort and joy. He is just and holy in His judgments, good, merciful, and true in all His dealings. He overrules even the wrath of man for His own glory and the good of His people. — *Schaff. Honored by God.* — Wronged by the world, buffeted by the messengers of Satan, overtaken by the storms of adversity, in closer fellowship with God we find balm to our soul. One day an aide-de-camp of the late Emperor Nicholas of Russia threw himself at the monarch's feet, and begged from his sovereign permission to fight a duel. The Emperor, who was a staunch opponent of duelling, immediately and emphatically refused. "But, sire, I am dishonored; I must fight," cried the disconsolate aide. The Czar frowned, and asked him what he meant. "I have been struck in the face," was the ready reply. "Well," said the Emperor, "for all that, thou shalt not fight; but come — come with me." And, taking him by the arm, the Emperor led him into the presence of his court which was assembled in an adjoining saloon. Then, in view of the flower of his realm, the Emperor kissed the cheek of the aide-de-camp which had received the blow. "Go now," he exclaimed, "and be at peace; thy affront has been effaced." Thus, when we are wronged by men or devils, we fly to our God, and the kiss of the King of the universe more than atones for the injury and dishonor that may have been done us. The King's love and favor fill the wounded soul with strength and gladness. — *Watkinson.*

10—12. (10) **fat,** or "have shut up their heart."[a] (11) **compassed,** illus. by 1 Sa. xxiii. 26. **in our steps,** *lit.* in each step we take. **bowing down,** or "to bring us down to the earth."[b] (12) **Like as,** *R. V.*, "He is like." Singling out the most prominent of his enemies. **lurking,** lying in wait.[c]

"*They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth.*" — Trapp wittily explains this metaphor by an allusion to a bull when about to run at his victim; he lowers his head, looks downward, and then concentrates all his force in the dash which he makes. It most probably denotes the malicious jealousy with which the enemy watches the steps of the righteous; as if they studied the ground on which they trod, and searched after some wrong foot-mark to accuse them for the past, or some stumbling-stone to cast in their future path to trip them in days to come. — *Spurgeon.*

Like a lion. —

— About them round
A lion now, he stalks with fiery glare;
Then, as a tiger, who by chance hath spied,
In some purlieu, two gentle fawns at play,
Straight crouches close, then rising, changes oft
His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
Whence rushing he might surest seize them both,
Grip'd in each paw. — *John Milton.*

13—15. (13) **disappoint,** *R. V.*, "confront."[d] **which is thy sword,** *R. V.*, "by thy sword." (14) **thy hand,** *R. V.*, "by thy hand," God's instrument for deliverance. **of the world,** Lu. xvi. 8. **hid treasure,** or stores of food. **leave the rest,** so a retributive Providence does not overtake them in this life.[e] (15) **behold thy face,** expression for hold close communion.[f] **in righteousness,** bec. to the righteous only is such communion granted. **satisfied . . likeness,** not "satisfied, awaking in resemblance to God," but "satisfied with beholding God's face," having communion with God. 1 John iii. 2.

Satisfaction. — What a magical word! What is it? Where is it to be found? I. The true satisfaction. 1. It is spiritual; 2. It is complete: 3. It is full; 4. It is everlasting. II. The source of true satisfaction. 1. The vision of God; 2. The likeness of God. — *Watkinson.*

The Psalmist'shope. — The contrast is not so much between here and hereafter, as betw. world (life) and God. We see here into the inmost nature of the O. T. belief. All the blessedness and glory of the future life which the N. T. unfolds is for the O. T. faith contained in Jehovah. Jehovah is its highest good: in the possession of Him it is raised above heaven and earth, life and death; to surrender itself blindly to Him, without any explicit knowl-

"Thou helper of those seeking protection from adversaries. Thy right hand." — *Aben Ezra; Delitzsch.*

"The ancient Egyptians had the term 'child of the eye' for darling." — *Spk. Com.*

"The hard usage of his enemies drove David into God's blessed bosom; as children misused abroad run home to their parents."—*Trapp.*

a "These men led a luxurious and selfish life, in consequence of which they had become proud and unfeeling." — *Perowne.*

b "The fig. refers to the lion, wh. fixes his eye on the prey, so that it falls paralyzed by terror."—*Spk. Com.*

c Fr. Ger. *lauern,* to lie hid.

"Virtue is an angel; but she is a blind one, and must ask of knowledge to show her the pathway that leads to her goal. Mere knowledge, on the other hand, like a Swiss mercenary, is ready to combat either in the ranks of sin or under the banner of righteousness; ready to forge cannon balls, or to print New Testaments; to navigate a corsair's vessel or a missionary ship."—*Horace Mann.*

Prayer concluded with more urgent pleading.

d "The foe springs like a lion upon Dav.; may Jahve, as Dav.'s defense, cross the path of the lion, and intercept him."—*Delitzsch.*

e Job. xxi. 17.

f Comp. Moses, Nu. xii. 8.

"Awake in the morning, a suitable expression in a night psalm."—*Ewald.*

"Waking from the present night of sorrow and suffering."—*Calvin.*

edge of a future life of blessedness, to be satisfied with Him, to rest in Him, to take refuge in Him in view of death, is characteristic of the O. T. faith.—*Delitzsch.*

Over yonder.—

"O blessed awak'ning for you and for me,
The King in His beauty our eyes then may see;
And like Christ, and with Christ, for aye we shall be!"—*F. G. B.*

To be over yonder,
In that land, that land of wonder,
Where the angel voices mingle, and the angel harpers ring;
To be free from care and sorrow
And the anxious, dread to-morrow,
To rest in light and sunshine, in the presence of the King.

O, to be over yonder!
My yearning heart grows fonder
Of looking to the east, to see the day-star bring
Some tidings of the waking,
The cloudless, pure day breaking;
My heart is yearning, yearning for the coming of the King.

O, when shall I be dwelling
Where the angel voices, swelling
In triumphant hallelujahs, make the vaulted heavens ring?
Where the pearly gates are gleaming,
And the morning star is beaming?
O, when shall I be yonder in the presence of the King?

O, I shall soon be yonder,
All lonely as I wander,
Yearning for the welcome summer, longing for the bird's fleet wing.
The midnight may be dreary,
And the heart be worn and weary,
But there's no more shadow yonder in the presence of the King.
—*Florence C. Armstrong.*

"Life is not victory, but battle . . . Be patient a little longer. By and by in our hushed and waiting chambers, each in his turn, we shall hear the sunset gun."—*Roswell Dwight Hitchcock.*

"There is no wealth but life. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy beings."—*Ruskin.*

PSALM THE EIGHTEENTH.

author,—prob. David

A Psalm sketching a life story, written at the close of David's chequered life. See 2 Sa. xxii.

1, 2. (1) **love,** *R. V.*, omits "will," the Heb. form employed indic. affection in its most tender aspects. "It is elsewhere used of God's love to man, not of man's love to God." (2) **rock,** *etc.*, these figs. are naturally suggested by the experiences of Dav's time of persecution. **my strength,** *R. V.*, "strong rock," poetical repetition of his leading fig. for God. **buckler,** the lighter form of shield. **horn,** *etc.*, symbol of strength; or of height and dignity.[a] **high tower,** in wh. I am beyond reach of danger.

Review of a troubled life.—In this psalm we have three things. I. A life greatly troubled. They were—1. Worthless: 2. Numerous; 3. Violent; 4. Indefatigable. II. A God equal to all emergencies. God appeared to him as—1. His all-sufficient protector; 2. His triumphant deliverer: this movement of God is in answer to prayer sublimely grand, completely effective. III. A soul alive with true sentiments. What are they? 1. Love; 2. Trust; 3. Praise.—*Thomas.*

"*The Lord is my high tower.*"—If a man do run to a tower, yet if that be a weak and an insufficient tower, without men and munition, and a ruinous shaken tower; or if a man do make choice of a tower, a strong, sufficient tower, yet if in his danger he betake not himself to that tower, but he sit still; or if he sit not still, yet he but only go and walk on easily towards it, he may well be met withal, and a danger may arrest him, surprise him, and cut him off before he get the tower over his head. But the man that will be safe, as he must choose a strong tower, so he must go to, nay, *run* into that tower. Running will not secure a man unless the tower be strong.—*Jeremiah Dyke.*

[a] De. xxxiii. 17; Lu. i. 69.

"Obs. the climax: the rock or cliff comes first as the place of refuge, then the fortress or fastness as a place carefully fortified, then the personal deliverer, without whose intervention escape would have been impossible."—*Spk. Com.*

3—6. (3) **will call,** more precisely, *I am continually calling.* His need of Divine help emph. **praised,** on account of former mercies, wh. renew the Psalmist's confidence. **so,** by thus securing the help of God. (4) **sorrows . . me,** *R. V.*, "cords." Death is figured as a hunter, who surrounds the field

"The Psalmist's dangers are here represented by 2 figures: a snare (Ps. xci. 3), and a whelming stream (Jonah ii. 5)."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

with a net. **floods,** or multitudes, *lit. streams of ungodliness.* **ungodly,** *lit. Belial:* "the personification of destructive wickedness."[b] (5) **sorrows,** cords or bands (*vs.* 4). **hell,** *Sheol,* the grave. **prevented,** *R. V.*, "came upon me." (6) **distress,** strait; when seemingly closed in. **temple,** *lit.* "palace,"[c] God's heavenly dwelling-place, wh. is both palace and temple.

The thundering legion (*vs.* 6). — It was in the year 176 of the Christian era that the Romans, in an expedition against the Gauls, under the command of the Emperor Aurelius, found themselves encircled on all sides by precipitous mountains, which were occupied by their barbarian enemies. A defeat seemed inevitable, and the Roman soldiers were in want of food and tormented with thirst. In this extremity the commander of the Prætorian guards informs the emperor that the Militine legion are Christians, and that they believe in the efficacy of prayer. "Let them pray, then," replies Aurelius. Full of faith, the legion prostrate themselves on the ground, and conjure the Christian's God to succor the Roman troops. They had scarcely risen from their knees when thick clouds darken the air, thunder peals among the deep fastnesses of the mountains, a tremendous shower of hail accompanied by lightning drives the barbarians from their entrenchments, while a soft and gracious rain falls over the Roman camp, and refreshes the worn-out soldiers. "So that," says the pagan historian, "at the same time, and in the same place, fire and water descended from the clouds, one burning the enemy as with oil, the other invigorating the Romans. In their despair the Quadi rushed down from their camp, and casting themselves frantically into the midst of the Romans, where the gentle rain descended, sought relief from their tortures; even the emperor pitied them. In memory of this miracle, continues Dion Cassius, the army proclaimed Marcus Aurelius emperor for the seventh time; and he decreed that ever after these Christian troops should be called "The Thundering Legion." When writing afterwards to the senate to inform them of this miraculous success, Marcus Aurelius commanded that all persecutions against the Christians should henceforth cease. — *Mrs. Elliot.*

b De. xiii. 13; Ju. xix. 22; 1 Sa. ii. 12.

c "This pass. is conclusive as to the use of the word previous to the erection of Solomon's temple, a point of great importance in its bearing upon other Psalms. (Ps. v. 7; xi. 4)." — *Spk. Com.*

"In the performance of its sacred office, faith fears no danger, spares no expense, looks in the volcano, dives into the ocean, perforates the earth, wings its flight into the skies, enriches the globe, explores sea and land, contemplates the distant, examines the minute, comprehends the great, ascends to the sublime; no place too remote for its grasp, no heavens too exalted for its reach." —*De Witt Clinton.*

7—11. Then, *etc.*, Dav. poetically describes his deliverance as if it had been a personal manifestation of Jehovah through the sublime agencies of nature.[d] **shook,** there was an earthquake. **hills,** *R. V.*, "mountains." (8) **smoke,** *etc.*,[e] poetic reference to the clouds hanging about the mountains. **fire,** or lightning. (9) **bowed,** bringing the heavy storm-clouds to bend low. **darkness,** *R. V.*, "Thick darkness" of the storm-cloud, God being above it to direct it. (10) **cherub,** which is here the storm and cloud figuratively conceived, not angelic beings.[f] **fly,** *R. V.*, "flew swiftly." (11) **secret place,** *R. V.*, "hiding place." **pavilion,** or tent, conceived as pitched amidst the clouds, which were His armies. **him . . were,** *R. V.*, "him; darkness of waters."

God's mighty deliverance

d Compare Ps. lxviii. 7, 8; lxxvii. 14–20; Ex. xix; Ju. v. 4; Am. ix. 5; Mi. i. 3; Ha. iii.

Earthquakes, their moral suggestions (*vs.* 7). — I. The perilous condition of our earthly existence. This shows — 1. The absurdity of setting our affections on material good; 2. The folly of postponing the preparation for eternity. II. The probability of a coming crisis in the history of our planet. III. The element of the severe in the Divine government. 1. The sinner deserves the severe; 2. And requires it. IV. The wisdom of seeking the Divine protection. 1. It can be obtained; 2. Has been; 3. Secures from all danger. — *Thomas.*

The historical references are partly to the deliverance at the Red Sea, and partly to the giving of the law at Sinai.

The earth shook. — In the night in which the Idumæans lay before Jerusalem, there arose a prodigious tempest and fierce winds, with most vehement rains, frequent lightnings, and terrible thunderings, and great roarings of the shaken earth; and it was manifest that the state of the universe was disordered at the slaughter of men; so that one might guess that there were signs of no small calamity. . . . At the day of Pentecost, when the priests, by night, went into the inner temple, according to their custom, to execute their office, they said they perceived, first of all, a shake and a noise, and after that a sudden voice, "Let us go hence." . . . A few days after the feast of unleavened bread, a strange and almost incredible sight was seen, which would, I suppose, be taken for a mere fable, were it not related by such as saw it, and did not the miseries which followed appear answerable to the signs; for, before the sun set, were seen on high, in the air, all over the country, chariots and armed regiments moving swiftly in the clouds, and encompassing the city. — *Flavius Josephus.*

e For *out of his nostrils,* some read *in his anger.* De. xxix. 20.

f "The fig. in this *vs.* recalls Ezekiel's description of the cherub as mounted on wheels, and thus rendered a kind of living throne-chariot. Ezek. i. x." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

12—15. (12) **brightness,** reflection of His glory, wh. breaks up the clouds in lightning, hail, *etc.* **hail,** the attendant of the severer storms.[a] (13) **thundered,** immediately upon the lightning. **Highest,**[b] most high, in 2 Sa. xxii. 14. **gave,** *R. V.*, "uttered." (14) **arrows,** poetical for *His lightnings.* **discomfited,** same word is used in Ex. xiv. 24. (15) **channels . . seen,** *R. V.*, "appeared," fig. taken from the dry path made thro' the Red Sea. **foundations,** or bottom of the sea. **discovered,** *R. V.*, "laid bare." **blast,** *etc.*, as of old at the Exodus, when "He rebuked the Red Sea."[c]

Nature ministering to supernatural purpose. — Not to material, but to moral and spiritual ends. Remember the higher ministry of nature. Nature is really but a mass of means which God uses for the salvation and sanctification of His creatures. Heathen fables tell us of nature being affected by great military and political events, but God's Word shows us nature ministering to great moral and religious ends, and this is well worthy of credence. The inferior universe serves the higher universe. We may well believe that the sun was darkened at man's redemption; that natural law and phenomena are controlled with a view to man's moral education; that ordinary laws and processes are distributed to secure man's immortal salvation. — *Watkinson.*

16—19. (16) **from above,** *R. V.*, "from on high," in a very direct way Div. deliverance came. **many waters,** figure for *calamities.*[d] (18) **prevented me,** *R. V.*, came upon me. (19) **large place,** comp. *distress,* or strait, of *vs.* 6. Open ground, free of the hunter's nets. **delighted in me,** comp. 2 Sa. xv. 26; Ps. xxii. 8.

Deliverance from deep waters (*vs.* 16). — We take these words as the expression of — I. David's experience. II. Of Christ's experience. III. Of every Christian's experience. — *Bonar.*

The Lord my stay. — When Henry the Eighth had spoken and written bitterly against Luther; said Luther, Tell the Henries, the bishops, the Turks, and the devil himself, do what they can, we are the children of the kingdom, worshiping of the true God, whom they, and such as they, spit upon and crucified. And of the same spirit were many martyrs. Basil affirms of the primitive saints, that they had so much courage and confidence in their sufferings, that many of the heathens, seeing their heroic zeal and constancy, turned Christians. — *Charles Bradbury.*

20—24. (20) **righteousness,** not absolute freedom fr. sin, but conscious integrity; sincerity of heart.[e] **cleanness . . hands,** from the particular sins with wh. he was charged. Saul assumed that he was plotting against his life. (21) **wickedly,** knowingly and willfully. Sins of weakness and error he would admit, not deliberate sins of intention. (22) **judgments,** or disclosures of his will. (23) **upright,** Ge. xvii. 1; *R. V.*, "perfect." **before him,** or in my relations with him. (24) **in his eyesight,** under His searching inspection.[f]

Thanksgiving in review of a troublous life (*vs.* 20.)—In these verses David regards God's interpositions on his behalf as — I. A vindication of his own character. 1. He regarded his character as very excellent; 2. As Divinely influential. II. As an illustration of God's manifestation. The general principle here is this, that as man is, so is God to him. This is true in two respects. 1. As a personal power; 2. As a mental conception. — *Thomas.*

Besetting sins. — I. We are all the subjects of special weaknesses and temptations. 1. Each *nation* has its besetting sin. Scientific observers tell us that different races of men have different kinds of weeds following in their wake, so that a careful observer can, in traveling, see at once, by merely noticing the prevailing weeds, whether Europeans or Asiatics, negroes or Indians, have dwelt at certain places. So each nation has its peculiar sin. 2. Each age has its besetting sin. In the history of morals we find how various vices have prevailed at various times. Now an age of cruelty; now of intemperance; now of superstition; now of scepticism. Has not our own age its besetting sin? Each individual has his besetting sin. John Hunter held that two general diseases cannot co-exist in the same individual. It is somewhat thus with man morally. Usually a man will be under the influence of some one particular passion or temptation. All sins are in us seminally, potentially, sympathetically, but in some one direction we are specially in danger. This may arise from our constitution. Or it may arise from our situation. — *Watkinson.*

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a "Hail is rare in Palestine, but often the more terrible and destructive when it does fall. Comp. Job xxxviii. 22; Jos x 11. — *Ewald.* Ex. ix. 23, 24.

b "Name of God as the inapproachable Judge, who governs all things."-*Delitzsch.*

c Ex. xiv. 21.

d Job. xxx. 14; Ps. cxxiv. 4, 5.

There are various seasons when it is particularly desirable that treasures of this kind should be in readiness. What can be more fitting, for instance, at family prayers, than to have one or more of the psalms repeated in addition to the passage read, or, occasionally, in place of the regular reading as a home Sabbath exercise?

Vss. 20-30. *God's character and government make such deliverance possible.*

e Comp. St. Paul, Ac. xxiii. 1.

"Some have seen in this language a too boastful spirit; but the words are, in truth, words of childlike, open-hearted simplicity, not of arrogant boastfulness."—*Perowne.*

f 1 Sa. xxvi. 23, 24; 1 Ki. xiv. 8; xv. 5.

"God respecteth not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how neat they are; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they are; nor the music of our prayers, how melodious they are—but the divinity of our prayers, how heart-sprung they are."—*Trapp.*

25—29. (25) In revealing himself to man God's disclosure of Himself is seen and interpreted by the individual's experience and character, both partake of the same nature. **merciful,** not merely kind, but *gracious*, "a friend of God and man."[a] **an upright,** *R. V.*, "the perfect." (26) **froward,** *R. V.*, "perverse.", not willing to comply with what is reasonable.[b] **show . . froward,**[c] a diff. Heb. word is here used. (27) **afflicted people,** who are thought of as humble. (28) **light my candle,**[d] Job xviii. 6, xxix. 3, *R. V.*, "lamp." (29) **I have run,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "I run upon." *See* 1 Sam. xxx. 8–17. **wall,** with poss. reference to the taking of Zion.[e]

The light of God. — When the Father of lights gives saving grace, then instantly the foulness of the inner man is seen. Then the illumined conscience testifies, "Behold, I am vile." When the revealing Spirit uplifts the heaven-lit torch, then new-born vision discerns the sin-sick ruin. But out of these materials God peoples heaven with a redeemed multitude, pure aud glorious as Himself. Yea, through grace, there is relief large as the need. There is a remedy, mighty to heal the deepest depths of the disease. The sinner is not forever buried in hopeless guilt. God, from all eternity foreseeing the Fall and its tremendous woe, devised a reparation wide as the breach. This gracious work is intrusted to His beloved Son. Sin destroyed creature-righteousness. Jesus brings in a righteousness Divine. — *Dean Law.*

30—34. (30), **tried,** tested, or refined. "In God's promise there is no mixture of alloy." **buckler,** shield. 2 Sa. xxii. 31. (31) **save the Lord,** *i. e.* Jehovah, "save" = beside. (32) **girdeth,** prepareth me for work and war.[f] **my way perfect,**[g] even as His, *vs.* 30. (33) **hinds' feet,** running swiftly, and standing firmly in dangerous places.[h] **high places,** mountain strongholds. (34) **bow . . arms,** *R. V.*, "So th. mine arms do bend a bow of brass."

Full conquest. — I. The fulness of His victory. 1. He has vanquished a host of enemies; 2. He has utterly vanquished them; 3. He has done it easily. II. The source of his victory. 1. The Psalmist trusted in God; 2. The Psalmist trusted in God alone; and 3. God gave him the victory. — *Watkinson.*

Tried. — Building a bridge across the Niagara River, below the Falls, was once thought to be impossible. The banks are steep and high, the distance across nearly an eighth of a mile, and the river here boils and foams so that no boat can stand the fury of the torrent a moment. Sending piles and building arches, as with other bridges, was quite out of the question. Yet a bridge was built — a wire suspension bridge, so called because it had to be hung by cables driven into huge blocks of granite on each bank. The cables were made of twisted wire. The bridge looked like a spider's web. But would the cables hold? That had to be tried. How frightened the spectators were when the engineer drove the first carriage across! A terrible plunge would that be into the raging waters, two hundred and fifty feet underneath. But the bridge stood the trial. Then gales and storms tried it, and it stood. "I am afraid to trust it, it looks so slender," said one of a party, shrinking back, when visiting the Falls a year afterward. "It has been tried," said the guide; "there is no danger," and we crossed safely. The Bible tells us of something that is tried. "The word of the Lord is tried." Its declarations and promises are tried, and its threatenings also are to be relied on. — *Anec. Illus. O. T. Texts.*

35—39. (35) **thy salvation,** this Dav. felt was his real shield. **thy gentleness,** or condescension, *lit.* humility,[i] the correlative quality in man. (36) **enlarged,** given me room for unobstructed movement. (37) **have pursued,** *R. V.*, "will pursue," and so the other words in this and the 38th *vs.* **turn again,** checked in the pursuit. (39) **subdued,** bowed down.

The gentleness of God (*vs.* 35). — I. What d we mean by gentleness? God's gentleness lies in His consenting to the use of indirection, as a way of gaining His adversaries. II. The end God has in view in condescending to these gracious methods, viz., to make us great. — *Bushnell.*

"O send me not away! for I would drink,
E'en I, the weakest, at the fount of life;
Chide not my steps, that venture near the brink,
Weary and fainting from the deadly strife.

[a] "God renders to men according to their deeds in a penal, not a vindictive sense." — *Fausset.*

[b] *A.S., framweard*, perverse.

[c] "The Lord so deals with the perverse as to bring them into inextricable perplexity, and to overthrow them." *Spk. Com.*

[d] "The lamp lighted in the house is the image at once of prosperity and continuance of life and happiness." — *Perowne.*

[e] 2 Sa. v. 6–9.

[f] "Girding was essential to free motion on account of the looseness of Oriental dresses; hence it is an expressive fig. for describing the gift of strength." — *Fausset.*

[g] Mat. v. 48.

[h] Ha. iii. 19.

"One of the few articles of Eastern dress which I wore in the East, was the *girdle*, which was of great use as a support to the body in the long and weary camel-rides through the desert. The support and *strengthening* I received in this way gave me a clearer idea than I had before of the meaning of the psalmist."— *John Anderson.*

[i] "A very remarkable word as applied to God, and just one of those links connecting the Divine with the human, wh., in the O. Test., so strikingly foreshadow an incarnation." — *Perowne.*

"We are such babes that we cannot stand alone; but when the Lord's right hand upholds us, we are like

brazen pillars which cannot be moved." — *Spurgeon.*

"Went I not forth undaunted and alone,
Strong in the majesty of human might?
Lo! I return, all wounded and forlorn,
My dream of glory lost in shades of night.

"Was I not guided for the battle-field?
Bore I not helm of pride and glittering sword!
Behold the fragments of my broken shield,
And lend to me Thy heavenly armor, Lord!"

"David yields me every day the most delightful hour. There is nothing Greek, nothing Roman, nothing in the west, nor in the land towards midnight, to equal David, whom the God of Israel chose to praise Him higher than the gods of the nations."—*Miller.*

40—42. (40) **necks,** *R. V.*, "made mine enemies turn their backs unto me." Ex. xxiii. 27. **destroy,** *R. V.*, "cut off." (41) **answered . . not,** bec. they fought against His anointed. And their cry was only one of terror. (42) **beat them small,** defeat them in a most complete and humbling way. **dirt,** *R. V.*, "mire."

The morality of prayer. — I. Prayer must be offered in a right cause. II. Prayer must be offered in a right spirit. 1. The spirit of penitence; 2. Of righteousness; 3. Of confidence. III. Prayer must be offered at a right time. — *Watkinson.*

I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets, or rather "of the streets." In the East, all household refuse and filth are cast forth into the streets, where all of it that is at all edible is soon cleared away by birds and dogs, and all that is not is speedily dried up by the sun. To cast forth any one, therefore, as the dirt of the streets, is a strong image of contempt and rejection. — *John Kitto.*

dominion extended at home and abroad

43—45. (43) **strivings,** this express. apparently refers to internal difficulties. **head of the heathen,** head of nations. (44) **submit,** by a forced subjection, proceeding from fear, not from free will. (45) **fade away,** or be wearied out. **be afraid,** *R. V.*, "come trembling." **close places,** caves or strongholds, in wh. a few may have found temporary shelter.

The story of a heathen. — The *Burman Missionary* tells this story of an old and blind man, who thirty years ago came into possession, through a countryman stopping over night at his house, of a book printed in Burmese, and containing only the Psalms and a part of the Prophets. Before he had finished the Psalms he cast away his idols and Buddhism, and believed in a living God — Creator, Preserver, and Judge of men, and from that time he has worshiped and prayed to the Eternal God. He committed many of the Psalm-prayers to memory, and daily offered them, especially the fifty-first. For twenty years he lived in this way before ever hearing of Christ and the Atonement. Coming then from the interior to Prome, he heard of a foreign preacher residing there, and from him received a copy of the New Testament. He says that if a man should go about and attend to his business twenty years by starlight, and the sun should then rise upon him in all its glory, he thinks it would produce about such a change in his eyes and vision as the Gospel of Matthew produced on his mind; that then the long night of praying to God and hoping for mercy without a mediator or an atonement came to an end, and for the past ten years his hope had been firmly fixed on Christ, and there it rests.

"There are prayers to God which are no better than blasphemy, which bring no comfortable reply, but rather provoke the Lord to greater wrath."— *Spurgeon.*

There are in the whole Book of Psalms 2,345 verses, making an average of fifteen and a fraction to each psalm. Any one treasuring up that amount weekly — 15 or 16 verses — would in the course of three years master the whole; or, at the rate of one verse daily, would in the course of six years and something over accomplish the same.

46—50. (46) **The Lord liveth,** comp. Ps. xlii. 2. **my rock,** *vs.* 2. (47) It is, *R. V.*, "Even." **avengeth,** awarded retributions to me.[a] (48) **yea, thou,** he turns fr. testifying of God to men, and makes his appeal and prayer directly to God. **violent man,** perhaps Saul. (49) **give thanks,**[b] or make solemn acknowledgment and confession to Thee. (50) **mercy,** *R. V.*, "loving kindness." **and to his seed,** 2 Sa. vii. 12–16, 26–29.

God as a rock (*vs.* 46). — Is the "shadow of a great rock" desirable "in a weary land," to bear the scorchings of the sun, and to revive the fainting traveler? What a covert and hiding-place then is God, against all storms raised either by the rage of man, or by the estuations of conscience? Is a rock of an awful aspect for its height? How great, then, is God, whose glory is above the heavens, whose faithfulness reaches unto the clouds. What evil can befall me, under which His everlasting arms cannot support me? A believer can only be wounded by his own fears, as the diamond is only cut by its own dust. O Saviour, if Peter cried out, "Save, Master, I perish," how much more shall I, who fall far short of his "little faith." — *W. Spurstowe.*

a "An important pass. as bearing upon Dav.'s character, and his repudiation of private acts of vengeance." — *Spk. Com.*

b Ro. xv.

"In the morning David's Psalms are sought for. In the night, when men are asleep, David wakes them up to

Life of David in his Psalms. — Take the eighteenth Psalm, which we know from the express testimony of the history, as well as from its inscription, to be David's, and which is on all hands admitted to be his. How thickly sown it is with metaphors, which in his mouth, have a peculiar force and beauty. Thrice he speaks of God as a rock. How suitable such epithets as coming from one who, when hunted by Saul, had so often taken refuge among the rocks and fastnesses, the almost inaccessible crags and cliffs of Palestine. As he had escaped the swiftness of foot, so he tells how God had made his feet like the fleet of the hinds of gazelles, which he had so often seen bounding from crag to crag before his eyes, and hath him "upon high places" beyond reach of the hunter's arrow. — *Perowne.*

PSALM THE NINETEENTH.

1—3. (1) **heavens,** the natural heavens: the firmament, and its contents. **declare,** or recount: it is as if they sung an unceasing song. **God,** *El,* the God of creation. **sheweth,** "proclaimeth." (2) **uttereth,** *welleth out,* as from a fountain. "Each day overflows with utterances full of meaning, wh. it transmits to its successor." **knowledge,** or inward apprehension. (3) **no speech,** their message is not fashioned into words.[a] **where,** *R. V.,* omits.

The two volumes (*vss.* 1–7). — The text puts the book of Scripture in contrast with the book of nature. I. Some things the heavens teach us. 1. They say, God is great; 2. Wise; 3. Good. For great lessons to make us happy we must go to the Bible. For — II. There are some things the heavens cannot teach us. They cannot — 1. Show us the way to happiness; 2. Or tell us the way to holiness; 3. Or the way to glory. Since of these two books the Bible is the best — (1) Study it most; (2) Study both the works and the word of God; (3) Study the works of God in the light of His word. — *J. Edmond.*

Spectacle of the heavens. — I had occasion, a few weeks since, to take the early train from Providence to Boston, and for this purpose rose at two o'clock in the morning. It was a mild, serene midsummer's night; the sky was without a cloud, the winds were whist. Jupiter, two hours high, was the herald of the day; the Pleiades, just above the horizon, shed their sweet influence in the east; Lyra sparkled near the zenith; Andromeda veiled her newly discovered glories from the naked eye in the south; the steady Pointers, far beneath the pole, looked up meekly from the depths of the north to their sovereign. Such was the glorious spectacle as I entered the train. As we proceeded, the timid approach of twilight became more perceptible; the intense blue of the sky began to soften, the smaller stars, like little children, went first to rest; the sister beams of Pleiades soon melted together; but the bright constellations of the west and the north remained unchanged. Steadily the wondrous transfiguration went on. Hands of angels hidden from mortal eyes shifted the scenery of the heavens; the glories of night dissolved into the glories of the dawn. Faint streaks of purple soon blushed along the sky, the whole celestial concave was filled with the inflowing tide of the morning light, which came down from above in one great ocean of radiance; till at length, as we reached the Blue Hills, a flash of purple fire blazed out from above the horizon, and turned the dewy tear-drops of flower and leaf into rubies and diamonds. In a few seconds the everlasting gates of the morning were thrown open, and the lord of day, arrayed in glories too severe for the gaze of man, began his course. I am filled with amazement when I am told that in this enlightened age, there are persons who can witness this daily manifestation of the power and wisdom of the Creator, and yet say in their hearts, "There is no God."— *Edward Everett.*

4—6. (4) **line,** Heb. means boundary like, marking extent of dominion: then a rule of conduct. Fig. a sound, a strain, Ro. x. 18. **In them,** *i. e.* the heavens. **tabernacle,** or pavilion[b] for a king. (5) **bridegroom,** symbol of youthful vigor and happiness. **chamber,** Heb. *chuppah.*[c] Joel ii. 16. **strong man,** comp. Lu. v. 31. **race,** *R. V.,* "his course," *i. e.* from east to west.[d] (6) **end,** the extreme E. of the horizon. **hid . . heat,** this even the blind may feel.

Natural theology. — I. The subject of the revelation. II. The characteristics of the revelation. 1. Its fulness. 2. Its constancy and perpetuity. 3. Its variety. 4. Its silence. 5. Its universality. III. The importance of this revelation. IV. The limitations of this revelation. — *Watkinson.*

sing; and gathering the servants of God into angelic bands, turns earth into heaven, and makes angels of men, chanting David's Psalms.' — *Chrysostom.*

author, — David

Psalm praising the God of nature and of revelation.

a "We prefer to render, 'It is not a declaration, neither are they words whose voice is inaudible (or incomprehensible).'" — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"The starry sky above me," said Kant, and the moral law in me, . . are two things which fil the soul with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence."

"This proclamation is continuous and unceasing. Each day, each night, hands on the message to its successor in an unbroken tradition. Day and night are mentioned separately, for each has a special message entrusted to it; the day tells of splendor, power, beneficence; the night tells of vastness, order, mystery, beauty, repose. They are 'like the two parts of a choir, chanting forth alternately the praises of God.'" — *Cam. Bib.*

b Ha. iii. 11.

c "Properly the canopy wh. is supported by four poles, and borne by four boys, at the consecration of the bridal pair, and then also the marriage itself."—*Delitzsch.*

d "A very common epithet of the

sun in Persian is *garonraw*, or the *hot*, or *swift-goer*." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

The Creator. —

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; Thyself how wondrous, then!
Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these heavens
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
— *John Milton.*

the excellence of God's law

7—9. (7) **law,** the word-revelation of God. **Lord,** *Jehovah,* no longer, *El,* as *vs.* 1. Jehovah is the name for the God of revelation and covenant. **perfect,** in sense of perfectly adapted to man's good. **converting,** *etc., lit. refreshing the spirit, R. V.,* "restoring." **testimony,** "The law, regarded as bearing witness to Jehovah's will and man's duty." **simple,** sincere, willing to obey.[a] (8) **statutes,** *R. V.,* "precepts" *i. e.* the law as setting forth man's obligations. **pure,** bright; it may be compared to the light in its illuminating influence.[b] (9) **fear,**[c] the law as teaching reverent fear of God.[d] **clean,** requiring and culturing moral purity, **judgments,** decisions, ordinances.

The law. — I. The attribute of the law. 1. It is the perfect transcript of the glory of God; 2. It is the perfect theory of the good of man. II. The effect of the law — 1. It brings back the soul to God; 2. The law strengthens and perfects it. — *Watkinson.*

God's law perfect (vs. 7). — An eminent lawyer, who had not read the Bible, and was doubtful about it being God's word, asked a Christian friend to tell him what books he should read to satisfy his mind. His friend said, "Read the Bible itself." The inquirer thought his question had been misunderstood. He wanted some books that would say something about the Bible. But his friend said, "No; I will not send you to other books. Read the Bible for yourself." The lawyer obtained a Bible. "Where shall I begin?" said he. "Oh, begin at the beginning, and read it through." The Christian called upon him now and then, and was delighted to find that he continued to read. One day the friend found the doubter walking up and down his room full of thought. He inquired what subject occupied his mind so completely. "I have been reading," said he, "the moral law in the Book of Exodus." "Well, what do you think of it?" "Why, I have been trying whether I can add anything to it, but I can't; and I have considered whether there is anything that can be taken from it, so as to make it better, and I cannot. It is perfect."

Enlightening the eyes. — The process of enlightening in many minds, says an observer, is shadowed forth by the experience of one whom I saw last week. He sat down to read the Bible an hour each evening with his wife. In a few evenings he stopped in the midst of his reading, and said, "Wife, if this book is true, we are wrong." He read on, and in a few days longer, said, "Wife, if this book is true, we are lost." Riveted to the book, and deeply anxious, he still read, and in a week more joyfully exclaimed, "Wife, if this book is true, we may be saved." A few weeks more reading, and taught by the Spirit of God through the exhortations and instructions of a city missionary, they both placed their faith in Christ, and are now rejoicing in hope. — *Christian Treas.*

10, 11. (10) **than gold,** the object of search, and the most desirable thing in the Psalmist's days. Frequent reference is made to it.[e] **honeycomb,** 1 Sa. xiv. 27, Heb. *the dropping of honeycombs.* (11) **warned,** and so guarded from evils.[f]

Reward. — Though we should not serve God for a reward, yet we shall have a reward for our service. The time is coming when ungodliness shall be as much prosecuted by justice, as in times past godliness had been persecuted by injustice. Though our reward be not for our good works yet we shall have our good works rewarded, and have a good reward for our works. Though the best of men (they being at the best but unprofitable servants) deserve nothing at the hands of God, yet they may deserve much at the hands of men; and if they have not the recompense they deserve, yet it is a kind of recompense to have deserved. As he said, and nobly, "I had rather it should be said, Why doth not Cato's image stand here? than that it should be said, Why doth it stand here?"—*Ralph Venning.*—*Honey and the honeycomb (vs. 10).*— We speak of the sweetness of honey without making any such distinctions of quality as are here implied. But whoever has eaten honey newly taken out of a honey-

a 2 Tim. iii. 15; Matt. xi. 25; 1 Cor. i. 27.

b Ac. xxvi. 18; Eph i. 18.

c "The revealed way in which God is to be feared." —*Delitzsch.*

d "I have delighted in the brightness of Thy temple. Thy creatures have been my books; but Thy Scriptures much more. I have sought Thee in the courts, fields, and gardens; I have found Thee in Thy temples."—*Lord Bacon.*

"The same Almighty Hand which had given the sun his light-giving, life-sustaining power in the physical world, had provided life and light also for the spiritual world." — *Kay.*

e Ps cxix. 72, 127; Pr. viii. 19.

f "To be forewarned is to be forearmed."

"A miner's safety-lamp was brought out some time ago, which, besides serving the purpose of an ordinary safety-lamp, sounds a note of warning to the workmen the moment the air around becomes so charged with fire-damp as to be dangerous or explo-

comb, or chewed the fresh honeycomb before the cups or cells have been opened, is sensible of a peculiar delicacy of flavor, which will be sought for in vain after the honey has for any length of time been expressed or clarified. The Moors of Western Barbary esteem honey a wholesome breakfast, and the most delicious that which is in the comb.

12—14. (12) **understand,** *R. V.*, "discern." **errors,** sins of inadvertency.[a] **secret,** *etc.*, those hidden even from our own apprehension: "sins which even those of the most tender conscience may be unconscious of." (13) **presumptuous,** "sins done with a high hand," as Nu. xv. 27–31. **upright,** *R. V.*, "perfect." **innocent,** *R. V.*, "clear." **great,** fully developed, violently wilful. (14) Liturgical conclusion. **strength,** rock. **redeemer,**[b] Ge. xlviii. 16.

Secret sins (*vs.* 12).—I. Why are secret sins so dangerous? 1. Change of place and circumstances does not aid you to break away from them; 2. They produce a continual warfare between the conscience and the desires of the heart; 3. They return often; 4. They counteract and destroy the means of grace; 5. They give the tempter great power over you.—*Todd.*—*Acceptable.*—All wish to please. Some please themselves. Some please men. Some seek to please God. Such was David. I. The prayer shows his humility. II. The prayer shows his affection. III. The prayer shows a consciousness of duty. IV. The prayer shows a regard to self-interest.—*William Jay.*

The responsibility of thought.—He holds all responsible for their thoughts. The question is not how do you act, how do you treat Christ, but what think ye of Christ? The seed is held responsible for the harvest, the child for the man, the thought for the act, the character. Christ declared that he who lusted and hated was an adulterer, a murderer. A thought to the mind of God is a thing. The first requirement of education is that the man shall regulate his thoughts. Says the Apostle: "Whatsoever things are true" (Phil. iv. 8). The thought is of first importance. Every harmony that moves the hearts of men first swayed the soul of some one as an unexpressed thought. So it is of sculpture and of painting. The thought went before the creation of the universe. The philosopher strives to find out the things which do not appear from those which do appear.—*S. H. Tyng.*—*The hidden treasure.*—There died in the city of Lyons a poor widow, who had been so fortunate as to become possessed of great treasure in her old age. One day, as she was sitting alone in her comfortless, half-empty room, it struck her that there was a singular outline on the beams of the wall The walls had been whitewashed; but she thought it looked as if there had been a square opening in one of them, which had been carefully closed with a kind of door. She examined it more closely; she tapped with her finger, and the boards returned a hollow sound. With beating heart she tried to remove the square door, and soon succeeded, without much difficulty: but, alas! instead of the gold and silver she hoped to see, she beheld a damp, dirty, moldy old book! In her disappointment she was ready to fix in the boards again, and leave the book to mould and crumble away; but a secret impulse induced her to take it out and see if there were any bank notes or valuable papers in it; but no, it is nothing but a book, a moldy book! She wiped it clean, and set herself to read. Her eyes fell upon the words, "Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" And the words that she read appeared to her so sweet and precious, that she read on and on during the whole day, and far into the night, almost forgetting to eat or sleep. The next morning she sat down again to the damp old book, the words of which made an ever-deepening impression on her soul. She began to see that she had indeed found a treasure, and an invaluable one Her little chamber no longer looked so desolate; her food, which had so often seemed to her as the bread of tears, now appeared to her more like bread from heaven; and her solitude was relieved by the presence of the great King, from whose book of gracious words, streams of blessedness flowed. She had the book cleaned and bound, and it was to her as meat and and drink, by day and by night, until she was permitted to close her eyes and enter into the joy of her Lord. She related this history, in the latter days of her pilgrimage, to a beloved pastor in Lyons, in whose hands the blessed book is now. It is Amelotte's edition of the New Testament, of the time of the Huguenot persecution.

sive. Thus the Word, which is a lamp unto our feet, gives a timely note of warning lest we fall into temptation and sin."—*Watkinson.*

a Plainly this Ps. was written before Dav. fell into wilful transgressions.

b Job xix. 25

Coleridge says that the fairest flower he ever saw climbing round a poor man's window was not so beautiful in his eyes as the Bible which was lying within.

"The law of the Lord is so holy that forgiveness must be prayed for, even for hidden sins. (*Note*—This was a principal text of the Reformers against the auricular confession of the Roman Catholics)."—*T. T. Barth.*

"What strangers we are to ourselves. In every man's nature there is an interior unexplored as that of Africa, and over that region what wild beasts may roam."—*Alex. Smith.*

A German prince was once visiting the arsenal of Toulon, and was told that in compliment to his rank he might set free one of the galley-slaves. Anxious to use the privilege well, he spoke to many of them, and asked the cause of their punishment. All declared it unjust, till he came to one who confessed his sin and deplored it, saying, "I acknowledge I deserve to be broken on the wheel." The prince exclaimed, "This is the man I wish to be released."

"The Emperor Adrian, meeting a man who had insulted him before he came to the government, said to him, 'Approach, you have nothing to fear; I am an emperor.'"

PSALM THE TWENTIETH.

author, — unknown

a prayer before battle

"Psalm xix. is followed by Ps. xx., because the commencement of the latter is the echo, as it were, of the petition with which the former concludes; and Ps. xx. is followed by Ps. xxi., because they both refer, as prayer and thanks, to the same occurrence." —*Delitzsch.*

1—5. (1) **hear thee,** *R. V.*, "answer," gracious hearing involves suitable answer. **name of,** put for the manifested perfections, as power, wisdom, *etc.*, **defend thee,**[a] *R. V.*, "set thee up on high." (2) **sanctuary,** term suitable to the reign of Dav. before the temple was built. **Zion,** where the sanctuary was. (3) **thy offerings,** special sacrifices were connected with military expeditions. **accept it,** *lit.* "regard as fat," so befitting the occasion. (4) **grant . . heart,** *R. V.*, "grant thee thy heart's desire." (5) **rejoice,** *R. V.*, "triumph," shout as in hours of victory. **set up,** or wave our banners, in the forward march.

God's defense. — On March 9, 1839, the sides of a coal pit, called "The High Pressure," near Musselburgh, Midlothian, fell in, and the shaft was filled up with earth, imprisoning thirteen people. After trying in vain every means of exit by abandoned shafts, they retired to a narrow space which had been hollowed out of the coal seam, 18 ft. by 24 ft., and 3½ ft. in height. Here they sat down, and prepared for death. They held a prayer-meeting, which they began by singing together the first four verses of this psalm. They were all calmed and strengthened, and conversed on the Scriptures, the state of their souls, and their hopes for another world, now and then pathetically referring to their loved ones at home. After long suspense, they were delivered almost by miracle, and the last verse of their song seemed prophetic:

"In thy salvation we will joy;
In our God's name we will
Display our banners; and the Lord
Thy prayers all fulfil." — *Ker.*

Bearer of banners. — In the early part of the late war, during one of the severest battles, as our forces were pressing forward in face of the enemy, the standard-bearer, being a mark for the rebel sharpshooter, fell. The soldier next to him caught the falling banner, while the ranks closing over him pressed onward. Soon he fell. Again, another comrade caught the falling banner and pressed onward. As I read the incident I raised my eyes to heaven and almost despairingly cried, "Who shall carry our nation's banner?" A few weeks ago, as I looked over our *Zion* in ——, so thinned by death and desertion, I felt to make the same cry, "Who shall carry our banner?" But He who loved and saved our nation hath loved and saved us, and just sent a reinforcement from our Bible classes and Sunday school of new recruits, bold and brave, who, I humbly trust, when we fall will catch the falling banner and press forward, copying the fidelity of our noble heroes, to sure and certain victory, which may God grant, for His Name's sake. Amen. — *Christian Advo.*

a Ps. ix. 9; xviii. 3.

"Really good wishes are good things, and should be expressed in words and deeds. The whole Psalm thus teaches Christian sympathy is a great branch of Christian duty. There may be a great deal of obliging kindness in that which costs us little."—*Wm. S. Plumer.*

The prayer accepted

6—9. (6) **know I,** either the king now speaks, in response to his people, or the high priest speaks on behalf of the people. **anointed,** so Dav. is often spoken of. **hear,** see *vs.* 1. (7) **chariots,** *etc.*, regarded as formidable enemies.[b] **remember,** *R. V.*, "make mention of." (8) **They are,** going forth in faith they fully anticipate the triumph over their foes.[c] **brought down,** *R. V.*, "bowed down." (9) **Save,** render, "Save the king, O Lord; hear us when we call."

Chariots and horses (vs. 7). — We have here — I. The variety and vanity of of all earthly sources of confidence. They point out to us — 1. The tendency of man to trust in the creature rather than the Creator; 2. The vanity of the creature is demonstrated by its inconstancy; 3. By its limited power and its brief duration. II. The foundation of Christian peace and courage. God's people have reason to trust Him — 1. From the history of the past; 2. From their own experience; 3. From the covenant of grace.

The Psalms. — The Jewish Psalms, in which is expressed the very spirit of the national life, have furnished the bridal hymns, the battle songs, the pilgrim marches, the penitential prayers, and the public praises of every nation in Christendom since Christendom was born. These psalms have rolled through the din of every great European battle field, they have pealed through the scream of the storm in every ocean highway of the earth. Drake's sailors sang them when they clove the virgin waves of the Pacific, Frobisher's when they dashed against the barriers of the Arctic ice and night. They floated over

b "The horse is only once mentioned in connection with agriculture, and the the foreign usage of war-horses is discountenanced in many passages. Consequently war-chariots were little used by the Hebrews, and were regarded by them as peculiarly formidable Jos. xvii. 16; Ju. i. 19; iv. 3."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

c "Great certainly is the faith wh. hath such courage by remembering the name of the Lord. Soldiers

the waters on that day of glad days when England held her Protestant freedom against Pope and Spaniard, and won the naval supremacy of the world. They crossed the ocean with the *May Flower* pilgrims; they were sung round Cromwell's camp fires, and his Ironsides charged to their music; while they have filled the peaceful homes of our land and of Christendom with the voice of supplication and the breath of praise. In palace halls, by happy hearths, in squalid rooms, in pauper wards, in prison cells, in crowded sanctuaries, in lonely wildernesses, everywhere these Jews have uttered our moan of contrition and our song of triumph, our tearful complaints and our wrestling, conquering prayer. —*J. Baldwin Brown.* —*The siege raised.*—When Louis XIII. of France had invested with his army a city of the Huguenots, the besieged assembled one evening on the city wall and sang, with great sweetness and solemnity, one of their favorite psalms. The king was so impressed with the whole scene, and with the spirit of the singers, that he turned to Mazarin, his favorite general, who was by his side, and quietly observed, "We can do nothing with this people." The siege was raised; and the persecuted Huguenots triumphed in their Lord. God ought to be remembered in our triumph as well as in our need. We are sometimes so much elated by the triumph as to forget the help by which it has come.—*Watkinson.*

in our day are wont, when they go into battle, to recall to mind the brave exploits of their fathers, or former victories, and the like, wherewith to warm and stir their hearts."—*Luther.*

PSALM THE TWENTY-FIRST.

author, — prob. David

Psalm for king returning triumphant.

1—6. (2) **heart's desire,** comp. Ps. xx. 4. (3) **preventest,** goest before him so that he must regard Thy ways as altogether of grace. **crown,** *see* 2 Sa. xii. 30.[a] **pure,** *R. V.*, "fine." (4) **life,** a special blessing under the old dispensation. **ever and ever,**[b] fig for deliv. fr. repeated dangers. (5) **glory,** the honor that has come on him. **hast,** *R. V.*, "dost." (6) *R. V.*, "For thou makest him most blessed forever. Thou makest him glad with joy in thy presence."

God going before us (*vs.* 3).—The word prevent now means to hinder. It used to mean, to go before. This the meaning here. I. God prevents us with the blessings of His goodness when we come into the world. II. When we become personal transgressors. III. When we enter upon the duties and cares of mature life. IV. When in the general course of life we enter upon new paths. V. In the dark valley of the shadow of death. VI. By giving us many mercies without our asking for them. VII. By storing heaven with every provision for our blessedness.—*S. Martin.*

Generosity of God.—It was the saying of a certain generous Spanish captain. "There is no way of enjoying one's property like giving it away." It is a joy, a luxury to give. The generosity of God knows no stint. When a certain English monarch once threw open his park and gardens to the public, the royal gardener, finding it troublesome, complained to his Majesty that the visitors plucked the flowers. "What," said the kind-hearted king, "are my people fond of flowers? Then plant some more!" So our heavenly King, with lavish hand, scatters on our daily pathway the flowers of blessing, and, as fast as we can gather them, spite of the grudging, churlish world, more are supplied. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The greater our need, and the more urgent our cry for help, the greater the rapture of our Divine benefactor in supplying that need. "The Lord rejoiced over you to do you good" (Deut. xxviii. 63).—*Watkinson.*

a Comp. Ps. viii. 5; Re. vi. 2.

b Some com. think this express. refers to the endless life of Messiah. But comp. familiar expression, "Let the king live forever." 1 Ki. i. 31.

"No longer forward or behind
I look in hope or fear
But, grateful, take the good I find,—
The best of now and here."
—*Whittier.*

7—10. (7) **For . . moved,** "the mediate cause is the king's faith; the efficient. God's mercy." (8) **thine hand,** these words appear to be addressed *to the king*. *Hand*, is sign of power, *right hand* of the most vigorous power. (9) **fiery oven,** illus. 2 Sa. xii. 31. (10) **fruit,** or children. Ancient conquests were usually attended with what we now regard as exceeding cruelties.

Sin is often its own detective.—An unguarded word, a suspicious sign, an unconscious oversight, will unmask the most carefully disguised plans, and lead to exposure and misery. Recently, the house of the Caliph of the Ben Oreazen in Algeria was entered by a band of robbers, and a box containing 25,000 francs stolen. In their haste to escape, the thieves left behind them an Arab cake bearing a particular mark, which one of the bakers of the town recognized as the sign used by Ben Xerafas, it being the custom for each family in sending their bread to the oven to mark it, so to know it from others. The police acted on the information, and descending on a certain hut, caught

"When, on a certain festive occasion, Pestalozzi, the German philanthropist, was presented with a wreath, he put it gently away, saying, 'Crowns are not for me, but for the innocent.' The best of men have ever had the feeling that if the world knew them better it would praise them less."—*Watkinson.*

"How sweet is his smile in whose countenance heaven lieth! Ps. xxi. 6."—*Fleming.*

" Our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand." — *Thomas Carlyle.*

the robbers asleep with a portion of the plunder still in their possession. A simple Arab cake was the insignificant agent of discovery and exposure. If the sinner does not betray himself, the hand of God, which has power to tear away every covering will sooner or later find him out. — *Watkinson.*

11—13. (11) **intended,** plotted. (12) **back,** *lit. the shoulder,* a common expression for putting to flight.[a] (13) **thou . . Lord,** a final ascription of all the glory is made to God.

A devout doxology (*vs.* 13). — I. God exalted. II. God alone exalted. III. God exalted by His own strength. IV. His people singing His praise. — *Spurgeon.*

Mischief. — The brain of the evil-doer is continually racked, either in devising new plans of mischief, or in counteracting the plans of others that threaten to interfere with his own. It is hard work to be wicked; it involves anxious thought, incessant activity, and sleepless vigilance. The fair goddess who lured to the first transgession and threw around it an irresistible charm, is now transformed to a demon, and tyrannizes over its victim, forcing him to do as a necessity what he began to do as a pleasure. All wrong-doing begins in the intention: there the most malignant venom is secreted. — *Watkinson.*

a "The shooting against their faces would cause them to turn their backs in flight." — *Fausset.*

"Prayer is the key of the day and the lock of the night. And we should every day begin and end with prayer. This will make our labor prosperous and our rest sweet."

PSALM THE TWENTY-SECOND.

author, — unknown

A Psalm of Messiah's sufferings.

Aijeleth Shahar, hind of the morning; prob. name of a tune.

1, 2. (1) **why,** not the word of impatience or despair, nor of sinful questioning, but the natural expression of deep and surprising suffering.[b] **roaring,**[c] he compares himself to a beast in pain. The cry forced forth from extremest suffering. (2) **not silent,** *lit.* not silence to me. Je. xiv. 17.

A sketch of suffering sainthood (*vs.* 1). — Regarding this Psa. in this light it falls into two general sections. I. The prayer of the righteous under great suffering. 1. The sufferings are spiritual, social; 2. The supplications are intensely earnest, ultimately successful. II. The relief of the righteous from great suffering. 1. The instrumental cause of the relief — Prayer: 2. The blessed results of the relief — the celebration of Divine goodness, the conversion of the world to the true God, the celebration of His religion to the end of time. — *D. Thomas.*

A plaintive psalm. — " Psalm xxii. is a plaintive psalm, whose deep complaints occasioned by the most shameful humiliation and the most fearful peril, stand in striking contrast with the calm and cheerful mood of Ps. xxi. It begins with a disconsolate shriek of anguish, advances to a cry for help that is full of trust, and ends in vows of thanksgiving and in an intuition of the world-embracing consequences which result from the deliverance of the suffering one. In no psalm does such a measure of the most excruciating inward and outward sufferings press upon the mourner, notwithstanding his most perfect innocence. In this respect Ps. lxix. is its counterpart; but our psalm differs from it in this, that there is not a word of imprecation mingling with its plaints." — *Delitzsch.* — *Deliverance.* —"The subject of this psalm is the deliverance of a righteous sufferer from his enemies, and the effect of this deliverance on others. It is so framed as to be applied without violence to any case belonging to the class described, yet so that it was fully verified only in Christ, the Head and Representative of the class in question. The immediate speaker in the psalm is an ideal person, the righteous servant of Jehovah, but his words may, to a certain extent, be appropriated by any suffering believer and by the whole suffering church, as they have been in all ages." — *Alexander.*

b Ps. xiii. 5, 11; Matt. xxvii. 46.

"It is the question of faith as well as of an anguish that cannot be told. For he who asks 'why,' nevertheless calls God 'my God,' and repeats the appropriating word again and again with the very emphasis of faith."—*Perowne.*

c " My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? *Such are* the words of my roaring."— *Hupfeld.*

"A genuine trust is always succeeded by a signal deliverance. Man is often disappointed and confounded when trusting to human policy and power; but never when trusting in God."

3—5. (3) **holy,** therefore cannot have changed; must be the same in the darkness as heretofore in the light. **inhabitest,** art throned on.[d] " God is regarded as enthroned on the praises addressed towards the Shechinah." **praises,** songs offered to God on account of His attributes and deeds. (4) **trusted,** in the midst of dark and trying scenes. (5) **cried,** the term implies that the Fathers, like the Psalmist, had their times of doubting and distress. **confounded,** *R. V.*, " ashamed."

Lessons. — 1. The lowest level of suffering is reached when the soul is consciously forsaken of God; 2. Prayer is the most suitable exercise of the soul in the most trying moments: 3. When the soul can do nothing else it can trust in God. — *Watkinson.*

d "Sitting on the praises of Israel as on a throne, as Thou art enthroned upon the cherubim." — *Wordsworth.*

"They that have conduit-water come into their houses, if no water come they do not conclude the

They cried unto Thee and were delivered.— As if he had said, "How is it that I am now left without succor in my overwhelming griefs, while all others have been helped?" We may remind the Lord of His former loving kindnesses to His people, and beseech Him to be still the same. This is true wrestling; let us learn the art. Observe, that ancient saints *cried* and *trusted*, and that in trouble we must do the same, and the invariable result was that they were not ashamed of their hope, for deliverance came in due time; this same happy portion shall be ours. The prayer of faith can do the deed when nothing else can. Let us wonder when we see Jesus using the same pleas as ourselves, and immersed in griefs far deeper than our own.— *Spurgeon.*

6—8. (6) **worm,**[a] *Heb. toleah*, the cochineal, which yields scarlet juice, fr. wh. scarlet dye is produced.[b] The term denotes utter helplessness and humiliation. **no man,** *i. e.* I am an insignificant person – a nobody. **despised,** Is. liii. 3. (7) **shoot . . lip,** express. denoting "open-mouthed ferocity."[c] **shake the head,** this may express compassion, here it expresses malicious joy. (8) **He trusted,** *etc.*, "Roll it upon Jehovah! let him deliver him: let him rescue him, for he delighteth in him."— *Cam. Bib.* So it is the actual language of the taunt.[d] **seeing,** this is spoken in bitter irony.

All they that see me laugh me to scorn. — There have been persons in our own days whose crimes have excited such detestation that the populace would probably have torn them in pieces, before, and even after their trial, if they could have had them in their power. Yet when these very obnoxious persons have been executed according to their sentence, if, perhaps, there was not one spectator who wished them to escape, yet neither was one found so lost to sensibility as to insult them in their dying moments. But when Jesus suffers, all that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head; they insult His character and His hope. — *John Newton.*

9—11. (9) **But,** *etc.*, "with this express. he establishes the reality of the loving relationship to God, at wh. his foes mock." **took me,** *etc.*, strong express. for the graciousness of God's care from his very birth. **make me hope,** *R. V.*, "trust." (10) **cast on thee,** God's care is deeper than a mother's, and works through hers. (11) **far . . near,** be not Thou *far*, for trouble is *near*, so there is present and immediate need of Thy help.

Hope as an instinct of the soul (*vs.* 9). — I. This instinct implies the distinguishing goodness of God in the constitution of our nature. 1. Hope is one of the most powerful impulses to action; 2. One of the chief elements of support under the trials of life; 3. A source of joy. — *D. Thomas.*

Comfort may be found in the hour of trial by reflecting on the past mercies of God. The more conscious we become of our own impotency, the more tenaciously do we cling to the Divine arm and the more highly do we prize the smallest acts of kindness and sympathy. "I began to rail against Providence," wrote the imprisoned Armand Charratt with the blood he had pricked from his arm, "when a messenger of mercy came me in the form of an escaped canary-bird down a chimney of the Bastile. I kept the canary-bird, and for three years I was no longer solitary."— *Hom. Com.*

12—15. (12) **bulls,** the fig. of brutal strength and willfulness.[e] **Bashan,** extending from the Jabbok to Mount Hermon, and eastward to the extreme boundary of Palestine. Celebrated for its fat pastures.[f] (13) **gaped,** *R. V.*, "gape," opening a wide mouth, as a lion in his roaring. **ravening,**[g] seeking prey. (14) **poured,** *etc.*, comp. our Lord's fainting on the cross. **out of joint,** stretched, as on a rack, from their sockets. **like wax,** softened with anguish. (15) **dried up,** with thirst. **dust of death,** *i. e.* death must be the end. Still he sees God's hand in it all.

Bulls of Bashan. — The mighty ones in the crowd are here marked by the tearful eye of their victim. The priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, rulers and captains bellowed round the cross like wild cattle, fed in the fat and solitary pastures of Bashan, full of strength and fury: they stamped and foamed around the innocent One, and longed to gore Him to death with their cruelties. Conceive of the Lord Jesus as a helpless, unarmed, naked man, cast into the midst of a herd of infuriated wild bulls. They were brutal as bulls, many, and strong, and the Rejected One was all alone, and bound naked to the tree. His position throws great force into the earnest entreaty, "Be not far from me."— *Spurgeon.*

spring to be dry, but the pipes to be stopped or broken. If prayer speed not, we must be sure that the fault is not in God, but in ourselves; were we but ripe for mercy, He is ready to extend it to us, and even waits for the purpose."— *John Trapp.*

a Job xxv. 6; Is. xli. 14.

b "The point of comparison is not the blood-red appearance, but the suffering so utterly defenseless and even ignominious."— *Delitzsch.*

c Job xvi. 10; La. ii. 15, 16.

d Matt. xxvii. 42, 43.

A prayer for Divine help

"Faith turns the mockery of his enemies into an argument of deliverance, 'They mock my trust in Thee;—yea, I do trust in Thee; for Thou art He,' *etc.*" — *Perowne.*

"What marvel," asks St. Bernard, "that the name of the Bridegroom should be as ointment poured forth, when He himself, for the greatness of his love, was poured forth like water!"

e "No deep ethical sense is to be given to such representations of the Psalmist's foes. 'Lions,' 'dogs,' 'bulls,' are introduced merely bec. his foes exhibit the savage, *brutal* character of these creatures." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

f De. xxxii. 14; Eze. xxxix. 18; Am. iv. 1.

g From *rapine*, also written *ravin*, food obtained by violence.

16—18. (16) **dogs,** regarded in Sc. as unclean creatures. In the E. they are mostly savage and wild. **wicked,** *R. V.*, "evil-doers." **pierced,** *etc.*, Matt. xxvii. 35. (17) **tell,** or count; by reason of extreme emaciation.[a] **stare,** with the complacency of a foe who has gained his cruel end. (18) **part,** *etc.*, Lu. xxiii. 34; Jno. xix. 23, 24. "This would only occur in the case of one who had been stripped as a preliminary to execution." **vesture,** inner garment, a seamless tunic.

Dogs have compassed me. — So great and varied was the malignity exhibited by the enemies of our Lord, that the combined characteristics of two species of ferocious animals were not adequate to its representation. Another emblematical figure is therefore introduced. The assembly of the wicked is compared to that of "dogs" who haunt about the cities, prowl in every corner, snarl over the carrion, and devour it all with greediness — like "dogs" with their wild cry in full pursuit, with unfailing scent tracking their victim, with vigilant eye on all its movements, and with a determination which nothing can falter, they run it on to death. The Oriental mode of hunting, both in ancient and modern times, is murderous and merciless in the extreme. A circle of several miles in circumference is beat round; and the men, driving all before them, and narrowing as they advance, inclose the prey on every side. Having thus made them prisoners, the cruel hunters proceed to slaughter at their own convenience. So did the enemies of our Lord: long before His crucifixion it is recorded that they used the most treacherous plans to get Him into their power. — *John Stevenson.*

19—22. (19) **thou far,** as *vss.* 1, 11. **strength,** "a Heb. word only used here; source or substance of all strength, with special reference to physical exhaustion." *R. V.*, "O thou my succor." (20) **soul,** or self. **my darling,** *lit.* "my only one." "The clue to the meaning is given by the use of the word for *an only child,* Gen. xxii. 2; Jud. xi. 34. The word denotes the one precious life wh. can never be replaced. *Cf.* xxxv. 17." — *Cam. Bib.* **power . . dog,** *lit.* the hand;[b] it appears to point to the agents or executioners. (21) **unicorns,** Nu. xxiii. 22; here *wild bulls.*[c] (22) **declare,**[d] *etc.*, the language of dawning hope. **brethren,** fellow men and fellow sufferers.[e]

A pathetic cry for help. — I. God is the unfailing source of help in time of trouble. II. Deliverance is implored from imminent peril. 1. From threatened death; 2. From the ferocity of the most pitiless tormentors. III. The cry for help is emboldened by the recollection of past deliverances. — *Watkinson.*

23—27. (23) **fear the Lord,** *R. V.*, "stand in awe of." **praise him,** for gracious deliv. afforded to His servant.[f] (24) **despised,** all these express. are toned by the shame gathering round a death by crucifixion. **affliction,** Is. liii. 4, 7. **hath he hid,** this was the *fact,* for the Psalmist's *feeling,* see *vs.* 1. (25) **of thee,** *R. V.*, "Of thee cometh my praise in the great congregation." **pay my vows,** wh. had been made in the time of trouble. (26) **eat,** as at a thanksgiving feast.[g] **live for ever,** comp. Pro. vi. 51. (27) **All,** *etc.*, "the anticipation of a general conversion of the heathen belongs to Dav.'s sphere of thought."[h]

The spread of true religion (*vs.* 27). — Here we have — I. Religion described as an act of — 1. Memory; 2. Of repentance; 3. Worship. II. Its prevalence foretold. 1. It has already been partially fulfilled; 2. There is no improbability of its entire fulfilment; 3. The Holy Spirit's agency will secure it. — *W Whythe.*

28—31. (28) **kingdom . . Lord's,** a theocratical truth, and an evangelical prophecy. **governor among,** *R. V.*, "ruler over." (29) **All . . fat,** *R. V.*, "All the fat ones." Fig. for mighty ones. **none . . soul,** the poor, who have only the barest means of subsistence. *R. V.*, "Even he that cannot keep his soul alive." (30) **seed,** the posterity of the present race. "A never-failing seed." Comp. Is. liii. 10. **it . . generation,** *R. V.*, "It shall be told of the Lord unto the next generation." (31) **They shall come,** comp. Is. liii. 11.

The living church. — The true church of God can never perish. It is said that the Baobab-tree — the largest known tree in the world — though stripped of its bark outside and hollowed to a large cavity within its trunk, has the singular power of exuding from its substance a perfectly new bark, which lines both the inner and outer surfaces of the tree. So is it with the church

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a "The body of the crucified is a living lesson in anatomy." — *Spk. Com.*

"The Lord can blunt the point of the sharpest weapon; and, at the last moment, restore the stricken one who cries to Him." — *Watkinson.*

We can do absolutely nothing with evil except to overcome it with good.

Comp. Lu. xxii. 43.

b 1 Sa. xvii. 37; Is. xlvii. 14; "hand of the flame."

c Job xxxix. 9.

d He. ii. 12.

e Comp. Mat. xxviii. 10; Jno. xx. 17.

Our prayers too often resemble the mischievous tricks of children in a town, who knock at their neighbors houses and then run away. We often knock at mercy's door and then run away, instead of waiting for an answer.

f Sometimes God delivers *from* the cross, at other times He delivers *through* the cross.

g "The sense is equally good and true in reference to the Antitype, whose sacrificed body, offered once for all on the cross, is given as spiritual food to the faithful in the Eucharist."

h Ps. ii. 8; xviii. 49; lxxii. 11; lxxxvi. 9.

"The Psalter forms, as it were, a little Bible for all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find psalms and sentiments which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake alone, so expressed as he could not express them him-

of God. Though pierced and peeled and wounded by the gleaming axes of malicious enemies, it still lives and grows in irresistible productiveness, affording shelter to millions, and stretching its life-giving and healing foliage over all nations. — *Watkinson.*

The soul (*vs.* 29). — A little girl, about seven years of age, was taken, with a brother younger than herself, to see an aunt who lay dead. On their return home, the little boy expressed his surprise that he had seen his aunt, saying, "I always thought that when people died they went to heaven; but my aunt is not gone thither, for I have seen her!" "Brother," replied his sister, "I fear you do not understand it; it is not the body that goes to heaven! it is the *think* that goes to heaven! the body remains and is put into the grave, where it keeps till God shall raise it up again. The body returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God, who gave it."

self, nor find nor even wish them better than they are."

"So that there is a commonplace of comfort for all, both richest and poorest, if they be subjects of God's kingdom of grace, their souls shall be alike fed by him and saved."—*John Mayer.*

PSALM THE TWENTY-THIRD.

author,— prob. David

A Ps. on the loving care of God.

1—3. (1) **Lord,** "Jehovah." **shepherd,** forcible fig. in view of the dangers of Eastern shepherding.[a] **not want,** Pr. Bk. Vers. is forcible, "therefore can I lack nothing." (2) **green pastures,** bright green bec. covered with *fresh* grass; [b] an oasis. **still waters,** or *waters of quietness,* "restful waters."—*Delitzsch.* Reference is to well-watered oases, rather than to gently flowing streams. (3) **restoreth,** or refresheth, as with rest and food. **his name's sake,** not for my deserts. Ez. xxxvii. 22.

a Ge. xlviii. 15; Is. xl. 11; Je. xxxi. 10; Jno. x. 27, 28.

Heinrich Heine. — Poor desolate and afflicted Heinrich Heine, who had been a pantheist and a scoffer, alternately or combined, was laid for years on what he called his *mattress sepulchre,* and took to reading the Bible, especially the psalms. One of the very last of his poems, addressed to his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, bears traces of the shepherd-song of God's flock, and if it wants the sparkle and point of his early genius, it is redeemed by its softened tenderness. It begins thus:

b Lie down in Heb. is a technical word for letting flocks lie down at their ease. — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"My arm grows weak; Death comes apace,
Death pale and grim; and I no more
Can guard my lamb as heretofore.
O God! into Thy hands I render
My crook; keep Thou my lambkin tender.
When I in peace have laid me down,
Keep Thou my lamb, and do not let
A single thorn her bosom fret,
And guide where pastures green and sweet
Refresh the wanderer's weary feet." — *Ker.*

"Beneath the burning skies, and the clear starry night of Palestine, there grows up between the shepherd and his flock a union of attachment and tenderness. It is the country where, at any moment, their protector may have to save them by personal hazard." — *F. W. Robertson.*

Reminiscence. — This peaceful idyl (the twenty-third psalm) is a voice out of the maturer life of the psalmist, out of memories of care and battle and treachery; a voice that tells that peace and rest of heart depend not upon the absence of life's burdens, nor on the presence of nature's tranquilizing scenes, but solely upon the shepherding of God. — *Marvin R. Vincent.*

4—6. (4) **walk,** as sheep following their shepherd thro' a dark and trying road. **valley . . death,** "dark, deep, sunless ravine between mountains,"[c] *R. V., marg.* "deep darkness." **thou,** my protecting Shepherd. **rod and . . staff,** rod to defend with, staff to guide with.[d] (5) **preparest,** *etc.,* the common formula for furnishing a meal.[e] Comp. 2 Sa. xvii. 27–29. **anointest,** *R. V.,* "hast anointed;" this was customary at banquets; *see* Lu. vii. 56. **runneth over,** so abundantly is it filled with blessings. (6) **Surely,** *R. V., marg.* "only." **for ever,** *Heb. to length of days.*

c Je. xlii. 16.

De Wette quotes Moriet as illus. of the image of this *vs.*:—"Near Ispahan is a valley, inconceivably dreary, desolate, waterless, called the valley of the angel of death."—*Spk. Com.*

A view of the future suggested by a review of the past (*vs.* 6). — I. The psalmist's hope. 1. He hoped for goodness and mercy; his hope was coextensive with his life; the assurance of this hope is remarkable; 2. But how was such a hope suggested? He recognized goodness and mercy in his past experience, and in a Divine Providence, which, having ruled the past, would guide the future. He had confidence in the present and abiding favor of God towards him. — *J. Parker.*

d Zec. xi. 7.

e Pr. ix. 2; Is. xxi. 5; Eze. xxiii. 41.

Shepherd's staff and crook. — The shepherd carried with him two instruments — the staff, for his own support, and to attack a beast or robber; and the crook, or rod. By this crook the shepherd guided a sheep in a dangerous

"Joy may grow on the very face of danger, as a slender rose-bush

flings its bright sprays and fragrant blossom over the lip of a cataract."—*Maclaren.*

"Those that have this happiness must carry their cup upright, and see that it overflows into their poor brethren's emptier vessels."—*Trapp.*

"It overflows with grace to comfort me in time. It shall overflow with glory to gladden me throughout eternity."—*J. Stevenson.*

"The little child out at sea in the storm is not frightened like all the other passengers on board the vessel; it is asleep in its mother's bosom; it is enough for it that its mother is with it; and it should be enough for the believer to know that Christ is with him."—*Spurgeon.*

pass, placing the crook under the sheep's neck, and holding him up to assist his steps. When a sheep was disposed to stray, the shepherd could hold him back with his crook. When the sheep had fallen into the power of a beast, the crook assisted in drawing him away. A good sheep loved the crook as much as the staff — to be guided as well as to be defended. Both of the shepherd's instruments were a great comfort to the sheep while passing through a frightful and dangerous valley. The interpretation usually given to the words, "Thy rod and Thy staff" — as though they meant "Thy gentle reproofs and Thy severe rebukes" — is erroneous. A sheep would hardly tell his shepherd that his chastising rod, and the heavy blows of his staff comforted him. The meaning is, it is a comfort to me to feel the crook of Thy rod helping me in trouble, and to know that Thy staff is my defense against wild beasts. — *The anointing oil and overflowing cup.* — Mr. Griffin, in his *Memoirs of Captain James Wilson*, gives the following statement in the captain's own words: "I once had this ceremony performed on myself in the house of a great and rich Indian, in the presence of a large company. The gentleman of the house poured upon my hands and arms a delightful odoriferous perfume, put a golden cup in my hands and poured wine into it till it ran over; assuring me at the same time that it was a great pleasure to him to receive me, and that I should find a rich supply in his house." To something of this kind the Psalmist probably alludes in this passage. — *On Psa. xxiii.* — This is an ode which for beauty of sentiment is not to be matched in the circuit of all literature. In its way down through three thousand years or more, this psalm has penetrated to the depths of millions of hearts; it has gladdened homes of destitution and discomfort; it has whispered hope and joy amid tears to the utterly solitary and forsaken, whose only refuge was in heaven. Beyond all range of probable calculation have these dozen lines imparted a power of endurance under suffering, and strength in feebleness, and have kept alive the flickering flame of religious feeling in hearts that were nigh to despair. — *J. Taylor.*

PSALM THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

author—prob. David

The Psalm of the Ascension. The removal of the ark fr. Kirjath-jearim to Mt. Zion may be the occasion of the writing. 2 Sa vi.

1, 2. (1) **The earth,** not a mere portion of it, such as the heathen deities were regarded as ruling over. (2) **founded . . seas,** "bec. the waters existed before the dry land, this has been cast up out of them at God's word." Ge. i. 9, 10.

The Divine proprietorship of the world. — I. Absolute and all-inclusive — 1. As to its matter; 2. As to its productiveness; 3. As to its inhabitants. II. Based on the act of creation. III. Confirmed by the fact of its preservation. Learn — 1. The folly of loving the present world; 2. The audacity of Satan in claiming all the kingdoms of the world; 3. The duty and privilege of rendering joyful worship to the great Proprietor of all. — *Watkinson.*

The earth is the Lord's. — Man lives upon the earth and parcels out its soil among its mimic kings and autocrats; but the earth is not man's. He is but a tenant at will, a leaseholder upon most precarious tenure, liable to instantaneous ejectment. The great Landowner and true Proprietor holds His court above the clouds, and laughs at the title-deeds of worms of the dust. The fee-simple is not with the lord of the manor nor the freeholder, but with the Creator. — *Spurgeon.*

"The Psalmist does not of course refer to geological speculations, but describes natural phenomena; the earth raised above the seas, girt by the ocean, and resting apparently upon its waters." — *Spk. Com.*

3—6. (3) **hill of the Lord,** Zion in the days of the tabernacle; Moriah in the days of the temple: but both only as fig. of God's eternal abode in heaven. **stand,** *i. e.* stand his ground. (4) **clean,** from acts of sin. **pure,** or simple, sincere. Moral conditions are absolutely essential to all true worship. **vanity,**[a] or vain desires. Poss. with allusion to false gods, wh. are in Sc. regarded as vanity. (5) **the,** *R. V.*, "a." **blessing,** comp. Ge. xxxii. 29; xxxv. 9. **righteousness,** in O. T. sense of acceptation of inward and outward holiness.[b] (6) **This,** is the test of, *see vs.* 4. **generation,** class. **O Jacob,** or Jacob's God. Or we may read "even Jacob," meaning that only those who thus seek God, are the true Jacob, or Israel.

The soul's cry and the true response (*vs.* 3–6). — I. The soul's cry. This state of fellowship with God is the great want of human souls. It is — 1. A very elevated state; 2. A very holy state; 3. A very desirable state. II. The true response. The answer indicates two things. 1. The way of reaching this state; 2. The blessedness of reaching this state. — *D. Thomas.*

[a] "It may be taken in its widest sense of all that the hum. heart puts in the place of God."—*Perowne.*

[b] "Poss. the term here betokens *beneficence* on the part of God, as in Ps. cxi. 3."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

7—10. (7) **Lift,** *etc.*, a kind of chorus, to be sung alternately. It is appropriate to the occasion of bringing the ark to Mount Zion.[a] **gates,** of the citadel of Zion. **everlasting doors,** or "gates of old," as being of a hoar antiquity. (8) **strong,** His attribute. **mighty,** its manifestations in actions. (10) **hosts,**[b] "As sovereign of the universe." — *Cam. Bib.*

The King of glory. —

In His blessed life
I see the path, and in His death the price,
And in His great ascent the proof supreme
Of immortality. And did He rise?
Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!
He rose! He rose! He burst the bars of death.
Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the King of glory to come in.
Who is the King of glory? He who left
His throne of glory for the pangs of death.

Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates!
And give the King of glory to come in.
Who is the King of glory? He who slew
The ravenous foe that gorged all human race.
The King of glory, He whose glory filled
Heaven with amazement at His love to man,
And with divine complacency beheld
Powers most illumined 'wildered in the theme.
— *Edward Young.*

a 2 Sa. vii. 2; Ac. i. 9.

b Ho. xii. 5; Am. v. 16.

"Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? There you look into the heart of all the holy, as into a beautiful garden, as into heaven itself. What delicate, fragrant, and lovely flowers are there springing up of all manner of beautiful, joyous thoughts towards God and His goodness!"—*Luther.*

PSALM THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

A prayer for protection and guidance. An acrostic or alphabetical Psalm.

1—3. (1) **Unto thee,** not to any idol-god, nor to any human deliverer, but to God, who alone can grant him that wh. shall satisfy his need.[c] **do . . soul,** *Polych. Bib.* "My heart longs."[d] (2) **trust,** *R. V.*, "in thee have I trusted." **ashamed,** by having my hope in Thee disappointed. **triumph over me,** wh. they would do, if Div. help tarried. (3) **let . . ashamed,** *R. V.*, "Yea, none that wait on thee shall be ashamed: they shall," *etc.*

The nature of true prayer (*vs.* 1).— I. The realization and recognition of the presence of God. II. The abstraction from the influences of the world; the consecration and concentration of all the energies of the man. IV. The results of such lifting up of the soul to God. 1. We shall be transported with the Divine nearness: 2. Transformed into the Divine likeness; 3. Translated into the Divine presence now and hereafter. — *F. W. Brown.*

Lift up. — The call to devotion in the early church was *sursum corda*, up with your hearts. Some lift up their hearts to vanity, and idolize a creation of man, or the soulless and unresponsive forces of Nature. But the only legitimate object of worship, to whom prayer can be acceptably offered, is God. "A carnal man can as little lift up his heart in prayer as a mole can fly. Let us therefore pray to God to draw us up to Himself, as the lodestone doth the iron."— *Trapp.*

c Compare Ps lxxiii. 24-26; He. xii. 2.

d "The fundamental distinction between the godly and ungodly men consists in the object to wh. their affections are directed." — *Spk. Com.*

"True prayer may be described as the soul rising from earth to have fellowship with heaven; it is taking a journey upon Jacob's ladder, leaving our cares and fears at the foot, and meeting with a covenant God at the top."—*Spurgeon.*

4—7. (4) **thy ways,** the trustful man desires to be wholly guided, and yields his will to God's. (5) **lead me,** *R. V.*, "guide me." **truth,**[e] or faithfulness, regarded as an attribute of God. **on thee,** Thee only, Thee altogether. (6) **tender mercies,**[f] *Heb. bowels.* **ever of old,** as Ge. viii. 1; ix. 15; xix. 29, *etc.* (7) **sins . . youth,** lapses, frailties of youth. **transgressions,** marked by willfulness, such as belong to maturer age.

Sins of youth. — How many would like to return to the happy time of youth! There is an exquisite pathos in those lines of Goethe:

"Give me, oh! give me back the days of youth,
Poor, yet how rich! — my glad inheritance,
The inextinguishable love of truth,
While life's realities were all romance.
Give me, oh! give youth's passions unconfined,
The rush of joy that felt almost like pain,
Its hate, its love, its own tumultuous mind;
Give me my youth again!"

e "His truth is the lasting and self-verifying fact of His revelation of grace."—*Delitzsch.*

f "'Tender mercies,' 'loving-kindnesses,' 'goodness.' How the soul dwells on these attributes of God, and cleaves to them when it is troubled with the sad recollection of the 'sins of its youth,' and its 'transgressions!'" —*Perowne.*

"The ways and stairs of God are known to no crea-

ture so well as to Himself; therefore He can give us the best instruction in them; we must go to school to God, to the guidance and training of His Holy Spirit." — *Starke.*

a Ro. v. 8.

b Matt. v. 5.

c "The lively sense of the greatness of sin, and the open confession of it, are the best pleas for forgiveness." — *Wordsworth.*

"Where do you find more profound, mournful, pathetic expressions of sorrow than the plaintive Psalms contain? There again you look into the heart of all the holy, but as into death, nay, as into the very pit of despair. How dark and gloomy is everything there, arising from all manner of melancholy apprehensions of God's displeasure."—*Luther.*

d "The word 'abide,' literally 'lodge,' indicates that the abode here, after all, is but a sojourning, our earthly home but a caravanserai."—*Sph. Com.*

e Ex. xx. 12: Le. xxvi. 34; De. iv. 1.

f Comp. Job xxix. 4; Jno. xlv. 23.

g "So as to reveal its deep, inner meaning to them." —*Kay.*

h Ps. ix. 15; x. 9.

i "The original text undoubtedly was 'the straits of my heart do Thou enlarge, and bring me out of my distresses.'" — *Delitzsch.*

"Present fear begetteth eternal security; fear God, which is above all, and no need to fear man at all." —*Augustine.*

But it may not, it cannot be. We are young but once. And oh! how much of that past youth-time would we like to live over again! How many of its wild, mad, sinful actions could we wish undone! How many are there of the sins of our younger days we can ourselves remember; and alas! how many more which are now unknown to ourselves and forgotten by all but God! — *Watkinson.*

8—11. (8) **upright,** a term suitable only to man is applied to God. "Acting according to his promise." **sinners,**[a] not while in their wilfulness, but when penitent and humble. Ref., however, may be to "those who err fr. human infirmity." (9) **meek,** those poor, or humble in spirit; contrite.[b] (10) **mercy,** *R. V.*, "loving kindness." **covenant,** the national covenant, wh. represented the great human covenant. **testimonies,** or laws wh. are the conditions and terms of that covenant. (11) **mine iniquity,** in relation to the laws and covenant.[c]

The penitent's supplication (*vs.* 11).—Here we have — I. The sinner's confession,—my iniquity is great. II. The sinner's prayer,— pardon my iniquity. III. The sinner's plea,— for Thy name's sake.

Sin.— Nothing is so blinding and misleading as sin, and it is never so dangerously deceptive as when it wears the semblance of virtue. Naturalists tell us that certain birds and insects have the curious faculty of assuming a likeness to the vegetation among which they sport themselves — that the South American hero.a can assume a perpendicular position, so as to look exactly like the reeds of its native district, that the leaf-butterfly of Sumatra is readily mistaken for one of the leaves among which it alights and that the walking-stick insect of New Zealand can closely resemble an upright twig. So sin has the dangerous power of assuming a tone and attitude of certain virtues. But the Divine eye detects the fallacy, and the Divine hand graciously guides into the right way.— *Watkinson.*

12—14. (12) **What man,** or whosoever is the man. "What the Psalmist asks for himself is the common lot of the pious." **teach . . choose,** God shall instruct him to make wise choice of his course of life. (13) **dwell at ease,** *Heb.* lodge in goodness.[d] **inherit,** *etc.*, fig. taken from the promise and possession of the land of Canaan.[e] (14) **secret,** *R. V.*, *marg.* "counsel or friendship;" privilege of close, friendly communion.[f] **will shew,** better rend. "And His covenant to make them know it."[g]

The blessedness of fearing the Lord (*vs.* 12).—The man who feareth the Lord is blessed — I. In the sacred knowledge of Christ's will, him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose. II. In the quiet peace of a good conscience, his soul shall dwell at ease. III. In the present comfort of a hopeful progeny, his seed shall inherit the earth.— *R. Mossom.*

The secret of the Lord.— Saints have the key of heaven's hieroglyphics: they can unriddle celestial enigmas; they are initiated into the fellowship of the skies; they have heard words which it is not possible for them to repeat to their fellows. He who does not know the meaning of this verse will never learn it from a commentary; let him look to the cross, for the secret lies there.— *Spurgeon.*

15—18. (15) **eyes . . towards,** attitude of expectant prayer. **net,** frequent fig. for dangers by enemies.[h] (16) **desolate,** the isolated one, whom men treat as a stranger. (17) **troubles,** *i. e.* straitness. **are enlarged,** "do Thou enlarge."[i] (18) **Look upon,** with idea of regarding graciously. **pain,** travail.

Forgive.—I. It is well when our sorrows remind us of our sins. II. When we are as earnest to be forgiven as to be delivered. III. When we bring both to the right place in prayer. IV. When we are submissive about our sorrows —"*Look,*" *etc.* — but very explicit about our sins — "*Forgive,*" *etc.* — *Spurgeon.*

"*Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord.*" — The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth, wandering over a thousand different objects, but fastening on none, and learning nothing. But the humble and patient inquirer carefully investigates the minutest phenomena that promise to lead to the interpretation of truth, and conduct the mind up to the great source of truth. Every year of our lives we grow more convinced that it is wisest and best to fix our attention on the beautiful and the good, and dwell as little as possible on the

evil and the false. The eye that turns its inquiring gaze towards God will make the grandest discoveries and see the most entrancing visions. — *Watkinson.*

19—22. (19) **Consider,** with a view to restraining. **cruel hatred,** or hatred of violence; proceeding altogether from malignity. (20) **ashamed,** *see vs.* 2. (21) **integrity,** *etc.*, a sense of sincerity is quite consistent with a confession of sin.[a] (22) **Redeem,** *lit.* "set free." **Israel,** the personal prayer becomes intercessory, and includes the whole congregation.[b]

Soul preservation (*vs.* 20). — I. Its twofold character, "keep" and "deliver." II. Its dreadful alternative, "Let me not be ashamed." III. Its effectual guarantee, "I put my trust in Thee." — *Spurgeon.*

Perfect integrity (*vs.* 21). — Among the Alps alone are found men rustic without being ferocious, civilized without being corrupted. The following trait is as characteristic as it is singular. Frantz went one evening to Gaspard, who was mowing his field. "My friend," said he, "the time is come to get up this hay: you know there is a dispute about the meadow, to whom it belongs, you or me; to decide the question I have assembled together the appointed judges at Salenche; so come with me to-morrow, and state your claims." "You see, Frantz," answered Gaspard, "that I have cut the grass; it is therefore absolutely necessary that I should get it up to-morrow; I cannot leave it." "And I cannot send away the judges, who have chosen the day themselves; besides, we must know to whom the meadow belongs before it is cleared." They debated some time. At length Gaspard said to Frantz, "Go to Salenche, tell the judges my reasons as well as your own, for claiming the meadow, and then I need not go myself." So it was agreed. Frantz pleaded both for and against himself, and to the best of his power, gave his own claims as well as those of Gaspard. When the judges had pronounced their opinion he returned to his friend saying, "The meadow is thine: the sentence is in thy favor, and I wish you joy." Frantz and Gaspard ever afterward remained friends. — *Paxton Hood.*

PSALM THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1—4. (1) **Judge me,** vindicate my cause: do me justice. **integrity,** conscious sincerity of intention,[c] *see* Ps. xxv. 21. **Lord . . slide,** *R. V.*, "Lord without wavering." (2) **Examine me,** Ps. cxxxix. 1, 23. **reins . . heart,** "the reins are the seat of the emotions, the heart is the very centre of the life of the mind and soul." By this fig. Dav. seeks a most minute and complete inspection. (3) **walked,** "term in Heb. implies long and active habits of obedience." (4) **vain persons,** Ps. xxiv. 4. **dissemblers,** *lit. hidden ones.*[d]

"*Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes.*" — It might be well to follow David and to keep the loving kindness of God before *our* eyes. This should be done in four ways: — I. As a subject of contemplation. II. As the source of encouragement. III. As an incitement to praise. IV. As an example for imitation. — *William Jay.*

Bad company. — So far from being himself an open offender against the laws of God, the psalmist had not even associated with the lovers of evil. He had kept aloof from the men of Belial. A man is known by his company, and if we have kept ourselves apart from the wicked, it will always be evidence in our favor, should our character be impugned. He who was never in the parish is not likely to have stolen the corn. He who never went to sea is clearly not the man who scuttled the ship. — *Spurgeon.*

5—8. (5) **not sit,** Ps. i. 1. (6) **wash . . hands,** a fig. expressive of separating one's self from.[e] **compass,** *etc.*, see Ex. xxx. 17–21, word prob. means "near and habitual approach."[f] (7) **publish,** *etc.*. *R. V.*, "make the voice of thanksgiving to be heard." (8) **have loved,** *R. V.*, "love." **habitation,** the home, or refuge.[g] **the place,** *lit.* "the place of the tabernacle of thy glory."

Redemption work. — I. It is a finished work. II. It is a wondrous work. III. It is an inspiring work. IV. It is a God-glorifying work. — *Watkinson.*

A song of thanksgiving. — Pineton of Chambrun, one of the French Huguenots, who after fleeing by night and hiding in the woods by day, escaped at

a "*Devoutness* that fills the whole man, and *uprightness* that follows the will of God without any by-paths and forbidden ways, he desires to have as guardians on his way."—*Delitzsch.*

b "This last *vs.* was perhaps added in order to adapt the Psalm in liturgical use. The name of God is here Elohim, whereas throughout the rest of the Psalm it is Jehovah."—*Perowne.*

"It may poss. be a pious ejaculation added during the captivity." — *Spk. Com.*

"Faith alone can interpret life, and the heart that aches and bleeds with the stigma Of pain, alone bears the likeness of Christ, and can comprehend its dark enigma."—*Longfellow.*

c Ge. xx. 5.

d "Men in whom evil purposes are concealed under a mask of respectability."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"A good cause, a good conscience, and a good deportment, are good grounds of appeal to God."—*Ingram Cobbin.*

"The law convinces and condemns sinners; the Gospel relieves and pardons them, justifies and saves them."—*Watts.*

e Matt. xxvii. 24.

f "I think that the whole passage is figurative, and amounts to this, 'I would fain give myself to Thy service even as Thy priests do.'" — *Perowne.*

g Comp. Ps. xxiii. 6; xxvii. 4; lxiii. 2.

length from France in the time of the *dragonnades* of Louis XIV., tells that, when he and his companions came in sight of Geneva, they burst into tears and sung for thanksgiving from *vs.* 8 of this psalm to the end. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honor dwelleth. . . . My foot standeth in an even place; in the congregations will I bless the Lord."—*Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

"The Psalms, the Canticles the poetic books, are the singing groves, the tinkling rills, the pastures green [of the Bible]."—*J. Hamilton*

9—12. (9) **Gather not,** make not my lot common with theirs.[a] **bloody men,** Ps. v. 6. (10) **mischief,** or violence. **bribes,** the sin of magistrates.[b] (11) **redeem me,** fr. the devices, and from the lot, of the wicked. (12) **even place,** on level ground, "He expresses the confidence that he is *safe,* and cannot be hemmed in."

Bribery.—There was a patron in England that had a benefice fallen into his hand, and a good brother of mine came unto him, and brought him thirty apples in a dish, and gave them to his man to carry them to his master. It is like he gave one to his man for his labor, to make up the gain, and so there was thirty-one. This man cometh to his master, and presented him with the dish of apples, saying, "Sir, such a man hath sent you a dish of fruit, and desireth you to be good unto him for such a benefice." "Tush, tush," quoth he, "this is no apple matter, I will none of his apples, I have as good as these (or any he hath) in mine own orchard." The man came to the priest again, and told him what his master said. "Then," quoth the priest, "desire him yet to prove one of them for my sake, he shall find them much better than they look for." He cut one of them, and found ten pieces of gold in it "Marry," quoth he, "this is a good apple." The priest standing not far off, hearing what the gentleman said, cried out and answered, "they are all one apples, I warrant you, sir; they grew all on one tree, and have all one taste." "Well, he is a good fellow, let him have it," quoth the patron, *etc.*, Get you a graft of this same tree, and I warrant you it shall stand you in better stead than all St. Paul's learning."—*Hugh Latimer.*

a "Let not my soul and my life be knit in their *fate* with those of such men. . . The prayer is apparently against evil fortunes regarded as the punishment of sin."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

b "The corruption of justice was then, and ever has been, the cancer of Oriental despotisms."—*Spk. Com.*

"Life has no dim and lonely spot
That doth not in her sunshine share."—*Lowell.*

PSALM THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

This Ps. expresses unshaken confidence in the midst of dangers.

1—3. (1) **my light,** only passage in the O. T. in wh. the term "light" is expressly applied to the Lord. Comp. Mic. vii. 8. **salvation,** or Saviour. **strength,** or stronghold, or bulwark.[c] (2) **wicked,** *R. V.*, "evil doers." **enemies,** *R. V.*, "adversaries." **eat . . flesh,** as if they were beasts of prey.[d] (3) **in this,** *R. V.*, "even then."

The Christian's boast (*vss.* 1–6).—I. The one thing of which David here speaks. Abiding in the presence of God will give—1. Light; 2. Salvation; 3. Strength; 4 Beauty; 5. Joy. II. The condition of attaining this one thing; we must seek after it.—*The Study.*

The twenty-seventh Psalm.—India was still heaving with the ground-swell of the terrible mutiny of 1857, when the wife of Sir John Lawrence was called home to her children in England, and had to leave her husband, who could not quit his post, surrounded by the smoldering embers which might, at any moment, rekindle into flame, and worn to exhaustion with the anxiety and labor which did so much for the preservation of the Indian empire. She thus writes, "When the last morning of separation, Jan. 6, 1858, arrived, we had our usual Bible reading, and I can never think of the 27th Psalm, which was the portion we then read together, without recalling that sad time." In perusing the psalm, one can see what springs of comfort must have opened in every verse, from the beginning to the close.—*Ker.*

c "The accumulation of words is to be noticed, wherein he terms God not only his light, but his welfare, and the rock or strength of his life For his meaning was, to set as it were his threefold shield against sundry terrors, as sufficient to ward them off."—*Calvin.*

d Job xix. 22.

4—6. (4) **desired,** *R. V.*, "asked." **dwell . . life,** this is plainly the language of one who is exiled fr. his sanctuary privileges. **beauty,** or graciousness.[e] **inquire,** or meditate, investigate God's char. (5) **pavilion . . tabernacle,** he will shelter me in his own dwelling. (6) **will,** *etc.*, the Psalmist confidently anticipates his restoration. **joy,** *lit.* "shouting," the shouting that accompanies the sacrifices of thanksgiving.

One thing.—Changes, great changes, and many bereavements there have been in my life. I have been emptied from vessel to vessel. But one thing has never failed—one thing makes me feel that my life has been one; it has calmed my joys, it has soothed my sorrows, it has guided me in difficulty, it has strengthened me in weakness. It is the presence of God—a faithful and

e "Apparently with reference to the ordinances of the sanctuary, the worship as there conducted, but not to be confined merely to the external glory of the tabernacle."—*Perowne.*

"Truth is not born with us, nor can it

loving God. Yes, brethren, the presence of God is not only light, it is unity. It gives unity to the heart that believes it — unity to the life that is conformed to it. It was the presence of God in David's soul that enabled him to say, "One thing have I desired of the Lord;" and in St. Paul's that enabled him to say, "This one thing I do." — *George Wagner.*

7—9. (7) **Hear, O Lord,** the tone of the Ps. suddenly changes when the Psalmist thinks of his own sinfulness. **with my voice,** *i. e.* aloud; (8) **When,** *etc., lit.* "My heart said to Thee, 'Seek ye My face;' Thy face, Lord, I will seek."[a] (9) **leave me not,** *R. V.*, "Cast me not off."

The answer of a gracious soul to the Divine call (*vs.* 8).— There will be a reply in a gracious heart to a gracious call. I. Consider the gracious call, 1. Seek My favor, approbation, friendship; 2. Seek by appointed means; 3. Especially in Jesus Christ. II. Consider the reply. 1. The call is general, but the reply is particular; 2. We have a warrant in the promises for seeking. — *R. Cecil.*

The hidings of God's face (*vs.* 9). Behold, great Master of the house, a needy beggar knocking at the door of Thy mercy; O let him, by his own experience, prove the truth of that gracious promise, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." For what is knocking, if the inward groan, the sounding of my bowels, the vehement desires, the doleful lamentations, the moving tears, and importunate cries, with which my heart now seeks Thee, do not deserve that name? Nor can any of these most inward griefs be lost upon an all-seeing God; for Thou observest my most secret thoughts, and my heaviness is not hid from Thee. Call up Thy bowels, Thy tender and unspeakable affection, of which I have already had so many instances; let these commiserate my present distress, and work out for me a mighty deliverance; that I may be conducted safe to Thee, my God, and see the riches of Thy kingdom, and the beauties of Thy glorious presence, and sing praises incessantly to Thy name. — *St. Augustine.*

10. When, *R. V.*, "For my father and my mother have forsaken me;" a proverbial expression. **Then,** *R. V.*, "But." **take me up,** into His love and care.[b] God's love stronger than th. of the closest human relations.

Human instability and Divine unchangeableness (*vs.* 10).— I. Man's mind and will are mutable, but God's grace and mercy cannot change. II. Man is feeble and impotent, but God is able at all times to succor His people. III. Man is mortal, but God is an ever-living friend. — *J. J. Cort.*

Refuge in God.—

When me my nearest friends forsake,
  When I am wretched and forlorn,
I refuge with the father take,
  My pang to heaven's God is borne;
Unchained by words my silent sigh
Steals to the loving One on high.

In Christ's dear name I will outpour
  My fullest bosom, Lord, to Thee;
Learn by sweet silence to adore,
  To see, by seeking not to see;
My needs shall feed thine altar's flame
If I them breathe in Christ's dear name.

— *Hymns of Denmark.*

11—14. (11) **plain path,** Ps. xxvi. 12. **enemies,** *lit. watchers for my fall.* (12) **breathe out,** Ac. ix. 1, "A forcible image, not uncommon in classic writers." (13) *trans. Polych. Bib.*, "Did I not trust to enjoy the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living — — !"[c] (14) **Wait on the Lord,** the attitude of soul constantly commended in the Ps.[d] **be . . heart,** *R. V.*, "Be strong and let thine heart take courage."

Need of Divine teaching (*vs.* 11).— Varro, a Roman writer of the first century B. C., states that in his day, he had been at the pains to collect the various opinions on the question, "What is the true object of human life?" in other words, "What is the supreme good?" He had reckoned up as many as three hundred and twenty different answers. How needful is Divine

be obtained irrespective of our own efforts. It must be sought for its own sake. It must be wooed and won, from love, before it can be enjoyed." — *Watkinson.*

[a] Ps. xxiv. 6.

"How beautiful and how varied are the forms of prayer and thanksgiving in the Book of Psalms! They appear as the outpourings of a grateful heart before God for the glories of His creation, for succor in the hour of danger, for deliverance from affliction, for national privileges, and for anticipated salvation." — *Sedgwick.*

"How eagerly do we wait for the reply from a friend to an important letter! So should we watch for God's answer to our prayers." — *Watkinson.*

[b] "Though my condition be helpless and friendless as that of a child deserted of his parents, there is One who watches over me, and will take me to His bosom." — *Perowne.*

"Dav. was sometimes compelled to leave his parents to the care of others (1 Sa. xxii. 3), but we know nothing of his parents forsaking him." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

[c] "Did I not believe, were not confidence preserved to me, . . then I had suddenly perished." — *Delitzsch.*

[d] Ps. xxxvii. 34.

"There is no more dignified

species of worship to be found than that of exemplifying our faith in the omnipotence and wisdom of God, by humble and joyous perseverance under the greatest difficulties."—*Tholuck.*

"A sense of God's presence in love is sufficient to rebuke all anxiety and fear in the worst and most dreadful condition."—*Owen.*

revelation: and how essential to those who are starting in life that a heavenly Guide should teach them the true end and purpose of earthly existence.—*W. H. Groser.*

Wait on the Lord, be of good courage. —

Stand but your ground, your ghostly foes will fly—
Hell trembles at a heaven-directed eye;
Choose rather to defend than to assail—
Self-confidence will in the conflict fail:
When you are challenged you may dangers meet—
True courage is a fixed, not sudden heat;
Is always humble, lives in self-distrust.
And will itself into no danger thrust.
Devote yourself to God, and you will find
God fights the battles of a will resigned.
Love Jesus! love will no base fear endure—
Love Jesus! and of conquest rest secure.—*Thomas Ken.*

PSALM THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

A psalm in which the help of God is sought against the public foe. The historical connection cannot be fixed.

1—5. (1) **silent to me,** be not deaf to me, do not *turn away* from me. **pit,** *Sheol*, the grave. (2) **lift . . hands,** the usual attitude in prayer.[a] **oracle,** or sanctury: the holy of holies. (3) **Draw,** *etc.*, as Ps. xxvi. 9. **speak peace,** comp. *dissemblers*, Ps. xxvi. 4. (4) **Give them,** the godly man may seek just punishments on his foes, as well as deliverance for himself. (5) **regard . . Lord,** the ground on wh. we may seek their punishment is not injury done to *ourselves*, but dishonor brought on *God*. **destroy,** *lit. shatter.*

A society strongly deprecated (*vs.* 3).—I. The character of ungodly society. 1. They are apostates; 2. Rebels; 3. Hypocrites. II. The attractiveness of ungodly society. This consists—1. In its numerical force; 2. Its social resources. III. The banefulness of ungodly society. 1. It is detrimental to the highest interests of human nature; 2. It is doomed to ruin.—*D. Thomas.*

My rock.—One day a friend called on the Rev. William Evans, a pious minister in England, and asked how he felt himself. "I am weakness itself," he replied; "but I am on the *Rock*. I do not experience those transports which some have expressed in the view of death; but my dependence is on the mercy of God in Christ. Here my religion began, and here it must end." Said a dying saint (the Rev. John Rees), "Christ in His person, Christ in the love of His heart, and Christ in the power of His arm, is the rock on which I rest, and now" (reclining his head gently on the pillow), "Death, strike."—*Watkinson.*

6—9. (6) **hath heard,** in the past; therefore new prayers may be offered with confidence. (7) **trusted,** so he could rejoice as if his prayer had actually been answered. **rejoiceth,** exulteth. (8) **saving strength,** fortress of protection. (9) **feed them,** as a shepherd does his flock. **lift them,** as a shepherd would the weary lambs.[b]

The songs of heaven (*vs.* 7).—There are three especial occasions wherein the universe has resounded with the most noble praise. I. The song of creation. II. The song of redemption. III. The song of glorification.—*C. Bryan.*

Trust. —

When my dim reason would demand
Why that or this thou dost ordain,
By some vast deep I seem to stand,
Whose secrets I must ask in vain.

When doubts disturb my troubled breast,
And all is dark as night to me,
Here as on solid rock I rest—
That so it seemeth good to thee.

Be this my joy, that evermore
Thou rulest all things at thy will;
Thy sovereign wisdom I adore—
And calmly, sweetly trust thee still.

[a] Ex. ix. 29; Ps. cxli. 2.

"The structure of the psalm is based on the common principle of dipodia, or strophes of two verses; the only exception being in the central one, which consists of three verses."—*Perowne.*

"Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust are forfeited; but infamy doth kill."—*W. Wordsworth.*

[b] Is. xl. 11; xlvi. 3; lxiii. 9.

"We should not sadden the harmless mirth of others by suffering our own melancholy to be seen, and this species of exertion is, like virtue, its own reward; for the good spirits which are at first simulated become at length real."—*Thomas Scott.*

"Behold what great contempt hath the Lord of Majesty endured, that His confusion may be our glory; His punishment our heavenly bliss! Without ceasing impress this spectacle, O Christian, on thy soul!"—*Dionysius.*

PSALM THE TWENTY-NINTH.

author, — prob. David

A psalm suggested by a great thunder-storm, sweeping over the full length of Palestine from Mt. Hermon to Kadesh Barnea.

1, 2. (1) **Give,** or *ascribe;* yield (*Calvin*). **mighty,** Heb. *sons of the mighty;* or angels.[a] **strength,** *i. e.* acknowledge that strength is with Him. **glory . . name,** *i. e.* "His glory as He reveals Himself in the world." (2) **beauty of holiness,** "in holy array," as priests in holy vestments.[b]

Whole psalm. — A glorious psalm of praise sung during a tempest, the majesty of which shakes universal nature, so much so that the greatness of the power of the Lord is felt by all in heaven and on earth. This Lord is the God of His people, who blesses them with strength and peace. To rightly appreciate the feelings of the bard, one ought to realize an oriental storm, especially in the mountainous regions of Palestine, which, accompanied by the terrific echoes of the encircling mountains, by torrents of rain-like water-spouts, often scatters terror on man and beast, destruction on cities and fields. Wilson, the traveler, describes such a tempest in the neighborhood of Baalbek: "I was overtaken by a storm, as if the floodgates of heaven had burst; it came on in a moment, and raged with a power which suggested the end of the world. Solemn darkness covered the earth; the rain descended in torrents, and sweeping down the mountain side, became by the fearful power of the storm transmuted into thick clouds of fog." Compare also our Lord's parable, taken from life, in Matt. vii. 27. — *Augustus F. Tholuck.*

[a] Ps. lxxxix. 6.

[b] 2 Chron. xx. 21; Ps. cx. 3.

The Sept. indicates that this Ps. was connected with the feast of Pentecost, wh. was the memorial of giving of law on Sinai.

3–6. (3) **voice,** *etc.*, the thunder heard at first muttering in the distance. **the waters,** those collected in the storm-cloud upon wh. Jehovah rides. (4) **powerful,** expressing the feeling produced as the storm comes nearer. The Heb. expression "in might;" "in majesty;" is more vigorous. (5) **breaketh the cedars,** the effect of the lightning, or of the wind.[c] (6) **skip,** a very strong poetical figure of the waving of mountain forests before the wind. **Sirion,** the Sidonian name for Hermon. **unicorn,** *R. V.*, "wild ox," Nu. xxiii. 22.

The voice of the Lord (vs. 4). — I. Let us notice the modes in which God speaks, or makes communications to men. He speaks — 1. In the structure and arrangements of material nature; 2. In the dispensations and the government of Providence; 3. In the messages of revealed truth. II. The attributes by which these communications are prominently distinguished. 1. Consider the glory of His nature from which the communications come; 2. The nature and contents of the communications themselves; 3. The issues in which neglect of or attention to these communications is to emanate. III. The tribute which these communications, made by God to man, imperatively require. 1. Faith is required; 2. Also gratitude; 3. And prayer. — *J. Parsons.*

Thunder in the poets. — The poets of all lands make frequent reference to the thunder. The following extracts are from Æschylus and Milton:

> "I feel in very deep
> The firm earth rock; the thunder's deepening roar
> Rolls with redoubled rage; the bickering flames
> Flash thick; the eddying sands are whirl'd on high;
> In dreadful opposition, the wild winds
> Rend the vexed air; the boisterous billows rise,
> Confounding earth and sky, the impetuous storm
> Rolls all its terrible fury." — *Potter's Trans.*

> "Either tropic now
> 'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven, the clouds
> From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
> Fierce rain, with lightning mix'd, water with fire,
> In ruin reconcil'd; nor slept the winds
> Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
> From the four hinges of the world, and fell
> On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines,
> Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
> Bow'd their stiff necks, laden with stormy blasts,
> Or torn up sheer." — *Paradise Regained.*

[c] "The ancient expositors remind us that the breaking of the cedar trees by the wind is a figure of the laying low of the lofty and proud things of this world, by the rushing mighty wind of the Holy Spirit." — *Wordsworth.*

"The priests and Levites in Jehovah's sanctuary on earth attired themselves, on special occasions, in suitable vestments to do Him service; so the angels are bidden to make a similar preparation." — *Spk. Com.*

"The call to worship in these two verses chimes in with the loud pealing thunder, which is the church bell of the universe ringing kings and angels, and all the sons of earth to their devotions." — *Spurgeon.*

"The expression may pos. ref. to the Mediterranean Sea, fr. which the storm comes up." — *J. D. Michaelis.*

"For they can conquer who believe they can." — *Virgil.*

7—11. (7) **divideth,** cleaveth, "sendeth out forked lightning-shafts."[a] "Parts the blaze of the lightning, so as to give it the forked appearance." (8) **Kadesh,** Ge. xiv. 7; Nu. xiii. 26; N. W. of the wilderness of Paran; reference to this district indicates the course of the storm as fr. N. to S. (9) **hinds to calve,** It refers to the premature birth due to the fright of the animals.[b] **discovereth,** *i. e.* strippeth bare. **temple,** *i. e.* heaven. **every one,** *better* "while in his temple all are saying, Glory."—*Cam. Bib.* (10) **upon,** or over, so as to control it. **flood,** vast deluge of rain accompanying the storm. (11) **with peace,** in the midst of, and after, storm.[c]

Terror caused by thunder. — "The voice of Jehovah (a common Hebrew phrase, denoting thunder) maketh the hinds to calve." Nor ought we to wonder that so timorous a creature as the hind should be so much affected by that awfully imposing sound, when some of the proudest men that ever existed have been made to tremble. Augustus, the Roman emperor, according to Suetonius, was so terrified when it thundered, that he wrapped a sealskin round his body, with a view of defending it from the lightning, and concealed himself in some secret corner till the tempest ceased. The tyrant Caligula, who sometimes affected to threaten Jupiter himself, covered his head, or hid himself under a bed; and Horace confesses he was reclaimed from atheism by the terror of thunder and lightning. — *Paxton.—Nature God's temple.* — I asked the earth, and it said, "I am not He," and all that is upon it made the same confession. I asked the sun, and the depths, and the creeping things that have life, and they answered, "We are not thy God; look thou above us." I asked the breezes and the gales; and the whole air with its inhabitants said to me, "Anaximenes is in error, I am not God." I asked the heaven, the sun, the moon, the stars. "We too," said they, "are not the God whom thou seekest." And I said to all the creatures that surround the doors of my fleshly senses, "Ye have said to me, of my God, that ye are not He; tell me somewhat of Him." And with a great voice they exclaimed, "He made us." — *Augustine.*

PSALM THE THIRTIETH.

author — unknown

Composed on recovery from dangerous illness.

1—3. (1) **extol,** or eulogize, elevated by praise.[d] **lifted me up,** as out of a well, or pit; fr. the depths of my suffering.[e] (2) **healed me,** "best taken literally of restoration from illness." (3) **grave,** *Sheol,* abode of spirits. **kept me alive,** through sickness, or danger. **should not,** *etc.*, or *from those that, etc.*[f]

Note on title of this Ps. — It was common, when any person had finished a house, and entered into it, to celebrate it with great rejoicing, and keep a festival, to which his friends were invited, and to perform some religious ceremonies, to secure the protection of heaven. Thus when the second temple was finished, the priests and Levites, and the rest of the captivity, kept the dedication of the house of God with joy, and offered numerous sacrifices (Ezra vi. 16). We read in the New Testament of the feast of the dedication, appointed by Judas Maccabæus in memory of the purification and restoration of the temple of Jerusalem, after it had been defiled and laid in ruins by Antiochus Epiphanes; and celebrated annually, to the time of its destruction by Titus, by solemn sacrifices, music, songs, and hymns to the praise of God; and feasts, and everything that could give the people pleasure, for eight days successively (Josephus). This was customary even among private persons. The Romans also dedicated their temples and their theatres. So also they acted with respect to their statues, palaces, and houses. — *Chandler.*

4—6. (4) **at . . holiness,**[g] *R. V.*, to his holy name, *lit. to the memorial,* the sacred title by which Israel remembers God: *see* Ex. iii. 15. (5) **moment,** "relatively, the longest experience of Divine anger by the pious is momentary." **favour,** *etc.*, read, His favor is lifelong, or a lifetime.[h] **for a night,**[i] "weeping may come in to lodge at even, but in the morning there is singing." *Cam. Bib.* **joy,** or singing. (6) **prosperity,** or security. **never be moved,** so I needed the affliction to cure me of my presumption.

Life in God's favor (vs. 5). — I. What is God's favor? 1. His goodness in the ordinary course of providence; 2. Signal acts of discriminating providence; 3. Special fruits of His distinguishing grace; 4. Manifestations of His favor to the soul. II. How is this said to be life? 1. It is the cause of life; 2. It is the object of life; 3. The rule of life; 4. The end of life. III. To whom is

a "The vivid, zigzag, serpent-like, character of the forked-lightning flash is given in a few words."—*Perowne.*

b "During thunderstorms the antelopes flee in consternation, and the poor Bechuanas start off the morning following such a storm in quest of the young which have been cast off through horror."—*Moffat's South Africa.*

c "The Psalm begins with a *Gloria in excelsis,* and ends with a *Pax in terris.*"—*Delitzsch.*

"Many men affect to despise fear, and, in preaching, resent any appeal to it; but not to fear where there is occasion is as great a weakness as to fear unduly, without reason. God planted fear in the soul as truly as He planted hope or courage. It is the soul's signal for rallying."—*Beecher.*

d Fr. Lat. *ex,* out of; *tollere,* to lift, take up, or raise.

e 2 Sa. vii. 1.

f "In this case the meaning would be, that while others are perishing, God has preserved the psalmist's life."—*Spk. Com.*

g Is. xxvi. 8; Hos. xii. 5.

h "The beauty of the antithesis is lost in the *A. V.* The Heb. *lit.* is, 'For (there is) a moment in His anger, life in His favor.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*

i Lit., "In the eventide weeping takes up its abode,

God's favor life? 1. To young converts; 2. Returning backsliders; 3. In the time of affliction; 4. To dying persons. IV. The nature of this life. A life of justification, sanctification, covenant supplies and glory. V. What a fearful case are they in who have not God's favor. — *Heywood.*

Preparation for death. — When you lie down at night compose your spirits, as if you were not to awake till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning consider that new day as your last, and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh of which you will never see the morning, or that morning of which you will never see the night; but which of your mornings or nights will be such you know not. Let the mantle of worldly enjoyments hang loose about you, that it may be easily dropped when death comes to carry you into another world. When the corn is forsaking the ground it is ready for the sickle; when the fruit is ripe it falls off the tree easily. So when a Christian's heart is truly weaned from the world, he is prepared for death, and it will be the more easy for him. A heart disengaged from the world is a heavenly one, and then we are ready for heaven when our heart is there before us. — *Barton.*

but at morn (there is) a shout of joy." "Just as the sun in Eastern lands, without any long prelude of twilight to announce his coming, leaps, as it were, in a moment above the horizon, so does the light of God's love dispel in a moment the long night and darkness of sorrow. See the beautiful parallel, Isa. liv. 7, 8." — *Perowne.*

7—12. (7) **mountain,** Mount Zion,[a] fig. of David himself. "Jehovah had made his kingdom strong to David, when on account of his self-confidence He made him to feel, how he is everything only through Him, and without Him absolutely nothing." — *Delitzsch.* **hide thy face,** comp. Ps. xxii. 24; xxvii. 9.[b] **troubled,** a strong word, indic. utmost dismay. (9) **profit,** gain to God. **in my blood,** or violent death. The living only can praise Him. **dust,** the body returned to its dust.[c] (10) **mercy,** bec. affliction reminds of sin. (11) **hast turned,** the thankful joy of one whose prayer is answered. **dancing,** the expression of a bright rejoicing heart. (12) **my glory,** my soul, vii. 5; lvii. 8. **for ever,** all my life.

a 2 Sa. v. 7-10.

b See also De. xxxi. 17; Ps. civ. 29.

Death. —

So live that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged, to his dungeon; but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams. — *Bryant.*

c "The truth seems to be that whilst *the faith* of the O. T. saints *in God* was strong and childlike, their *hope of immortality* was at best but dim and wavering." — *Perowne.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-FIRST.

author,— unknown

1—5. (1) **ashamed,** by the failure of my trust in Thee, and by the success of mine enemies.[d] **in thy righteousness,** in vindication and illustration of Thy righteous ways of dealing with Thy servants. (2) **Bow down,** incline. **strong rock,** or like a hill-fort unto me. **for . . me,** "a mountain — fortress, to help me."—*Polych. Bib.* (3) **art my rock,** then prove Thyself to be what Thou art.[e] **name's sake,** as my rock, and my shepherd, defend, lead, and guide; *cf.* Ps. xxiii: 2, 3. (4) **net,** perhaps hunting of Saul, or devices of Ahithophel are referred to. (5) **Into,** *etc.*, words sanctified by our Lord's use of them.[f] "The man of God commends to God, not his body or his bodily life alone, but the life of his spirit, which is more precious."—*Perowne.* **commit,** *R. V.*, "commend."

A prayer offered in time of grievous affliction.

Dedicated to the chief musician or precentor.

d Ps. xxv. 2.

e "This is the illogical language of intense feeling." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

f Lu. xxiii. 46.

Prayer for Divine guidance (vs. 3). — Consider the petition itself. It implies — I. That he feels his need of being led; 2. A persuasion of the willingness of God to lead; 3. Faith. II. The methods by which God leads. 1. By His providence; 2. By His Word; 3. By His Spirit. III. The encouragements thus to pray.

"*Into Thy hands.*" — This psalm sparkles all through with lamps which have lighted the steps of men in dark places. Above all, the 5th verse has given the closing words to many a life. It was one of the seven sayings on the cross, and the last — "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." It was the dying word of Stephen, addressed to Christ Himself. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." It was the parting word of Luther, of Knox, of John Huss, of Jerome of Prague, of Julian Palmer, one of the noted martyrs in the reign of the English Mary, of Francis Teissier, the first martyr of the "Desert," who

"The body being only the covering of the soul, at its dissolution we shall discover the secrets of nature — the darkness shall be dispelled, and our souls irradiated with light and glory; and as now we cannot lift up our eyes towards

ascended the scaffold singing it, in 1686, and of countless more. "The Lord Himself gave the word, and great has been the company of those who published it." No watchword of the Captain of salvation has been taken up by so many sons whom He has led to glory through the valley of the shadow of death. — *Ker.*

the sun without dazzling, what shall we do when we behold the Divine light in its illustrious original?"—*Seneca.*

6—8. (6) **have hated,** *R. V.*, "I hate." **them that regard,** the worshipers of. **lying vanities,** false gods which cannot help their worshipers.[a] (7) **considered,** *R. V.*, "seen." **known,**[b] with the added sense of *approving*, which is usual in Scripture. **my . . adversities,** *R. V.*, *marg.* "the adversities of my soul." (8) **shut,** *etc.*, delivered over to. "A truly Davidic expression."[c] **large room,** enabled me to act with freedom. Ps. xviii. 19.

a De. xxxii. 21.

b "Thou hast taken cognizance of the distresses of my soul."—*Hupfeld and Delitzsch.*

Thou hast known my soul in adversities. — One day a person who, by the calamities of war, sickness, and other affliction, had been reduced from a state of affluence to penury, came to Gotthold in great distress. He complained that he had just met one of his former acquaintances, who was even not distantly related to him, but that he had not condescended to bow, far less to speak to him, and had turned his eyes away, and passed him as if he had been a stranger. "O sir," he exclaimed with a sigh, "how it pained me! I felt as if a dagger had pierced my heart!" Gotthold replied, "Don't think it strange at all. It is the way of the world to look high, and to pass unnoticed that which is humble and lowly. I know, however, of *One* who, though He dwelleth on high, humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth (Ps. cxiii. 5, 6), and of whom the royal prophet testifies: 'Thou hast known my soul in adversities.'" Yes; though we have lost our rich attire, and come to Him in rags, He still recognizes, and is not ashamed to own us. — *Christian Scriver.*

c 1 Sa. xxiii. 12.

"What if the leaves were to fall a-weeping, and say, 'It will be so painful for us to be pulled from our stalks when autumn comes.' It is hard to die when the time is not ripe. When it is, it will be easy."—*Beecher.*

9—13. (9) **eye . . belly,** *my soul and body.* My whole person. (10) **grief,** anguish. **sighing,** the expression of inward distress. **faileth,** *lit.*, tatters. **mine iniquity,** "there was some sin wh. called for chastisement, or required the discipline of suffering." **consumed,**[d] comp. Ps. xxxii. 3, 4, (11) **was,** *R. V.*, "am become." **reproach,** *etc.*, "The reproach originated with his enemies, but was extended to, and taken up by, his neighbors; so that his acquaintance, those who ought to have known him best, became terrified." **fled,** as from a leper. (12) **forgotten,** by men, not God. **broken vessel,** the type of fragility and worthlessness. (13) **slander,** calumny.[e]

d Job. xx. 11.

"Not one shall fall in the march of life,
Not one shall fall in the hour of strife,
Who trusts in the Lord's right hand;
Arise and possess the land!"[f]

Forgotten.— A striking instance of how the greatest princes are forgotten in death is found in the deathbed of Louis XIV. "The Louis that was, lies forsaken, a mass of abhorred clay; abandoned 'to some poor persons, and priests of the *Chapelle Ardente*,' who make haste to put him 'in two lead coffins, pouring in abundant spirits of wine.' The new Louis with his court is rolling towards Choisy, through the summer afternoon; the royal tears still flow; but a word mispronounced by Monseigneur d'Artois sets them all laughing, and they weep no more." — *Thomas Carlyle.* — *Rev. Gilbert Rule* (*vs.* 13).— Mr. Rule was minister of Alnwick, in Northumberland, during a period of persecution. Being compelled to resign his charge, he went to Berwick, where, for the support of his family, he engaged in the medical profession. His enemies continuing their persecution, engaged some of the worst of men to waylay and murder him. A messenger was sent to him at midnight, to request him to visit a person in the country who was represented as very ill. The kind-hearted man expressed so much sympathy for the supposed sick person, and so readily prepared to go to his relief, that the messenger relented, and he could not forbear telling Mr. Rule the whole affair. Thus his life was spared, and God showed how easily He can bring to naught the counsel of the wicked.

e All these expressions are singularly appropriate, as describing the state of things in connection with the Absalomic revolt.

"My joy is death! Death, at whose name I oft have been afear'd, because I wish'd this world's eternity!"—*Shakespeare.*

14—18. (14) **But,** introducing the deep confidence of his heart in God, amid both his consciousness of sin and peril of life.[f] (15) **My times,** the various vicissitudes of my life: life's "sundry and manifold changes." (16) **face to shine,** Ps. iv. 6, fig. borrowed from the high priest's blessing (Nu. vi. 25).— *Perowne.* **mercies,** *R. V.*, "loving kindness." (17) **silent,** *etc.*, *marg. let them be cut off for the grave.* (18) **lying lips,** that so freely slander the King. **proudly,** with stiff neck. **contemptuously,** with high and insolent demeanor.

f "Mighty strength of faith, when a man, conscious of his own sinfulness, and with a world in arms against him, yea, forsaken of his own friends, can still turn to God, and say, 'Thou art my God.'"—*Perowne.*

Our times in God's hand (*vs.* 15).— Consider— I. Our dependence on God. In His hands are—1. The occurrences of life; 2. The seasons of death. II.

Our security in God. 1. None can destroy us before our time; 2. None can hurt us without His permission. Learn — To seek God without delay, to serve Him without fear, to trust Him without carefulness.— *C. Simeon.*

Waiting the Lord's time.— When the Rev. George Whitefield was last in America, the Rev. W. Tennent paid him a visit as he was passing through New Jersey; and one day dined with him and other ministers at a gentleman's house. After dinner Mr. Whitefield, said that he was weary with the burden of the day; and declared the great consolation, that in a short time his work would be done, when he should depart and be with Christ. Mr. Whitefield said, "Well, Brother Tennent, you are the oldest man among us; do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand, when you will be called home?" Mr. Tennent bluntly answered, "I have no wish about it." Mr. Whitefield pressed him again. Mr. Tennent answered, "No, sir, it is no pleasure to me at all; and if you knew your duty, it would be none to you. I have nothing to do with death; my business is to live as long as I can, as well as I can, and to serve my Master as faithfully as I can, until He shall think proper to call me home. But now, brother, let me ask you a question. What do you think I should say, if I were to send my man into the field to plough; and if at noon I should go to the field, and find him lounging under a tree, and complaining, 'Master, I am weary of the work you have appointed me; let me return home, and be discharged from this hard service.' What should I say? Why, that he was a lazy fellow, and that it was his business to do the work that I had appointed him, until I should think fit to call him home."

"The world is wide
In time and tide,
And God is guide;
Then do not hurry.
That man is blest
Who does his best
And leaves the rest;
Then do not worry."
—*Chas. F. Deems.*

"What can harm thee, when all must first touch God, within whom thou has inclosed thyself."—*R. Leighton.*

"When the cloud of trouble hideth the Lord's favor, faith knoweth it may shine again, and therefore prayeth through the cloud for the dissolving of it."—*David Dickson.*

19—22. (19) **laid up,** ready in store, waiting for necessary occasions. God is never taken unawares by the distresses of His people.[a] "Can the author of this serenely joyous thanksgiving, *vss.* 19–24, be the despised and downcast sufferer of *vss.* 9–18? If so, it was surely not at the same moment. An interval has elapsed; his prayer has been answered; the danger is past."— *Cam. Bib.* (20) **hide them,** as Israel was hidden by the pillar cloud, shining light to them, and being dread darkness to their foes. **the pride,** or violent schemes. **pavilion,** booth, tent of boughs, sheltering from heat. (21) **strong city,** Zion. "The strong city is generally explained as God Himself, and His powerful and gracious protection. But why should not an actual city be meant, Ziklag namely?"— *Delitzsch.* (22) **in my haste,** when fleeing in fear. "Humbly he confesses his want of faith in the hour of trial, when he thought himself out of God's sight, and contrasts it with God's goodness."— *Cam. Bib.*

The goodness of God to His believing people (*vss.* 19, 20). — In speaking of His goodness, we shall consider it — I. In a general view. Notice — 1. That which is laid up for them: 2. That which God has actually wrought for them. II. With a particular reference to their intercourse with the ungodly world. 1. Exceedingly bitter are those pains which men inflict upon each other by calumnies and reproaches; 2. But against these God does provide an effectual antidote. Apply — Seek to attain the character here drawn; let us enjoy the privileges conferred upon us. — *Simeon.*

God's treasuries. —

His are the mountains, and the valleys His,
And the resplendent rivers — His t' enjoy
With a propriety that none can feel;
But who with filial confidence, inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
And smiling, say, My Father made them all!
Are they not His by a peculiar right,
And by an emphasis of interest his,
Whose eyes they filled with tears of holy joy,
Whose heart with praises, and whose exalted mind
With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
That plann'd, and built, and still upholds a world
So clothed with beauty for rebellious man. — *Cowper.*

a "We may compare the Arabic line, 'Never be cast down, O afflicted one, for God has many mercies *hidden*' (in store for thee)."— *Jennings and Lowe.*

vs. 22. The meaning is simply as *A. V.* has it; "For I said in my haste." According to Gesenius and Fürst, however, we should substitute for "haste," "fear," or "terror."

"What a mercy that if *we* believe not, yet God abideth faithful, hearing prayer even when we are laboring under doubts which dishonor His name." *Spurgeon.*

23, 24. (23) **O love,** *etc.*, he would have all learn fr. God's gracious ways with him. **faithful,** those in whom is found both trust and steadfastness. (24) **hope,** "hope and waiting are marks peculiar of the O. T dispensation."[b]

b Ps. xxvii. 14.

"Certain it is that, among the poor, the approach of dissolution is usually regarded with a quiet and natural composure, which it is consolatory to contemplate, and which is as far removed from the dead palsy of unbelief as it is from the delirious raptures of fanaticism. Theirs is a true, unhesitating faith, and they are willing to lay down the burden of a weary life, in the sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality." — *Southey.*

Two counsels of wisdom. — I. Love the Lord. 1. Reason says "Love the Lord;" 2. Gratitude says "Love the Lord;" 3. Experience says "Love the Lord." II. Be of good courage. There are differences as to courage. 1. There is the courage of the flesh; 2. There is the courage of the mind. This is higher; 3. But noblest of all is the courage of the soul. This implies a heart that is right with God, and hence a heart that is loyal to truth and to duty, a heart that is continually being recruited with new strength, and that is ready for any fate. — *Watkinson.*

Strengthened. — Some time ago a young girl, belonging to a prominent family in a Southern town, was stricken with a loathsome and incurable disease. For months she bore intense agony, the mere sight of which made strong men turn pale; but whenever a moment of relief came she was hopeful, loving and gay, as if in health, eagerly seeing the villagers in whom she was interested, and saying once to her father, who had been a soldier: "When *your* captain ordered you to march over a bad bit of ground, you knew he had a reason for it. You did it without complaining. So will I." When at last she was laid to rest, an intelligent workingman came up to her father as he turned from her grave, and said respectfully: "Sir, there's hardly a man or woman, black or white, in this village, who has not been helped by the sight of that child's courage and faith in the Master she loved. Perhaps you don't understand why such pain was sent to her, but we do. She suffered for us." The meanest man who receives his orders to face pain and misery like a faithful soldier, may see some day how he helped to win the victory of life for the great hosts of men. — *Youth's Companion.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-SECOND.

author, — David

The second of the seven penitential Psalms. To follow Ps. LI — the confession, — this records forgiveness received.

"The lessons of the Psalm are summed up in Prov. xxviii. 13; or 1 John i. 8, 9." — *Cam. Bib.*

1, 2. (1) **Blessed,**[a] comp. Ps. i. 1. "The first beatitude of the Psalter is pronounced on an upright life; but since 'there is no man that sinneth not' (1 Ki. viii. 46) there is another beatitude reserved for true penitence." **transgression,** open defection fr. God's covenant.[b] **sin,** personal defilement. **covered,** and so hidden, that it is to God the Holy One as if it had not taken place. The idea of covering underlies the conception of atonement. (2) **imputeth,** reckoneth to a person what is not properly his (Le. vii. 18). **iniquity,** deviation fr. that wh. is well pleasing to God: perversity. **no guile,** no deceitfulness; absolute sincerity.[c]

The forgiveness of sins (*vs.* 1). — I. The description of those who are pronounced blessed. Not the wealthy, *etc.* 1. They are sinners; 2. They are pardoned sinners; 3. They are pardoned by the Lord. II. The ground of pardon. 1. The meritorious cause is the work of Christ; 2. Yet not all will be saved; faith is necessary, and also repentance, and also confession.

The Thirty-second Psalm. — As if to show that the follies of the most frivolous courts cannot shut out the thought from the occasional view of the real and deeper side of life, this psalm is said to have been a favorite with Diana of Poitiers. — *Ker.* — *The Penitential Psalms.* — When Galileo was imprisoned by the Inquisition at Rome, for asserting the Copernican system, he was enjoined, as a penance, to repeat the Seven Penitential Psalms every week for three years. This must have been intended as extorting a sort of confession from him of his guilt, and acknowledgment of the justice of his sentence; and in which there certainly was some cleverness and, indeed, humor, however adding to the iniquity (or foolishness) of the proceeding. Otherwise it is not easy to understand what idea of painfulness or punishment the good fathers could attach to a devotional exercise such as this, which, in whatever way, could only have been agreeable and consoling to their prisoner. — *M. Montague.*

3—5. (3) **kept silence,** feeling sin, but restraining repentance and confession.[d] **roaring,** or groaning. "Bitter struggles of conscience, with severe prostration of bodily powers."[e] (4) **thy hand,** *etc.*, God's punishing hand felt in the sinner's own spirit. **moisture,** vital juice, dried up by inward conflicts, and hardening himself against God's humblings.[f] (5) **acknowledged,** or made confessions, after Nathan's visit, and found peace. **thou forgavest,** God ever graciously responds to the humble and penitent soul.[g]

Confession and forgiveness (*vs.* 5). — From this we gather — I. That the condition of forgiveness is confession. II. That confession must be made to

a Matt. v. 3-11; Ro. iv. 7.

b "Sin is called transgression, as being a breaking loose or tearing away fr. God." — *Delitzsch.*

c "The forgiveness of God must be based on sincerity on the part of the forgiven." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

d "Reference is made to the year during wh. Dav. had cherished his sin, without confessing his guilt. 2 Sa. xii. 1-5." — *Wordsworth.*

e Ps. vi. 2 cii. 5.

f "In the summer-heat of anxiety his vital moisture underwent a change; it burned and dried up."—*Delitzsch.*

g "This accords exactly with the

God and not to man. III. Confession to God secures forgiveness with, as the context shows, increase of grace and holiness. Apply:— Cease from man whose breath, *etc.* Let us go with boldness to the throne of grace.— *Analyst.*

The drought of summer (*vs.* 4).— The fields of Canaan are refreshed with frequent and copious rains, while some of the neighboring countries are scarcely ever moistened with a shower. In the winter months the rain falls indiscriminately, but seldom in the summer. Soon after the heats commence, the grass withers, the flower fades, every green thing is dried up by the roots, and the fields, so lately clothed with the richest verdure, and adorned with the loveliest flowers, are converted into a brown and arid wilderness. To the uniform withered appearance of the field during the reign of an Eastern summer, and not to any particular year of drought, the Psalmist refers in these plaintive terms: "My moisture is turned into the drought of summer." When conviction slept, and conscience was silent, the soul of David resembled a field refreshed by the genial showers of heaven; but the moment God in anger entered into judgment with him, and set his sins in order before his face, his courage failed, his beauty was turned into corruption, and his strength into weakness; "the commandment came, sin revived and he died."— *Paxton.*

narrative. Nathan asks no more from the king, and at once declares his pardon. 2 Sa xii. 13."—*Spk. Com.*

"If God striketh those so sore whom he favoreth, how sharply and sore will he strike them whom he favoreth not."—*Gregory.*

6, 7. (6) **shall every one,** *R. V.*, "let every one." **in a time,**[a] *lit.* of finding or a time of acceptance, ere his humblings pass into overwhelming judgments, **floods,** *etc.*, the fig. of affliction (Ps. lxix. 1, 2). (7) **Thou . . place,** Adam fled *from* God to hide, but Dav. flees to hide *in* Him. **compass,** give me songs wherever I may go.[b]

Him.—Zenon hearing news he had lost all by sea, said, only thus, "Thou hast done very well, Fortune, to leave me nothing but my cloak." Another, called Anaxarchus, when as Nicocreon the tyrant commanded he should be beaten to death in a mortar, spake thus to the executioner, "Beat and bray as long as thou wilt Anaxarchus, his bag or satchel (so he called his own body), but Anaxarchus thou canst not touch." Yet these, making so small reckoning of their goods and body, set their mind notwithstanding at a high rate. The mind of a man is himself, say they. Hence it is that Julius Cæsar, when Amyclas, the pilot, was greatly afraid of the tempest, spake to him thus: "What meanest thou to fear, base fellow? dost thou not know thou carriest Cæsar with thee?" As if he should say, Cæsar's body may well be drowned, as any other man's may; but his mind, his magnanimity, his valor, his fortitude, can never be drowned. Thus far went philosophy; but divinity goeth a degree further. For philosophy defineth *him*, that is, a man, by his reason, and the moral virtues of the mind; but divinity defineth a Christian man by his faith, and his conjunction thereby with Christ. Excellently saith Saint Austin: "Whence comes it that the soul dieth? Because faith is not in it. Whence that the body dieth? Because a soul is not in it. Therefore the soul of thy soul is faith." So that if we would know what is a faithful man, we must define him, not by his natural soul, as he is reasonable, but by the soul of his soul, which is his faith. And then we easily answer the objection, that a flood may come near a faithful man's goods, near his body, near his reasonable soul; but to his faith, that is, to HIM, it can never come near. — *Thomas Playfere.*

a "At the time of visitation."—*Kay.*

b Ps. v. 12.

"He who seeks Jehovah when He may be found, shall not be swept away when His judgments are let loose like a flood of waters upon the earth."—*Perowne.*

"Remarkable answers to prayer very much quicken the prayerfulness of other godly persons. Where one man finds a golden nugget others feel inclined to dig."—*Spurgeon.*

"The floods shall come, and the waves shall rage, and toss themselves like Atlantic billows; whirlpools and waterspouts shall be on every hand, but the praying man shall be at a safe distance, most surely secured from every ill."—*Spurgeon.*

8—11. (8) **I,** *i. e.* Jehovah. **guide . . eye,** or "my eye being upon thee."[c] (9) **mule,** (2 Sa. xiii. 29). **lest,** *etc.*, better rendered, "or it will not come nigh thee" to obey thee.[d] (10) **sorrows,** as Divine punishment. (11) **Be glad,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. xxxi. 24.

The advantages of religion (*vs.* 10). — I. The sorrows of the wicked. 1. Who are the wicked? 2. What are their sorrows? II. The advantages of believers. 1. Who are believers? Their trust in God is enlightened, not presumptuous; heartfelt, not hypocritical; active, not indolent: evangelical, not legal; 2. What are their advantages? They are the objects of Divine mercy. It environs, it defends them. — *G. Brook.*

Mercy. — "Mark that text," said Richard Adkins to his grandson Abel, who was reading to him the thirty-second Psalm. "Mark that text, 'He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.' I read it in my youth and believed it; and now I read it in my old age, thank God, I know it to be true. Oh! it is a blessed thing in the midst of the joys and sorrows of the world, Abel, to trust in the Lord." — *Christian Treasury.* — *Rejoice.* — When

c "The guidance with the eye is a gentle guidance. A look is enough, as opposed to that bit and bridle which the mulish nature requires."—*Perowne.*

d "Whose adornment is in bit and bridle (not as man's ornament), which is in the graciousness of a pliant and ready will. The sense has been happily expressed by Horace: 'A horse's ear is in his

bitted mouth.' "—*Wordsworth.*

"Except the eye of God can be put out, we cannot be put out of His sight and His care." — *John Donne.*

author, — unknown: composed after the captivity

Subject is, — The God who rules the world is also the defender of His people.

a Fr. A. S. *cymlic*, suitable, fit.

b Ps. cxlvii. 1.

c "There is no distinct personification of the word, but a preparatory stage in the development of that fundamental truth of Christianity is traceable in this Psalm." — *Spk. Com*

"God writes with a pen that never blots, speaks with a tongue that never slips, acts with a hand that never fails. Bless His name." — *Spurgeon.*

"The expression describes the convex surface of the ocean apparently overhanging the plains, but it undoubtedly includes a reference to Ex. xv. 8; Jos. iii 13-16."—*Spk. Com.*

d Ps. civ 24; Is. vi. 3; xl. 9; Ha. iii. 3.

"For who can doubt that God can do as He wills upon earth, since he so tamed the unconquerable nature of the sea?"—*Hugo Grotius.*

"A similar grand description occurs in the Hindu mythology, as the following quotation from the *Upanishad* will show: — 'In the

the poet Carpani inquired of his friend Haydn, how it happened that his church music was always so cheerful, the great composer made a most beautiful reply. "I cannot," he said, "make it otherwise; I write according to the thoughts I feel: when I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit." — *Whitecross.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-THIRD.

1—4. (1) **Rejoice,** shout for joy. **for,** *R. V.* omits. **praise is comely,**[a] words and mode of expression belonging to the later times after the exile.[b] (2) **Praise,** *R. V.*, "Give thanks unto." **harp,** only two instruments are mentioned in this *vs.* the psaltery, played with the fingers, and the harp, an instrument played on with a plectrum. **sing,** *R. V.*, "sing praises . . . psaltery of ten strings." (3) **new song,** "an expression especially characteristic of the later compositions." A new song is one springing freshly from a thankful heart. **loud noise,** accompaniments of trumpets and cymbals. (4) **word,**[c] all revelations of God's will. **works are,** *R. V.*, "work is done in faithfulness."

True worship. — I. The worship of God is the chief joy of the good. II. The worship of God is the highest duty of the good. 1. It is agreeable to their character. 2. It is agreeable to their obligations. 3. It is agreeable to their circumstances. III. The worship of God is the noblest employment of the good. The worship of God in song combines — 1. Unity and variety. 2. Sameness and freshness. 3. Devotion and art. 4. Fellowship and individuality. — *Watkinson.*

Power of music. — Napoleon's army came to a pass in the Alps where the rocks could not be surmounted by the ammunition wagons. He went to the leader of the band, and asked for his portfolio. Then, turning over until he came to an inspiring march, he said, "Play that." The whole band struck the air with their instruments; and over the rocks went the ammunition wagons. While Dr. Kane was in the Arctic regions, ice-bound, his men were kept from despair, and probably mutiny, by one of their number playing on an old violin. — *R. West.*

All His works are done in truth. —

Truth is in each flower
As well as in the solemnest things of God:
Truth is the voice of nature and of time —
Truth is the startling monitor within us —
Naught is without it, it comes from the stars,
The golden sun and every breeze that blows —
Truth, it is God! and God is everywhere! — *W. T. Bacon.*

5—9. (5) **righteousness,** the principle. **judgment,** the manifestation or expression. Reference is to righteousness in God, not in man. **goodness,**[d] *R. V.*, "loving kindness." (6) **heavens made,** Ge. i. 6; ii. 1; Ps. cxlviii. 5. **host,** term combining the two ideas of multitude and order. **breath,** word of the Lord. (7) **heap,** "a fig. suggested by the appearance of the waves of the sea." **the depth,** *R. V.*, "the deeps." (8) **in awe,** of His sublime power. (9) **stood fast,** *i. e.* it was as God commanded, Ge. i. 3.

Praise. — A fourfold argument for praise, from the truth, the faithfulness, the justice, and goodness of God. I. "For the word of the Lord is right. II. "All His works are done in truth." III. "He loveth righteousness and judgments." IV. "The earth is full of His goodness." — *Adam Clarke.*

The waters of the sea. — Of all objects that I have ever seen, there is none which affects my imagination so much as the sea or ocean. I cannot see the heavings of this prodigious bulk of waters, even in a calm, without a very pleasing astonishment; but when it is worked up in a tempest, so that the horizon on every side is nothing but foaming billows and floating mountains, it is impossible to describe the agreeable horror that rises from such a prospect. A troubled ocean, to a man who sails upon it, is, I think, the biggest object that he can see in motion, and consequently gives his imagination one of the highest kinds of pleasures that can arise from greatness. I must confess it is impossible for me to survey this world of fluid matter without

thinking on the Hand that first poured it out, and made a proper channel for its reception. Such an object naturally raises in my thoughts the idea of an Almighty Being, and convinces me of His existence as much as a metaphysical demonstration. The imagination prompts the understanding, and by the greatness of the sensible object, produces in it the idea of a Being who is neither circumscribed by time nor space. — *Spectator.*

10—12. (10) **bringeth,** *etc.* God is in all creation: He is also in Providence. **devices,** self-willed plannings.[a] (11) **counsel,** Pr. xix. 21. (12) **Blessed,** *etc.*, comp. De. xxxiii. 29.

J. Knox (*vs.* 10).— This celebrated Scotch reformer had many surprising escapes from the malicious designs of his enemies. He was accustomed to sit at the table in his own house, with his back to the window; on one particular evening, however, he would neither himself sit in his chair, nor allow any one else to do so. That very night a bullet was shot in at the window purposely to kill him; it grazed the chair in which he usually sat, and made a hole in the foot of the candlestick. — *The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought.*— The more the Pharisees of old, and their successors the prelates of late, opposed the truth, the more it prevailed. The Reformation in Germany was much furthered by the Papists' opposition; yea, when two kings (amongst many others), wrote against Luther, namely, Henry VIII. of England, and Ludovicus of Hungary, this kingly title being entered into the controversy (making men more curious to examine the matter), stirred up a general inclination towards Luther's opinions. — *Richard Younge.*

13—15. (13) **looketh,** with minute and careful inspection. (14) **place . . habitation,** not described, but conceived as giving Him vantage-ground for His observations. (15) **alike,** *R. V.*, "He th. fashioneth the hearts of them all, th. considereth," *etc.*[b]

The Lord looks upon us (*vs.* 13).— I. Perhaps no figure of speech represents God in a more gracious light that when He is spoken of as looking upon us. II. How can we but love Him when we know that He marks our path and orders our ways? III. He regards the poorest of His saints to show Himself strong on behalf of those who fear Him.— *C. H. Spurgeon.*

Legh Richmond's son. — For the encouragement of young persons, mention might be made of Wilberforce Richmond, an interesting and pious son of Legh Richmond, who died early, and who could say, "There is not a Psalm I have not turned into a prayer." The same has been done by some who were familiar with the original Hebrew of the book. Thus the Rev. David Brown, a devout English clergyman, accustomed himself to use them in that language as the medium of his most private and earnest devotion, whether of contrition, supplication, or praise. In all affliction and in all rejoicing, he alike called upon God in the language of David.

16, 17. (16) **saved,** in battle. It is characteristic of the true Israelite that he looks to God's deliverance and defense, sees behind all second causes.[c] (17) **horse,** much esteemed by the surrounding nations for war purposes.[d]

Groundless trust. — As a passenger in a storm, that for shelter against the weather, steppeth out of the way, betaketh him to a fair spread oak, standeth under the bows, with his back close to the body of it, and findeth good relief thereby for the space of some time; till at length cometh a sudden gust of wind, that teareth down a main arm of it, which falling upon the poor passenger, either maimeth or mischieveth him that resorted to it for succor. Thus falleth it out with not a few, meeting in the world with many troubles, and with manifold vexations, they step aside out of their own way, and too, too often out of God's, to get under the wing of some great one, and gain, it may be, some aid and shelter thereby for a season; but after awhile, that great one himself coming down headlong, and falling from his former height of favor, or honor, they are also called in question, and to fall together with him, that might otherwise have stood long enough on their own legs, if they had not trusted to such an arm of flesh, such a broken staff that deceived them. — *Thomas Gataker.*

18—22. (18) **the eye,** *etc.*, Job xxxvi. 7. (19) **soul,** or life. **famine,** the common calamity of the East. (20) **shield,** or defense. (21) **rejoice . . trusted,** faith bringing present peace. (22) **according as we hope,** responsive to our attitude towards Thee.[e]

beginning was self alone; there was nothing else. He thought, Let Me create the worlds and He created these worlds.'"

a Ja. i. 13–15.

"The wheels in a watch or a clock move contrary one to another, some one way, some another, yet all serve the intent of the workman, to show the time, or to make the clock strike. So in the world, the providence of God may seem to run cross to his promises; one man takes this way, another runs that way; good men go one way, wicked men another, yet all in conclusion accomplish the will, and center in the purpose of God the great Creator of all things."—*Richard Sibbes.*

b "He at once moldeth their hearts, and understandeth all their wants."—*Hupfeld.* The deepest self-abasement often accompanies the fullest assurance of faith.

"True faith does not require you to see your name written in the book of life, it is sufficient for you to close with God on the ground of His sure word of promise."

c "The delusiveness of material resources is contrasted with Jehovah's care for His people."— *Cam. B.*

d "The king, mighty man (or warrior), and war-horse, are selected as types of earthly power in all its greatness."—*Perowne.*

"Do not speak of hindrances to keep you from Christ; the chief hindrance arises from yourself. To try to hide your sin from God is the greatest sin of all."

e "Our faith measures mercy (Matt. ix. 29), and if of grace, it is no more

of debt (Ro. xi. 6)." — *Fausset.*

"Two men give to the poor, one seeketh his reward in heaven, the other the praise of men. Thou in two seest one thing, God understandeth what is within. 'He understandeth all their works.'"—*Augustine*

"In our present imperfect state there is seldom or never true faith without some admixture of unbelief, any more than there can be a new man without the remains of the old one."

author, — unknown

Waiting for the Lord includes: I. Conviction — a persuasion that the Lord is the supreme good. II. Desire — it is expressed by hungering and thirsting after righteousness, *etc.* III. Hope. IV. Patience — God is never slack concerning His promise. — *William Jay.*

Trust. — There is an excellent story of a young man that was at sea in a mighty raging tempest; and when all the passengers were at their wits' end for fear, he only was merry; and when he was asked the reason of his mirth, he answered, "That the pilot of the ship was his father, and he knew his father would have a care of him." The great and wise God, who is our Father, hath from all eternity decreed what shall be the issue of all wars, what the event of all troubles; He is our pilot, He sits at the stern; and though the ship of the church or state be in a sinking condition, yet be of good comfort, our Pilot will have a care of us. There is nothing done in the lower house of Parliament on earth, but what is first decreed in the higher house in heaven. All the lesser wheels are ordered and overruled by the upper. Are not five sparrows, saith Christ, sold for a farthing? One sparrow is not worth half a farthing. And there's no man shall have half a farthing's worth of harm more than God hath decreed from all eternity. — *Edmund Calamy.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-FOURTH.

An alphabetical Psalm. Subject, the reflections of a delivered one.

1—5. (1) **at all times,** whensoever opportunity is offered. (2) **boast,** the Heb. implies grateful exultation.[a] **humble,** *R. V.*, "meek," in sense of those submitting patiently to affliction. (3) **magnify,** ascribe glory to. (4) **heard,** *R. V.*, "answered." (5) **lightened,** or brightened, by the uplifting on them of the shining of His countenance. **ashamed,** *R. V.*, "shall never be confounded."

A song of praise. — We should praise God — I. For what He is in Himself. This praise is — 1. Free; 2. Constant; 3. Exulting; 4. Influential; 5. Social. II. For what He does for His people. 1. Personal deliverance; 2. Brighter days for the afflicted; 3. Divine guardianship for the godly to the end. — *Watkinson.*

Looking at God. — The more we can think upon our Lord, and the less upon ourselves, the better. Looking to Him, as He is seated upon the right hand of the throne of God, will keep our heads, and especially our hearts, steady when going through the deep waters of affliction. Often have I thought of this when crossing the water opposite the old place of Langholm. I found, when I looked down on the water, I got dizzy; I therefore fixed my eyes upon a steady object on the other side, and got comfortably through. — *David Smith.* — *Prayer.* — In prayer the perfections of God, and especially His mercies in our redemption, should occupy our thoughts as much as our sins, our obligations to Him as much as our departures from Him. We should keep up in our hearts a constant sense of our own weakness, not with a design to discourage the mind and depress the spirits, but with a view to drive us out of ourselves in search of the Divine assistance. — *Hannah More.*

6—10. (6) **This poor man,** a personal testimony, designed to encourage others. (7) **The angel,** "that mysterious Being who appears as Jehovah's representative in His intercourse with man, called also *the angel of His presence* (Is. lxiii. 9). He protects those who fear Jehovah like an army encamping round a city to defend it (Zech. ix. 8); or perhaps, since he is 'the captain of Jehovah's host' (Josh. v. 14), he is to be thought of as surrounding them with the angelic legions at his command."— *Cam. Bib.* (8) **taste,** gain a personal experience. (9) **no want,** many fancied wants there may be, but no real wants. (10) **young lions,**[b] not cubs, but lions in full vigor of life and energy.

Taste and see. — The testimony of experience. I. Personal experience alone can establish the truths of the Scriptures. II. This experience is within the reach of all. III. It is unreasonable to pass judgment upon it without this experience. IV. This experience brings great blessedness. — *M. A. Breed.*

Columba. — Part of his last afternoon was spent by Columba in transcribing the Psalms of David. Having come to that passage in the thirty-fourth Psalm, where it is said, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing," he said, "I have come to the end of a page, and I will stop here, for the fol-

a 1 Sa. ii. 1; Ps. xliv. 8; Je. ix. 24; Lu. i. 46.

"Sorrow is knowledge."—*Byron.*

"Six wings he wore, to shade his lineaments divine; the pair that clad each shoulder broad, came mantling o'er his breast with regal ornament; the middle pair girt, like a starry zone, his waist, and round skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold and colors dipped in heaven; the third his feet shadow'd from either heel with feather'd mail, sky-tinctured grain."—*Milton.*

b Types of the cruel and violent, Ps. xxxv. 17; Job iv. 9-11.

"Just as the stem which is full of sap throws out many branches, so the believer who is full of a spirit of praise will give vent to it in many different forms."—*P. B. Power.*

"While a man rests in any degree

lowing verse, 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord,' will better suit my successor to transcribe than me. I will leave it, therefore, to Baithen." As usual, the bell was rung at midnight for prayers. Columba was the first to hasten to church. On entering it soon after, Dermid found him on his knees in prayer, but evidently dying. Raising him up in his arms, he supported his head on his bosom. The brethren now entered. When they saw Columba in this dying condition they wept aloud. Columba heard them. He opened his eyes and attempted to speak, but his voice failed. He lifted up his hands as if to bless them, immediately after which he breathed out his spirit. His countenance retained in death the expression it wore in life, so that it seemed as if he had only fallen asleep.—*Christian Treasury.*— *Round about.* — In illustration of this it may be observed, that according to D'Arvieux, it is the practice of the Arabs to pitch their tents in a circular form; the prince being in the middle, and the Arabs about him, but so as to leave a respectful distance between them. And Thevenot, describing a Turkish encampment near Cairo, having particularly noticed the spaciousness, decorations and conveniences of the Bashaw's tent, or pavilion, adds, "Round the pale of his tent, within a pistol shot, were above two hundred tents, pitched in such a manner that the doors of them all looked towards the Bashaw's tent, and it ever is so, that they may have their eye always upon their master's lodging, and be in readiness to assist him if he be attacked."—*Richard Mant.*

11—14. (11) **children,** the audience of adults may be thus affectionately addressed.[a] **the fear,** or the first principle of the fear. (12) **loveth . . days,** wishes to have a long and prosperous life. The great desire of O. T. saints. (13) **tongue,** that most unruly member.[b] (14) **pursue it,** follow after it with great exertion and eagerness.

The use and abuse of the tongue. — We have here — I. A wonderful gift referred to — speech. 1. It is singular. Man distinct from dumb creation: 2. It is useful; 3. It is powerful. Mary of Scotland feared the tongue of Knox more than an army of 10,000 men. II. A gift that is often abused. 1. Profane swearing; 2. Indecent language: 3. Boastful and idle words; 4. Falsehood. III. A gift that requires the help of the Giver in order that we may use it well. 1. He helps by giving His Holy Spirit to cleanse the heart: 2. He helps by the laws he imposes; 3. He helps by the good things He gives us; 4. He helps in answer to prayer.

Master Terry. — Master Terry was a child who read many good books and thought very seriously, and spent a large portion of his time in walking and pondering by himself. He was seldom found without some good book or other in his pocket, even when he was but little above five years old. He was constant in his retirement for secret prayer. But that which deserves particular remark, was a concern which this young child had, some time before he died, for the spiritual welfare of an aged faithful servant, who had been above forty years in the family, and who, by weakness, was confined to her chamber, having passed the seventieth year of her age. This little child, when not eight years old, would take delight to be with her; of his own accord he would talk to her of the things of God, and pray with her; in which, as that servant said, he would deliver himself pertinently, and in such an affecting manner, as to surprise his friends. He continued thus till she died, and was thereby no small help and comfort to the poor servant. Thus out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God perfects praise. He died in the tenth year of his age.

15—18. (15) **eyes,** *etc.*, comp. Job xxxvi. 7.[c] **upon,** *R. V.*, "toward." (16) **face . . against,** the Heb. pânîm is the face of *anger.* **remembrance,** by depriving them of posterity.[d] (17) **cry, heareth, delivereth,** *R. V.*, uses past tense. (18) **nigh,** in merciful tenderness, as a gracious healer. **broken heart,** "those in whom the egotistical, *i. e.* self-loving life, is broken at the very root."[e] **contrite,** or crushed. "Those whom grievous experiences have subdued and humbled."

God's care. — A mother had been trying to soothe to sleep her sick boy, and the following conversation took place: "Oh, what if we should both fall asleep, and dear baby alone up in your room?" "Well, I intend to sleep, and I intend that you should sleep too. If baby does wake up, I'll hear her first cry." "Would you? How is that? How do you hear so quickly?"

on his own merits for acceptance with God, it is of little consequence whether he be a pagan idolator or a proud, ignorant Pharisee, both go about to establish their own righteousness: neither submits to the righteousness of God, and I know not which of the two is more distant from the kingdom of God."-*J. Milner.*

"Heaven and earth are replete with the goodness of God. We omit to open our mouths and eyes, on which account the psalmist desires us to '*taste*' and '*see*.'"—*A. F. Tholuck.*

Testimony of the redeemed

a 1 John ii. 28, *etc.*

b Ps. xv. 2, 3; Pr. iv. 24; Jas. iii. 2.

"The benefit of life is not in the length, but in the use of it. He sometimes lives the least that lives the longest."—*Seneca.*

"Go away from it. Not merely take your hands off, but yourself off. Live not near the pest-house. Avoid the lion's lair, leave the viper's nest. Set a distance between yourself and temptation."—*Spurgeon.*

"On every Mohammedan tombstone the inscription begins with the words, 'He remains.' This applies to God, and gives sweet comfort to the bereaved. Friends may die, fortune fly away, but God endures — He remains."—*Perrine.*

c See also 1 Pe. iii. 12.

d "The dread that, together with a man's posterity his name and memory should utterly perish, is especially characteristic of the Semitic races. See Job xviii. 17; xxxi. 8; Ps. xxi. 10; civ. 13." — *Spk. Com.*

e Ps. li. 17; Isa. lvii. 15.

"Though the mariner sees not the pole-star, yet the needle of the compass which points to it tells him which way he sails. Thus the heart that is touched with the lodestone of Divine love, looking towards God by fixed believing, tells the soul that its course is heavenward, towards the haven of eternal rest." — *Leighton.*

"Well, dear, I think that verse helps us to know about it, 'His ear is ever open to their cry.' I feel that my ear is very open to my baby's cry. God made the mother's heart and the mother's ear, and 'He who made the ear, shall He not hear?' Doesn't this help us to know that His ear must be very open to His children's 'cry? Think often about this, dear boy, when you are left alone and in pain." —*Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*— *Afflictions of the righteous.*— God, who is infinite in wisdom, and matchless in goodness, hath ordered troubles, yea, *many* troubles, to come trooping in upon us on every side. As our mercies, so our crosses seldom come single; they usually come treading one upon the heels of another. They are like April showers — no sooner is one over, but another comes. And yet, Christians, it is mercy, it is rich mercy, that every affliction is not an execution, that every correction is not damnation. The higher the waters rose, the nearer Noah's ark was lifted up to heaven; the more thy afflictions are increased, the more thy heart shall be raised heavenward. —*T. Brooks.*

19—22. (19) **Many,** *etc.*, no exception for evil promised to the righteous. (20) **all his bones,** simple fig. of protection fr. any serious injury.[a] (21) **Evil shall slay,** the natural result of evil is to bring about the destruction of the evil-doer. **desolate,** *i. e.* condemned, deemed guilty. (22) **none . . desolate,** or left under condemnation.

Consolation (vs. 19).—I. The peculiar affliction of God's people. 1. Internal — temptations, doubts, fears; 2. External — misrepresentation, persecution. II. Their deliverance. 1. Consolation in trial: 2. Compensation for loss. — *W. W. Whythe.*

God's care. — One of the poor members of the flock of Christ was reduced to circumstances of the greatest poverty in his old age, and yet he never murmured. "You must be badly off," said a kind-hearted neighbor to him one day as they met upon the road, "you must be badly off; and I don't know how an old man like you can maintain yourself and your wife; yet you are always cheerful!" "Oh, no!" he replied, "we are not badly off. I have a rich Father, and He does not suffer me to want." "What! your father not dead yet? he must be very old indeed!" "Oh!" said he, "my Father never dies, and He always takes care of me!" This aged Christian was a daily pensioner on the providence of his God. His struggles and his poverty were known to all; but his own declaration was that he never wanted what was absolutely necessary. When old age benumbed the hand of his industry, the Lord extended to him the hand of charity. With David he could rely on his Shepherd's care, and say, "I shall not want;" and as certainly as he trusted in God, so surely, in some unexpected manner was his necessity supplied. — *John Stevenson.*

[a] Some think there may be prophetic reference to our Saviour's crucifiction. Jas. xix. 32-36.

"The greatest pain to the troubled soul is not to be sure of the hearing of his prayers. Whoever does not give up God, even when his trouble of body and pain of soul has advanced to the highest point, soon has the experience that God has not forsaken him." — *Lange.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-FIFTH.

author,— prob. David

A cry to God as a champion against ungrateful persecutors.

Best associated with the enmity of Saul, and Saul's party.

1—4. (1) **Plead my cause,** *R. V.*, "Strive thou, O Lord." An expression suitable to judicial proceedings. **that strive,** or my adversaries. **fight,** the speaker being a warrior, conceives of God's help in ways familiar to his own mind.[b] (2) **Take . . buckler,** as a man of war.[c] (3) **stop the way,** stand in it to keep my enemies from reaching me.[d] **persecute,** *R. V.*, "pursue." (4) **Let,** *etc.*, comp. v. 26; Ps. xl. 14, 15; lxx. 2, 3. **confounded,** *R. V.*, "ashamed." **put . . shame,** *R. V.*, "brought to dishonor."

God's help. — Before the enemy comes to close quarters the Lord can push them off as with a long spear. To stave off trouble is no mean act of loving kindness. As when some valiant warrior with his lance blocks up a defile, and keeps back a host until his weaker brethren have made good their escape, so does the Lord often hold the believer's foes at bay until the good man has taken breath, or clean fled from his foes. He often gives the foes of Zion some other work to do, and so gives rest to his church. What a glorious idea is this of Jehovah blocking the way of persecutors, holding them at the pike's end, and giving time for the hunted saint to elude their pursuit! — *Spurgeon.*

5—9. (5) **as chaff,** Job xxi. 18. **chase,**[e] "the angel of Jehovah thrusting them down." — *Cam. Bib.* (6) **dark,** *etc.*, "darkness and utter slipperiness." **persecute,** *better*, "pursue." (7) **pit . . digged,** *lit.* their netted pit; or pit furnished with a net.[f] (8) **at unawares,** suddenly, when unprepared. (9) **joyful,** bec. of overthrow of these persecutors.

[b] *Lit.* "devour by devourers."— *Fausset.*

[c] Comp. Ex. xv. 3; De. xxxii. 41.

[d] "The word rendered *stop* may mean a *battle-axe.*" — *Spk. Com.*

[e] "It is the angel who took off Pharaoh's chariot wheels, so that they drove them heavily, that is intended here." — *Delitzsch.*

[f] "A common metaphor, borrowed

Retribution. — By giving Ahithophel rope enough, the Lord preserved David from perishing. Who will not admire that Goliath should be slain with his own sword, and that proud Haman should hold Mordecai's stirrup, and be the herald of his honor? The wicked shall be undone by their own doings; all the arrows that they shoot at the righteous shall fall upon their own pates. Maxentius built a false bridge to drown Constantine, but was drowned himself. Henry the Third of France was stabbed in the very same chamber where he had helped to contrive the cruel massacre of the French Protestants. And his brother, Charles the Ninth, who delighted in the blood of the saints, had blood given him to drink, for he was worthy. It is usual with God to take persecutors in the snares and pits that they have laid for His people, as many thousands in this nation have experienced; and though Rome and her confederates are this day a-laying of snares and traps and a-digging of pits for the righteous, who will rather burn than bow to their Baal, yet do but wait and weep, and weep and wait a little, and you shall see that the Lord will take them in the very snares and pits that they have laid and digged for His people. — *Thomas Brooks.*

10—14. (10) **All my bones,**[a] every part of me. **poor,** afflicted. (11) **False witnesses,** or witnesses of injustice and cruelty.[b] (12) **spoiling of my soul,** *lit.* bereavement to my soul.[c] His wife Michal and his friend Jonathan were severed fr. him: and he felt friendless and alone. (13) **sick . . sackcloth,** the Psalmist indicates his ready and hearty sympathy with others. **prayer returned,** "perhaps to be explained by the attitude of earnest prayer, the head bowed, so th. the prayer wh. came fr. his heart seemed to return thither again."[d] 1 Ki. xviii. 42. (14) **mourneth,** with usual signs of Oriential grief.

Behaving as a friend. — This implies: I. Kind consideration. II. Generous sympathy. III. Self-denying service. IV. Constancy in love and devotion. —*Watkinson.*

Friendship. — A Moravian missionary sold himself to slavery, that he might win the love and trust of the slaves. The appeals of others they might scorn, but their hearts were opened to the man who had thus proved himself their friend. —*Watkinson.* — *Kindness to the sick.* — A few years ago, a number of boys, who had been taught in a Sabbath school near Sheffield, met in a field, and instead of spending their money in oranges, on what is called Shrove Tuesday, they agreed to give all they had to their teacher, who they knew was in great distress. They tied up the money in an old cloth, and when it was dark they opened his door and threw it into the house. Inside of the parcel was a small piece of paper, on which was written, "Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed." — *For his mother.* — On account of the plurality of wives in in an Eastern household, the sons are usually far more attached to their mother than their father. Their father they share with a numerous band of half-brothers, who are envious of them, or of whom they are jealous, but their mother is all their own; with her they are brought up in childhood; she takes their part in youth, in the numerous battles of the harem; and on their part when they are grown up, they love her intensely, and hence their mourning at her decease is of the bitterest kind. —*Spurgeon.*

True love. —

Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds;
Or bends with the remover to remove.
Oh no! it is an ever fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star of every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
— *Shakespeare.*

15—18. (15) **mine adversity,** *R. V.*, "when I halted," strongly contrasting his ways toward them, and theirs toward him. **abjects,**[e] despicable ones; worthless ones; slanderers. **I knew it not,** or "whom I knew not:" persons beneath my notice. (16) **hypocritical mockers,** *lit.* men who make profane jests for the sake of a cake;[f] "vile, backbiting parasites." (17) **my darling,** *Heb.* "my only one,"[g] *i. e.* my precious life. (18) **much people,** another phrase for "the great congregation."

Slander. — It is such dainty work to tear to pieces a good man's character,

a "Regarded, in Heb. physiology, as the seat of the most acute sensations, whether of pain or of pleasure."—*Spk. Com.*

b "The Psalmist laments the injustice and ingratitude of his adversaries. Comp. Saul's own admission, 1 Sa. xxiv. 18." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

c "I who have ever sought to help the friendless and comfort the afflicted, and who prayed so earnestly for others, am forsaken of all."—*Perowne.*

d Matt. x 13; Lu. x. 6.

"Mahomet was once asked what relation had the strongest claim upon our affection and respect; when he instantly replied, "The mother, the mother, the mother." — *Spurgeon.*

e Fr. Latin *abjectus*, part of *abjicere*, to throw away.

f "Hangers on at the tables of the rich, who, by witticism and buffoonery, made entertainment for the guests, and received their dinner in return." — *Gesenius.*

g Ps. xxii. 20.

from the artifice employed for taking wild beasts. Pit, lightly covered over, in wh. is concealed a net." — *Perowne.*

"Fair warfare belongs to honorable men, but the assailants of God's church prefer mean, ungenerous schemes, and so prove their nature and their origin. We must all of us be on our guard, for gins and pitfalls are still the favorite weapons of the powers of evil." — *Spurgeon.*

A colored Presbyterian deacon was in the habit of shutting his eyes while he sang with great unction, "Fly abroad, thou mighty gospel!" and not seeing the contribution-plate, "Oh, yes!" said the plate-bearer; "but you just give something to make it fly."

that when slanderers have their hand in they are loth to leave off. A pack of dogs tearing their prey is nothing compared with a set of malicious gossips mauling the reputation of a worthy man. That lovers of the gospel are not at this time rent and torn as in the old days of Mary, is to be attributed to the providence of God rather than to the gentleness of men.— *Spurgeon.*— *Providence.*— The entrance of Frederick William Robertson into the ministry came about by the barking of a dog. Lady Trench resided next door to Captain Robertson; she had a daughter seriously ill; the young lady was prevented from sleeping by the barking of Captain Robertson's dog. The families were strangers to each other; but Lady Trench wrote to beg that the dog might be removed; the dog was not only removed, but in so kind and acquiescent a manner that Lady Trench called to express her thanks. She was so much struck with the bearing of the eldest son, that an intimacy sprang up between the families, which resulted in the introduction of young Robertson to some of Lady Trench's clerical friends; one of them, Mr. Daly, now Bishop of Cashel, was no sooner introduced than he struck at the question, whether it were definitely fixed that he should go into the army; the impression of his unaffected piety convincing Mr. Daly that he ought to be in the church. "If," says Frederick Robertson, in one of his papers, "I had not met a certain person, I should not have changed my profession; if I had not known a certain lady, I should not probably have met this person; if that lady had not had a delicate daughter who was disturbed by the barking of my dog; if my dog had not barked that night, I should now have been in the dragoons, or fertilizing the soil of India. Who can say that these things were not ordered, and that, apparently, the merest trifles did not produce failure and a marred existence?"— *Paxton Hood.*

"It matters not at what hour of the day the righteous fall asleep; death cannot come to him untimely who is fit to die; the less of this cold world, the more of heaven; the briefer life, the earlier immortality."— *Milman.*

19—23. (19) **wrongfully,** without any adequate or just cause. **wink,**[a] *see* Pr. vi. 13; x. 10. **hate . . cause,** our Lord refers to these words as "fulfilled" in Himself. Jo. xv. 25. (20) **quiet,** but for their interruptions. And loving quiet. (21) **mouth wide,** in scornful laughter: represented by *Aha, aha.* **eye hath seen,** *i. e.* its desire, the fall of this righteous man. (22) **thou hast seen,** God knoweth us altogether, and this for us is the beginning of rest. (23) **Stir up thyself,** the earnest language of the importunate man.

[a] An insulting gesture.

The causeless hater.— I. His character. He is described as — 1. False; 2. Spiteful; 3. Turbulent; 4. Adding insult to injury; 5. Hating without a cause. II. His righteous doom. There is here a two-fold and earnest appeal to God for judgment. He is regarded — 1. As a silent witness; 2. As an almighty friend; 3. As a righteous judge.— *Watkinson.*

"Pecuniary aid, by those who have the means, is the most easy form in which benevolence can be gratified, and that which often requires the least, if any, sacrifice of personal comfort or self-love. The same affection may be exercised in a degree much higher than itself, and often much more useful to others, by personal exertion and personal kindness."— *Abercrombie.*

Note on vs. 21.— See that rude fellow, who has triumphed over another; he distends his mouth to the utmost, then claps his hands, and bawls out, "*Agā! agā!* I have seen, I have seen." So provoking is this exclamation that a man, though *vanquished,* will often commence another attack. An officer who has lost his situation is sure to have this salutation from those he has injured. Has a man been foiled in argument, has he failed in some feat he promised to perform, has he in any way made himself ridiculous, the people open their mouths, and shout aloud, saying, "*Agā!* finished, finished, fallen, fallen." Then they laugh, and clap their hands, till the poor fellow gets out of their sight.— *Roberts.*

"He who rejoices in another's fall rejoices in the devil's victory."— *Ambrose.*

24—26. (24) **Judge me,** secure me justice. **thy righteousness,** wh. is based on perfect knowledge and infinite love. None need fear the righteousness of God's judgments. (25) **Ah . . it,** *lit.* "Ah, ah, our soul," *i. e.* our desire; just what we wanted. **swallowed,** *etc.*, 2 Sa. xvii. 16, obliterating every mark of him.

"We know that when a man is benevolent and sympathetic, he is in the state in which we can draw more good things from him than when he is in any other state."— *Beecher.*

O Lord my God.— O Jehovah my God; here is another precious word. He takes Jehovah to be his God, in opposition to those who make idols, or riches, or their own lusts their God. He claims a full possession of all that is in the great I AM. Even though he views Him as a judge he lays the hand of faith upon his God, and flinches not even before the blaze of His righteousness. It is a noble word, a grand utterance of faith; he who can pronounce that word "my" from his inmost soul in such a connection may well laugh to scorn all his enemies.— *C. H. Spurgeon.*

"If we go to one for some kindness, we do not go to him on those days when he is gloomy, when his nerves are shaken, when his health is suffer-

27, 28. (27) **that favor,** stand on my side; remain faithful to me in this time of slander and trouble. **prosperity,** welfare, or peace. (29) **speak,** in

grateful, trustful songs; "shall speak musingly, in the low murmur of one entranced by a sweet thought."— *Cheyne.*

The fatherhood of Jehovah (*vs.* 27).— This passage, when steadily looked at, has a very wonderful light, almost, in some respects, like that of the sun. When any collection of the solar rays is separated by the use of the prism three different kinds of rays are said to result; some that illumine, some that exert chemical action, and some that give heat. In this pencil of Scriptural rays we find a similar threefold division; we find — I. Wonderful truth. II. Wonderful faith. III. Wonderful comfort.— *Homilist.*

God's providence.— The Rev. Hansard Knollys was one of the subjects of the persecution in the seventeenth century. He was prosecuted in the High Commission Court, and fled to America, whence after a time he returned. Having lived for some time in obscurity in London, he had but sixpence left, and no prospect for the support of his family. In these circumstances he prayed, encouraged his wife to remember the past goodness of God to them, and reflect on His promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" paid his lodging, and then went out, not knowing where the providence of God would lead him to seek the means of subsistence. He had walked but a short distance when he was met by a woman who told him that some Christian friends had prepared a residence for him and his family, and had sent him money and other comforts. They were greatly impressed with this manifestation of Divine goodness in their behalf, and the wife exclaimed, "Oh, dear husband, how sweet it is to live by faith, and trust God's faithful word! Let us rely upon Him whilst we live, and trust Him in all straits."

Prayer.— See how the hearts of the saints have been drawn out against their persecutors. Prayers are the arms that in times of persecution the saints have still had recourse to. The Romans being in great distress were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temples of their gods to fight with their enemies, and so they overcame them; so when the people of God have been hard put to it by reason of afflictions and persecutions, the weapons that they have fled to have been prayers and tears, and with these they have overcome their persecutors.— *Thomas Brooks.*

ing, and when his business is going wrong: we go to him when he is full-fed, and comfortable, and genial, as it is at such times that he is most likely to grant our request."—*Beecher.*

"One man has kindness deep within him; and when the occasion comes, the rind or shell is cracked, and the kernel is found. Such a man's heart, too long clouded, like a sun in a storm-muffled day, shoots through some opening rift, and glows for a period in glory. But there are other natures that are always cloudless. With them, a cloud is the exception, shining is the rule."—*H. W. Beecher.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-SIXTH.

author,— unknown

Psalm on the contrast between the evil and the good.

1—4. (1) **The transgression,** *etc.*, this clause may be rendered, "Transgression uttereth its oracle to the wicked in his heart," transgression being personified. The wicked man has made it his God, and it has become a lying spirit within him.[a] "A mutinous spirit dwells with the wicked deep in his heart."—*Polych. Bib.* **that there is,** *better*, "there is." A positive assertion by the Psalmist. **no fear,** *etc.*, illus. Lu. xviii. 2–4. (2) **until his iniquity,** *R. V.*, "that his iniquity shall not be found out and be hated." (3) **words,** *etc.*, his sin is of heart, of lip, and of life. (4) **mischief,** *R. V.*, iniquity.[b] **abhorreth not evil,** at last the very sense of evil gets destroyed.

The distinguishing characteristics of a wicked life. — I. A wicked life is characterized by practical atheism. II. By self-adulation. III. By verbal profanity. IV. By un-wisdom. V. By cunning artifices.— *Watkinson.*

Proud sinners have strongest conceit that they go right, at least in the way of their choice. Satan blindeth them so, that they mistake both the end and way; in their count they are running to heaven, when they are posting to hell; he serveth them kindly with fresh post-horses. Sometimes he mounteth them on drunkenness, and when they have run a stage on that beastliness, he can mount them on lechery. Again, he can refresh them with avarice; and if they be weary of that slow jade, he setteth them on lofty ambition, and to make them more spirity he can horse them on restless contention. Every one seeth not Satan's inquiry; there is no complexion or disposition, but he hath a fit horse for it, and that of itself. Every man's predominant is a beast of Satan's saddling and providing to carry men to hell. The way is one, the postmaster is one; he is to be found at every stage, mounting his gallants; their horses are all of one kind, though not of one color. Happy is the man whom God dismounteth in that evil way, and more happy is he who taketh with that stay, and turneth his course to heaven. — *William Struther.*

[a] "The wicked hath an oracle of transgression in his heart."—*Perowne.*

"Crime is personified as dwelling in the heart of the wicked, and as uttering suggestions, to wh. he listens as to an oracle." — *Spk. Com.*

[b] Mic. ii. 1.

"He hath the devil for his bedfellow who lies abed and schemes how to sin."—*Spurgeon.*

"The *wicked* man has no regard to the oracles of God: he has one in his own heart, which dictates nothing but rebellion."—*Zachary Mudge.*

5—9. (5) **mercy,** *R. V.*, "loving kindness." **faithfulness,** to His promises.[a] **clouds,** *R. V.*, "skies." (6) **great mountains,** *lit.* mountains of God.[b] **great deep,** so unfathomable. **man and beast,** comp. Ps. civ. 21.[c] (7) **excellent,** *R. V.*, "precious." **shadow,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. xvii. 8. (8) **fatness . . house,** fig. for the privileges of communion with God. **pleasures,** or delights, "thy Edens." (9) **fountain of life,**[d] *etc.*, "golden sayings like this anticipate the revelation of the Gospel. It is only in the light of the Incarnation that their depth of meaning begins to be understood." *Cp.* John i. 4, 9.

"*Thy righteousness is like the great mountains.*" — 1. Mt. Ranier, summit never covered: The uplifting, sustaining power of God's righteousness. 2. Mt. chains, the Rockies and Appalachians, forming continents: The formative power of God's righteousness. 3. Volcano, Mt. Vesuvius: The burning, consuming, cleansing nature of God's righteousness. 4. Mt. Washington, its magnificent view: From the point of view of God's righteousness only can we get a fair view of near, earthly things and human history. — *M. A. Breed.*

Satisfied. — I once heard a father tell that when he removed his family to a new residence where the accommodation was much more ample, the substance much more rich and varied than that to which they had previously been accustomed, his youngest son, yet a lisping infant, ran round every room and scanned every article with ecstacy, calling out in childish wonder at every new sight, "Is this ours, father? and is this ours?" The child did not say "yours;" and I observed that the father, while he told the story, was not offended with the freedom. You could read in his glistening eye that the infant's confidence in appropriating as his own all that his father had, was an important element in his satisfaction. Such, I suppose, will be the surprise, and joy, and appropriating confidence with which the child of our Father's family will count all his own when he is removed from the comparatively mean condition of things present, and enters the infinite things to come. When the glories of heaven burst upon his view, he does not stand at a distance like a stranger, saying, O God, these are Thine. He bounds forward to to touch and taste every provision which those blessed mansions contain, exclaiming as he looks in the Father's face, Father, this and this is ours! The dear child is glad of all the Father's riches, and the Father is gladder of his dear child. — *William Arnot.— The supreme hymn.* — Apropos of a symposium of ministers on the subject of "The Best Hymn," Robert Collyer tells this anecdote: "I well remember one day when this subject was the subject of a discussion between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. The latter said that many of the so-called hymns were mere pieces of cabinet work. Then his voice deepened, his eyes shone, as we remember him in his noblest moments, as he said: 'One hymn I think supreme.' Emerson threw his head back, as he always did when his attention was arrested, and waited. Dr. Holmes repeated the first verse:

"'Thou hidden Love of God, whose height,
Whose depth, unfathomed, no man knows,
I see from far Thy beauteous light;
Inly I sigh for Thy repose.
My heart is pained, nor can it be
At rest, till it find rest in thee.'

"'I know — I know,' exclaimed Emerson. 'That is the supreme hymn.'"

10—12. (10) **continue,** draw out at length: prolong. The glory of God's loving-kindness is its constancy and continuance.[e] **loving-kindness,** mentioned the third time in this Ps., a matchless attribute of God. (11) **come against,** the proud oppressor trampling me down. **remove me,** drive me from my land. (12) **There,** with prophet. **vision,** the Psalmist seems to see the very place of their overthrow.[f]

God's continued care implored (vs. 10). — I. What need we all have of the blessings here implored! 1. Of this, whatever their attainments, all stand in need; 2. What should we do if God were to withdraw His loving-kindness from us? II. On what grounds are the upright authorized to expect it? 1. By the promises of God; 2. By the intercession of Christ; 3. By the honor of God Himself. Apply: — Seek to answer the character here described; implore of God the blessing you so greatly need; seek it also for others. — *C. Simeon.*

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a "A burst of rapture, here is the true oracle." — *Spk. Com.*

b "Such epithets as these show how deeply the Heb. felt the beauty and majesty of natural scenery: the mountains were to him an outward representation of the righteousness, deep-rooted in the very essence of the Godhead, and towering over the earth in its manifestation." — *Spk. Com.*

c "Hast thou ever seen a beast or a bird that followed a trade? and yet they are fed without toil." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

d Pr. xvi. 22; Je. ii. 13; Jno. iv. 14; v. 26; Re. xxii. 1.

"Happy is the soul that can drink in the sumptuous dainties of the gospel — nothing can so completely fill the soul."

"Far and wide, terrible and irresistible like the ocean are the providential dispensations of God; at one time they appear as peaceful as the unrippled sea of glass; at another tossed with tempest and whirlwind, but evermore most glorious and full of mystery." — *Spurgeon.*

"From the low prayer want and plaint of woe O never, never turn away thine ear! Forlorn in this bleak wilderness below, ah! what were man, should heaven refuse to hear!" — *Beattie.*

e He. xiii. 8.

f "David descries their destruction afar off, as it were from a watch tower, and gives determinate sentence of it, as assuredly as if it were close at hand." — *Calvin.*

Figurative use of "feet" and "hands" (*vs.* 11). — Here we have another instance of the feet and hands being used for the whole man. Our Saviour said of the man: "The hand of him that betrayeth Me." Of a sick person to whom the physician will not administer any more medicine, it will be said *paregari-kivuttan*, "The hand of the doctor has forsaken him." A servant is under the hand of his master. The foot of pride probably alludes to the custom of the conqueror trampling upon the vanquished: for in the next verse it is said, "The workers of iniquity are fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise." — *Roberts.*

"The true mark of a godly man standeth in the conjunction of faith in God with sincere study of, obedience to Him, for, He is the man that knoweth God, and is upright in heart"— *David Dickson.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

author,— unknown

A didactic Psalm: subject, the justifying of God's providence.

1—4. (1) **Fret,**[a] *Heb.* "Heat not thyself." Do not get angry, and impatient.[b] Look at the matter coolly. **workers,** *etc. R. V.*, "them that work unrighteousness." (2) **cut down,** Job xiv. 2.[c] (3) **Trust,** sure of safety. **so . . land,** *R. V.*, "Dwell in the land," dwell safely, quietly. **land,** Palestine, God's honored land. **be fed,**[d] *R. V.*, "follow after faithfulness." (4) **Delight thyself,** find thy pleasure in Him.[e]

Psalm thirty-seventh. — This psalm was the basis of the hymn of Paul Gerhardt, *Befiehl du deine Wege* ("commit thou all thy ways"), which has taken national rank in Germany, next to Luther's *Ein feste Burg*, ("a mighty fortress"). It was the custom in some of the high schools in Germany, when pupils were leaving at the close of their course, to accompany them to the gate of the town singing this hymn. When Queen Louisa of Prussia, in 1806, received the news of the disastrous battle of Jena, she sat down, after her first burst of weeping, and sang this hymn softly at the piano; when she rose, her eye was clear and her spirit calm. — *Ker.* — *Get up and go on.* — A father was once telling me about his experience with his boy. He was a preacher in Boston. There was much religious interest in the church, and one night his only son stood up in the young people's meeting and said he wanted to be a Christian. The father did not hear of it until the next morning. He determined that no one should get ahead of him, and after dinner he said, "Irving, don't you want to go to ride?" They rode and talked together for half a dozen miles, and everything was plain and frank between them. It was winter, icy and very slippery. Finally the father said: "Now there is one thing I want you to remember. Suppose I should say, 'I have got to go on several miles to see some one, and you will have to get out and walk home.' You get out and start. Suppose you should slip down on the ice, what would you do?" "Get up and go on again." "Suppose you slipped down half a dozen times." "Why, there would not be but one thing to do, and that would be to keep getting up and keep going on." "Yes, my boy; and I want you to remember that that is the Christian life. You will get down on the ice sometimes, but the only thing to do is to get up and go on." The boy was in college later, and after a while he said, "Father, I've got down on the ice." "Well, you told me what you would do." "Yes," and he did. But I am afraid there is many a boy that has not got up and kept on. — *C. M. Southgate.*

a From Fr. *frotter;* fr. L. *fricare*, to rub; A. S., *fretan*, to eat, to gnaw.

b Pr. xxiii. 17; xxiv. 1.

c Matt. vi. 30; 1 Pe. i. 24.

d "The drift of the passage is, we think, 'Abide contentedly where Jehovah has placed you, and let not your faith in His love be impaired by these social anomalies.'"— *Jennings and Lowe.*

e Job xxii. 26; xxvii. 10; Is. lviii. 14.

5—7. (5) **Commit,** cast thy way; roll thy anxiety;[f] repose it on the Lord. (6) **bring forth,** even as He brings forth the light of the morning.[g] (7) **Rest in the Lord,** *lit.* be silent, or be still before Him.[h] **who prospereth,** comp. Ps. lxxiii. 3. "If the prosperity of the wicked frets thee, because it seems to obscure thy righteousness, since while he appears to bask in the sunshine of God's favor, thy life is possibly overshadowed by clouds and darkness, be sure that, in the end, this seeming injustice will be remedied. God will not frown on thee always; one day He will turn on thee the light of His countenance, and make thy righteousness to shine forth like the sun in its noonday splendor." — *Pul. Com.*

Character of those who rest in the Lord. — The state of heart and conduct in which we are to wait for His goodness is thus described. I. Trust in the Lord. II. Do good. III. Delight thyself in the Lord. IV. Commit thy way unto the Lord. — *Pul. Studies.*

Faith in the promises. — A captive was brought before an Asiatic prince: the scimitar was already raised over his head, when oppressed by intolerable thirst, he asked for water. A cup was handed him: he held it as if appre-

f Pe. v. 7.

g Je. li. 10.

"What you have to do and cannot, is set forth as a burden."—*Tausset.*

h "A word expressive of that calm resignation which leaves itself absolutely in the hands of God. Prayer Bk. Version is 'Hold thee still in the Lord.'"—*Perowne.*

"God is worth waiting for. His time is the best. Men tarry for the King."— *Watkinson.*

"The angry man is compared to a ship sent into the sea, which hath the devil for a pilot."—*T. Adams.*

hensive lest the scimitar would fall while he was in the act of drinking. "Take courage!" said the prince: "your life will be spared till you drink this water." He instantly dashed the cup of water to the ground. The good faith of the barbarian saved him. The word had passed; it was enough; and the captive went on his way rejoicing.

8—11. (8) **Cease from anger,** *etc.*, such anger and such wrath as the prosperity of the wicked calls forth. **in any wise,** read the clause, "Fret not thyself, since that can only lead thee to do evil."[a] "If men will dwell unduly on the fact of the prosperity of the wicked, and brood upon it in their hearts, they will be apt, in the first instance, to envy the wicked, which is at once 'to do evil;' and from this they will be naturally tempted to go on to an imitation of their wicked practices." (9) **cut off,** and so wilt thou be, if through fretfulness thou becomest an evil-doer. **wait,** God's time for vindicating the righteousness of His people. **inherit the earth,** Matt. v. 5. This prophecy has had only occasional fulfilment hitherto. (10) **it shall not be,** *R. V.*, "he shall not;" not the least trace of him shall remain.[b] (11) **But . . peace,** this represents a general law, leaving untouched the exceptions.

A sermon for the fretful. — I. Cease from present anger. It is madness, it is sin; it shuts out our prayers; it will grow into malice; it may lead to worse. II. Forsake it for the future. Repent of it, watch temper, discipline thy passions, *etc.* III. Avoid all kindred feelings of fretfulness, impatience, envy, *etc.*, for they lead to evil. — *Spurgeon.*

Indian and the Quaker meeting.—A little before the Revolutionary war, there were a few families of Friends, who had removed from Duchess county and settled at Easton, then in Saratoga county, New York. These requested the favor of holding a religious meeting, which was granted. The section of the country proved to be one which was so much distressed by scouting parties from both the British and American armies, that the American government, unable to protect the inhabitants, issued a proclamation, directing them to leave their country: and they did generally go. The Friends requested to be permitted to exercise their own judgment (saying, "You are clear of us in that you have warned us"), remained at their homes; and kept up their meeting. Robert Nisbet, who lived at that time at East Hoosack, about thirty miles distant, felt a desire to walk through the then wilderness country, and sit with the Friends at their week-day meeting. As they were sitting in meeting, with their door open, they discovered an Indian peeping around the door post. When he saw the Friends sitting without word or deed, he stepped forward and took a full view of what was in the house: then he and his company, placing their arms in a corner of the room, took seats with the Friends, and so remained till the meeting closed. Zebulon Hoxie, one of the Friends present, then invited them to his house, put a cheese and what bread he had on the table, and invited them to help themselves: they did so, and went quietly and harmlessly away. Before their departure, however, Robert Nisbet, who could speak and understand the French language, had a conversation with their leader in French. He told Robert that they surrounded the house, intending to destroy all that were in it; "but," said he, "when we saw you sitting with your door open, and without weapons of defense, we had no disposition to hurt you — we would have fought for you." This party had human scalps with them.

a "Be not incensed, it only leads to evil-doing." — *Delitzsch.*

b Job viii. 18–22.

"High and pure benevolence not only is dispensed with willingness when occasions present themselves, but seeks out opportunity for itself, and feels in want of its natural and healthy exercise when deprived of an object on which it may be bestowed."—*Abercrombie.*

President Lincoln, walking one day with his secretary, stopped at a little shrub, and looked into it; then stooped, and put his hands down through the twigs and leaves, as if to take something out. His secretary said to him, "What do you find there, Mr. Lincoln?" "Why," said he, "Here is a little bird fallen from its nest, and I am trying to put it back again."

A dying soldier was exhorted to throw himself into the arms of Jesus. "He is not here; He is not here!" was his reply. "Not here, not here!" were his last mournful words.

12—17. (12) **gnasheth,**[c] as in violent rage. (13) **laugh,** Ps. ii. 4. **his day,** in which he receives his full deserts.[d] (14) **such as be,** *Heb.* upright of way. (15) **enter . . heart,** all evil becomes at last woe upon the evil-doer. (16) **A little,** comp. Pr. xv. 16. **riches,** *R. V.*, "abundance." (17) **arms,** with which violent deeds are done.

The Divine hand (*vs.* 14). — I. It is a strong hand. II. It is a redeeming hand. III. It is a tender hand. *Upright conversation.* — I. What it excludes. The horizontal or earthly, the crooked or crafty, the slanting or sinister. II. What it includes. Motive, object, language, action. III. What it achieves. It stands like a pillar; it supports like a column; it ascends like a tower; it adorns like a monument; it illuminates like a Pharos. — *Spurgeon.*

Rev. J. Garie (*vs.* 12). — This gentleman, with other ministers, attempted, in 1790, to disseminate the gospel in some of the darkest parts of Ireland. After preaching several months at Sligo, with every appearance of success, a new place of worship was opened, which was attacked and seriously injured

c Fr. Old Eng. *gnaste*, Icel. *gnista*, to grind or strike together the teeth.

d Ps cxxxvii. 7; Job xviii 20; Je. l. 27, 31; Ob. 12.

"Come ye who find contentment's very core
In the light store
And daisied path
Of poverty,
And know how more
A small thing that the righteous hath

the day after. These attacks were repeated, till at length it was burned down. A dreadful outrage was committed on one of the principal friends of Mr. G., and he himself was in so much danger of violent death, that he was compelled to change his lodgings every night; but he still continued at his post. One evening a man entered his room with a pistol, threatening to take away his life. Mr. Garie, holding up a small Bible, advanced towards him, and with a smiling countenance looked him full in the face. Struck with his mild and innocent appearance, the man immediately retired from him, and his life was preserved. Mr. Garie afterwards returned to Scotland, settled at Perth, and died in 1802. — *R. T. S.* When the wicked are most near to do a mischief to the Lord's people, there is a mischief most near to them. — *David Dickson.—Riches of the poor.* — If thine estate were but little, yet it would be perfumed with love, and that lump of sugar in thy cup would make the liquor sweet, be it never so small. As the waters which flow from the hills of some of the islands of Molucca taste of the cinnamon and cloves which grow there, so should thy gift, though it were but water, taste of the good will and special grace of the giver. Thy "little," with the fear of the Lord, would be "better than the riches of many wicked men." As a little ring with a very costly diamond in it is far more worth than many great ones without it, so thy estate, though it were but a penny, should be joined with the precious jewel of that love which is better than life, and enjoyed by special promise, and thereby be infinitely more worth than the thousands and millions of others bestowed merely from common bounty, and enjoyed only by a general providence. — *George Swinnock.*

Availeth, than the ungodly's riches great." — *G o v. Patmore.*

"God's hand is still under us, and His goodness is lower than we can fall." — *Trapp.*

The husbandman is never so near the vine as when he prunes it. God's hand is a tender hand even when he uses the pruning knife.

"The righteous gain by giving. The wicked lose by withdrawing. A running stream inherits the most territory." — *Watkinson.*

18—22. (18) **knoweth the days,** Ps. i. 6; xxxi. 15. **forever,** "the righteous man lives in his posterity, who continue in possession of the ancestral inheritance, while the posterity of the wicked perish (*vss.* 28, 38; xxxiv. 16). The Psalmist's view is still limited to earth (*cp. vs.* 19). The eternal inheritance reserved in heaven is beyond his horizon." — *Cam. Bib.* (19) **ashamed,** or confounded. **evil time,** *R. V.*, "time of evil." when calamities are impending. (20) **fat of lambs,** *R. V.*, "the excellency of the pastures," reference is to the transient character of the grass of the fields.[a] (21) **borroweth,** is brought so poor that he must borrow and cannot pay. Circumstances are changed at last, and the righteous can lend, nay give. **showeth mercy,** *R. V.*, "dealeth graciously." (22) **blessed of him,** *i. e.* God; it is that blessing makes truly rich.[b]

a "The enemies of Jahve are like the *glory of the meadows.* They vanish a w a y like t h e smoke, they disappear."—*Delitzsch.*

b Pr. iii. 33.

The relation of the righteous (*vs.* 21). — I. Relation to society. 1. He has the means of helping; 2. He has the disposition to help. II. Relation to God. 1. He blesses the righteous but not the wicked; 2. He establishes the righteous but not the wicked; 3. He is pleased with the righteous but not with the wicked. III. Relation to the world. 1. They will be kept from utter destitution; 2. Neither they nor their children shall be utterly neglected.—*Thomas.*

"To others do (the law is not severe) what to thyself thou wishest to be done; forgive thy foes, and love thy parents dear, and friends, and native land, nor t h e s e alone—all human weal and woe learn thou to make thine own."—*Beattie.*

"*Excellency of the pastures.*"—The force of the comparison is hardly realized in our moist northern climate, where verdure is perpetual. "But let a traveler ride over the downs of Bethlehem in February, one spangled carpet of brilliant flowers, and again in May, when all traces of verdure are gone; or let him push his horse through the deep solid growth of clovers and grasses in the valley of the Jordan in the early spring, and then return and gallop across a brown, hard-baked, gaping plain in June, . . . and the Scriptural imagery will come home to him with tenfold power."—*Tristram's Nat. His. of the Bible.*

23—26. (23) **ordered,** or established. "God secures the just man from falling." (24) **fall,** into misfortune; perhaps even into sins of infirmity. **utterly cast down,** be prostrated.[c] **upholdeth,** *etc. Heb.*, "upholdeth his hand." (25) **old,** an appeal to the experience of a long life in confirmation of the preceding stanzas. He has never seen the righteous permanently deserted by God, or his children reduced to homeless beggary (cix. 10). *Cp. vss.* 28, 33; ix. 10; Gen. xxviii. 15. Temporary impoverishment and apparent abandonment for a time need not be supposed to be excluded.[d] (26) **he . . merciful,** *R. V.*, "all the day long he dealeth graciously

c 2 Co. iv. 9.

d "The policy of the Hebrew commonwealth would of itself lead to the ultimate enrichment of God-fearing men, and in a w e l l-o r d e r e d period such a state- m e n t would in- v o l v e no hyperbole." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

God's interest in His people (*vss.* 23, 24).— We observe — I. The interest which God takes in His people. 1. He orders their steps; 2. He delights in their way; 3. He upholds them with His hand. II. What return He looks for

at their hands. 1. We must cheerfully obey His will; 2. We must simply depend on His care. Apply — (1) To the self-confident and secure; (2) The fearful and disconsolate.— *C. Simeon.*

Begging (*vs.* 25). — It is not *my* observation just as it stands, for I have relieved the children of undoubtedly good men, who have appealed to me as common mendicants. But this does not cast a doubt upon the observation of David. He lived under a dispensation more outward, and more of this world than the present rule of personal faith. Never are the righteous forsaken: that is a rule without exception. Seldom indeed do their seed beg bread, and although it does occasionally occur, through dissipation, idleness, or some other causes on the part of their sons, yet doubtless it is so rare a thing that there are many alive who never saw it. Go into the union house and see how few are the children of godly parents; enter the gaol and see how much rarer still is the case. Poor ministers' sons often become rich. I am not old, but I have seen families of the poor godly become rich, and have seen the Lord reward the faithfulness of the father in the success of the son, so that I have often thought that the best way to endow one's seed with wealth is to become poor for Christ's sake. — *Spurgeon.* — *The honest insolvent.* — A gentleman of Boston, says a religious journal, who was unfortunate in business thirty years ago, and consequently unable at that time to meet his engagements with his creditors, after more than twenty years of toil, succeeded in paying every creditor (except one whose residence could not be ascertained) the whole amount due to them. He has in that twenty years brought up and educated a large family but — still he owed one of his former creditors; he was not satisfied to keep another's property; he made inquiry, and received information that the party had died some years since. He again pursued his inquiry respecting the administrator, and ascertained his name and residence, wrote to him, acknowledged the debt, and requested him to inform him of the manner he would receive the money. A few days since he remitted the whole amount, principal and interest.

"God promiseth that the seed of his people shall inherit the earth. The child of such a tenant as paid his rent well, shall not be put out of his farm." — *John Glascock.*

"When men wish to grow in Christian graces they must lift their souls up into the atmosphere of Divine benevolence, and out of real, pure, genial love all Christian graces will flow most easily and naturally!"

"In sudden cases, the richest man in the world may be put to ask a piece of bread. A good man may fall into such wants, but good men are rarely, if ever or at all, left in them." — *Joseph Caryl.*

27—29. (27) **dwell,** *etc.*, a promise or assurance. Thou shalt dwell.[a] Peaceable occupation of the land by successive generations is meant (*cp. vs.* 29). The individual lives on in his descendants. (28) **judgment,** *i. e.* justice. **shall inherit,** bec. He who loveth judgment will surely appear for them.

Doing good (*vs.* 29). — Psalm thirty-seventh is not a devotional but an ethical psalm. It contains no praises, petitions or confessions. It is a series of aphorisms embodying a single truth, and is not designed to unfold progressive thought, but to enforce one sentiment, with line upon line, like variations on a recurring strain of music. The third verse gives a practical inference suggested at every point along the psalm. "Do good," not merely think about it. Will imaginary subscriptions help on good objects? "Do good," not merely talk about it. Will words bind up wounds and clothe the naked? "Do good" yourself, not wait for others, not complain of others, not merely set others to work, but up and about it your own self.

[a] So shalt thou abide securely for ever.

"I will, if I can, do something for others and heaven; not to deserve by it, but to express myself and my thanks. Though I cannot do what I would, I will labor to do what I can."— *Feltham.*

30—34 (30) **speaketh,** or uttereth. (31) **in his heart,** cherished as the inward, moving principle, always controlling his actions. **steps,** or *goings.*[b] (32) **watcheth,** *vs.* 14. The next verse shows that wrong by judicial corruption (Is. v. 23) as well as actual violence is meant. (33) **in his hand,** *i. e.* to his private murderous devices. **condemn,** will not suffer him to be unjustly condemned. **judged,** when his enemies try to work his ruin by process of law. (34) **thou shalt see it,** bec. thyself protected by the God on whom thou has waited.

[b] In these *vss.* the righteous are described as to the elements of character, thought, word, and action." —*Fausset.*

"All heavenly hearts are charitable. Enlightened souls disperse their rays." —*Feltham.*

The security of the upright (*vs.* 31). — I. The character of the upright. 1. God has engraven His law on his heart; 2. This forms his distinguishing character. II. Their security. This — 1. Partly from the very character which they possess; 2. Principally from the care and fidelity of God. Hence we may see — (1) Whence it is that so many professors of religion dishonor their high and holy calling; (2) How inseparable is the union between duty and privilege. — *C. Simeon.*

"Avoid crooked paths, take heed of turning to the left hand, lest you be set on the left hand. Sin doth cross our hopes, it barricades up our

Justice will overtake the wicked. — As one that hath been either robbed himself, or that hath a friend murdered, if he have the party apprehended and laid fast in prison, is not presently out of patience because he seeth not him instantly executed, but is well content quietly to expect the time of the assizes, though it be half a year after, as long as he is sure that he will then

have justice against him; so ought we not to fly out because evil-doers prosper, remembering that all wicked ones are in the meanwhile in this world, as in God's jail, under the chains of a guilty conscience, out of which there is no possible means-of escape without judgment. — *T. Gataker.*

way; a man may as well expect to find heaven in hell, as in a sinful way." —*Thomas Watson.*

35—40. (35) **green bay tree,** *R. V.*, "a green tree in its native soil;" some deeply-rooted giant of the primeval forest, apparently secure from all danger of sudden disturbance. Comp. Ps. i. 3. (36) **he passed away,** *better*, "and I passed by." (37) **perfect,** in Old Testament, the sincere man. **end,** *etc.*, or "a man of peace hath a posterity." *Heb.* "for the man of peace there is a reward (or future, or posterity)."[a] (38) **end . . wicked,** *i. e.* their posterity. (40) **because they trust,** the whole lesson of the Ps. lies in these words.

The true nobleman (*vs.* 37.)—I. His pedigree. II. His honors. 1. His prayers are the delight of God; 2. His influence over man is great; 3. His personal safety is secure. III. His sentiment. IV. His pursuits. V. His trials. VI. His future. 1. Certain and lasting fame; 2. Deliverance from all anxiety and uncertainty; 3. Permanent safety; 4. Abundant endowments; 5. Admission to glory. — *Stems and Twigs.*

His end is peace. — Time would fail me to tell how Christians die nor can anything save the pen of the recording angel who has stood by their bed of death and borne them to Abraham's bosom narrate the unnumbered instances of their delightful departure from the present world, which verify the truth of the Bible. "I could never have believed," said a dying saint, "that it was so delightful a thing to die, or that it was possible to have such views of the heavenly world as I now enjoy." The memorable Melancthon just before he died, chanted in his sleep the words, "I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." He seemed restless, and on being asked by one near him, "Whether there were anything more that he desired?" replied, "*Aliud nihil nisi cœlum*" — nothing more, unless it be heaven. — *Gardiner Spring.*

a "Strange though such appeals may sound in our ears, numerous progeny, and a long line of descendants, are constantly set forward by the Heb. teachers, as rewards conditional on righteousness." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

"Mark him in the setting out, he hath many oppositions; mark him in the journey, he is full of tribulations; but mark in the conclusion; and the end of that man is peace." — *Thomas Adams.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.

author, — prob. David

1—5. Sickness, punishment for sin. (1) **in thy wrath,**[b] wh. the Psalmist feels he has much reason to fear. (2) **stick fast,** have entered deep. Poetical description of the pains of sickness.[c] **presseth,** falleth heavily. (3) **anger,** *R. V.*, "indignation." **rest,** *R. V.*, "health." (4) **over mine head,** like swirling waves. **heavy burden,** familiar fig. for sins, as they come to oppress and crush the spirit.[d] (5) **are corrupt,** or suppurate. From this we may guess the nature of his disease. Comp. Job and Hezekiah. **foolishness,** sin is essentially foolishness. So it is often set forth in Proverbs.

"*Foolishness.*"—The folly of sin. Everything that a man has to do with sin shows his folly. I. Dallying with sin. II. Committing it. III. Continuing in it. IV. Hiding it. V. Palliating it. — *B. Davies.*

Burdens.—There is a gateway at the entrance of a narrow passage in London, over which is written, "No burdens allowed to pass through." "And yet we do pass constantly with ours," said one friend to another, as they turned up this passage out of a more frequented and broader thoroughfare. They carried no visible burdens, but they were like many who, although they have no outward pack upon their shoulders, often stoop inwardly beneath the pressure of a heavy load upon the heart. The worst burdens are those which never meet the eye. There is another gate — one which we are invited to enter, and must enter, if we would ever attain to rest and peace, and over which is also inscribed, "No burdens allowed to pass through." This is the strait gate which leads to life; and by it stands One who opened the narrow way to which it leads, saying to each one of us. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." — *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

A prayer of a suffering penitent.

b Is. xxvii. 8; Je. xxx. 11; xlvi. 28.

c Joo vi. 4.

d Comp. bundle on back of Bunyan's pilgrim.

"A man, when under the rebuke of God, feels himself to be overwhelmed in the sea of his sins. There is no human refuge for him. No light reaches him."—*Watkinson.*

6—10. (6) **troubled,** *R. V.*, "pained," writhe with pain and sorrow. **I go mourning,** he, like Job, feels himself under divine discipline. (7) **loathsome disease,** *R. V.*, "burning." (8) **feeble,** "corpse-like cold;" benumbed. Psalmist describes the alternations of a fever fit. **I . . heart,** *Polych. Bib.* "I groan louder than the roar of a lioness." **roared,** with pain; groan aloud. (9) **before thee,** well known to thee. (10) **panteth,** *R. V.*, "throbbeth;"

"Persons in health have died from the expectation of dying. It was once common for those who perished by violence to summon their de-

stroyers to appear, within a stated time, before the tribunal of their God: and we have many perfectly attested instances in which, through fear and remorse, the perpetrators withered under the curse, and died. Pestilence does not kill with the rapidity of terror." —*Wakley.*

"The first symptom of approaching death with some is the strong presentiment that they are about to die."—*Wakley.*

a "The alienation of friends and acquaintances is a common topic in Ps. of this kind. Comp. xxxi. 11; lxxxviii. 18."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"Silence is the language of dignified innocence. It is a token of noble self control."—*Watkinson.*

One dying said, "I cannot see the darkness of the valley, because of His brightness."

b "Dav. may be giving the reason for his silence. He feared lest, by some injudicious answer, he might give occasion to his enemies, who had already triumphed when he made a false step. Ps xxxix. 1, 2"—*Spk. Com.*

"The first hospital for the reception of the diseased and the infirm was founded at Edessa, in Syria, by the sagacious and provident humanity of a Christian father."

lit. goes round and round. **light . . eyes,** eyes dim and dull from overmuch weeping, comp. Job xvii. 7.

Discipline of affliction.— To a certain extent, we can all see that discipline is good for us. What man of business repents him of the time he spent in what appeared to be the sharp discipline of school? Who does not wish that he had had more of it and sharper? The time when you strained all your powers, denied yourselves all your pleasures, and tied yourselves tight to your tasks, is the time which you remember most gratefully had you your youth over again, you would make that the rule and not the rare exception. Tell me which of you came through childish and youthful follies without some sharp lessons? Who has not been bitterly mortified by the wounding of his self-importance, or heartily laughed at for what he thought very wise and grand? The sharper the lesson the better it served its purpose. Looking back you would not wish one drop of its bitterness extracted; you would rather that the infusion had been stronger, that it might have killed the weakness at its very root. We see, so far, that good comes out of discipline. We do not sit down and cry over it. Hereby you consent to the wisdom of the discipline of God.— *Baldwin Brown.*

11—14. (11) **lovers,** *i. e.* familiar friends. **my sore,** *R. V.*, "plague." Here again we may compare the case of Job.[a] (12) **snares,** "to the desertion of friends is added the persecution of enemies, who take advantage of the debility and prostration caused by sickness to plot against the writer's life, to 'lay snares for him,' and devise evil against him. Those who assign the psalm to David suppose the devices described in 2 Sa. xv. 1-6 to be referred to." (13) **deaf man,** we are reminded of David's self-restraint when Shimei hurled curses at him from the hillside. (14) **no reproofs,** or no arguments; *i. e.* conscious of guilt the psalmist is obliged to remain silent under his enemies' charges.

Deaf and dumb. — For why should I hear when I meant not to speak? and why should I speak when I knew beforehand I should not be heard? I knew by contesting I should but provoke them, and make them more guilty that were guilty too much before. I therefore thought it better myself to be silent than to set them a-roaring and make them grow outrageous. No doubt a great wisdom in David, to know that to be deaf and dumb was in this case his best course, but yet a far greater virtue that knowing it, he was able to do it. Oh, how happy should we be, if we could always do that which we know is best to be done, and if our wills were as ready to act as our reason is able to enact; we should then decline many rocks we now run upon, we should then avoid many errors we now run into. To be deaf and dumb are indeed great inabilities and defects, when they be natural; but when they be voluntary, and I may say artificial, they are then great abilities, or rather perfections. —*Sir Richard Baker.*

15—22. Pleadings, confessions, petitions. **15—18.** (15) **in thee . . hope,** or, "thee do I wait for." **hear,** *R. V.*, "answer." (16) **I said,** within myself.[b] **foot slippeth,** fig. for misfortune wh. seems to prove God's disfavor. (17) **to halt,** in position where there is great danger of falling. **sorrow,** the suffering of affliction, making him unfit for kingly duties. (18) **declare,** in humble confession that sin is the cause.

Trust in God. — David committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously, and so in patience was able to possess his soul. Hope in God's intervention, and belief in the power of prayer, are two most blessed stays to the soul in time of adversity. Turning right away from the creature to the sovereign Lord of all, and to Him as our own covenant God, we shall find the richest solace in waiting upon Him. Reputation like a fair pearl may be cast into the mire, but in due time when the Lord makes up His jewels, the godly character shall shine with unclouded splendor. Rest, then, O slandered one, and let not thy soul be tossed to and fro with anxiety. — *Spurgeon.*

19—22. (19) **lively,** read the sentence, "But those that are causelessly mine enemies are strong." **wrongfully,** *i. e.* falsely; hatred based on misconceptions. This suits well the time of Absalom's conspiracy, when day by day more and more of the people forsook David and joined the party of his son (2 Sa. xv. 12, 13). (20) **evil for good,** turn against Dav., though he had been kind to them. (22) **my salvation,** "note the development of feeling;

first prayer, then confidence in God's knowledge, then hope, then assurance of salvation in God." [a] — *Spk. Com.*

Matthew Hale's enemy. — A person who had done Sir Matthew Hale a great injury, came afterwards to him for his advice in the settlement of his estate. Sir Matthew gave his advice very frankly to him, but would accept of no fee for it. When he was asked how he could use a man so kindly who had wronged him so much, his answer was, he thanked God he had learned to forgive injuries.

a Ex. xv. 2; Ps. xxiv. 5; xxvii. 1; Is. xii. 2, *etc.*

PSALM THE THIRTY-NINTH.

author,— unknown

Prayer of one much tried by the prosperity of the ungodly.

1—3. (1) **I said,** *i. e.* thought to myself; formed the resolution. **with my tongue,** by murmuring at the Div. dispensation under which he suffered. **bridle,** or muzzle. **wicked . . me,** the sight of their prosperity was a temptation to complain against God's providence. (2) **even from good,** [b] speaking neither good nor bad, (3) **hot,** with holding back the expression of earnest feeling. He speaks, however, at last to God, not to his adversaries. **burned,** *R. V.*, "Kindled," the more he tried to suppress his feelings the greater the fire of passion burned to give utterance.

Silence. — There is a sevenfold silence. 1. A stoical silence. 2. A politic silence. 3. A foolish silence. 4. A sullen silence. 5. A forced silence. 6. A despairing silence. 7. A prudent, a holy, a gracious silence. — *Thomas Brooks.*

Meditation.—A writer of the present day says, "I remember Alma Tadema, the great painter, saying to me that he sat down every day at his easel. Sometimes he began without enthusiasm, and painted on with little interest. But after an hour or so he surprised himself in a fit of absorption: the fire had kindled within him as he worked. — *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.* — *Dying silence.* — In the last visit but one which Whitefield paid to America, he spent a day or two at Princeton, under the roof of Dr. Finley, then president of the college at that place. At dinner the doctor said, "Mr. W., I hope it will be very long before you will be called home: but when that event shall arrive, I shall be glad to hear the noble testimony you will bear for God." "You would be disappointed, doctor," said W., "I shall die silent. It has pleased God to enable me to bear so many testimonies for Him during my life, that He will require none from me when I die." The manner of W.'s death verified his prediction.

b The expression includes the idea of submission; the silence of resignation.

"Such a Ps. fits well the reactions that followed the reformations of such kings as Asa, Jehoshaphat, or Jehoash."—*W. E. Barton.*

Jeduthun, either the same as Ethan, a leading singer, or the title of a tune.

4—8. (4) **mine end,** how near I am to death, [c] comp. Ps. xc. 12. **that . . know,** *R. V.*, "let me know." (5) **handbreadth,** *R. V.*, "as handbreadths." "The shortest measure is enough to reckon life by."— *Cam. Bib.* Matt. vi. 27. **best state,** or at his standing fast, however firmly established he may be. **vanity,** or a mere *breath.* (6) **vain shew,** as a shadow, an unsubstantial form, [d] trans. *Cam. Bib.* translates: "Only as a phantom doth each walk to and fro; only for vanity do they turmoil; one heapeth up, and he will not know who doth gather the hoard." **gather,** as His heritage or His spoil. (7) **now,** taking all these things into consideration. (8) **transgressions,** his own sins were far more serious things than his enemies; therefore he prays first for redemption from their power and punishment. [e] **foolish,** *i. e.* those who taunt sufferers with being the mark of God's wrath.

Hope centered in God (vs. 7). — I. There is nothing in this world worthy the expectation of our souls, as to constitute their happiness. 1. All things here are uncertain; 2. They are unsatisfying. II. Our hopes should be placed on God entirely as the author of our felicity. 1. There is enough in God to fill our most enlarged expectations; 2. God is willing to grant us all the happiness we can possibly desire in and from Him. — *T. Gibbons.*

The rich man and his son. — An old woman, who showed the house and pictures at Towcester, expressed herself in these remarkable words: "That is Sir Robert Farmer; he lived in the country, took care of his estate, built this house, and paid for it; managed well, saved money, and died rich. *That* is his son. He was made a lord, took a place at court, spent his estate, and died a beggar!" A very concise but full account, and fraught with a valuable moral lesson: "He layeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them."

c "Make me rightly to know and estimate the shortness and uncertainty of human life, that so, instead of suffering myself to be perplexed with all that I see around me, I may cast myself the more entirely on Thee." — *Perowne.*

d Ps. lxxiii. 20.

e Ps. xxxii. 1.

"When in the Bristol election, his competitor died, Burke said, 'What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!'" — *Wm. S. Pluemr.*

"I see that we who live are nothing else but images and a vain shadow." — *Sophocles.*

"Ills that never happened have chiefly made men wretched." — *Tupper.*

9—13. (9) **dumb,** "the knowledge that my afflictions came from Thee, and were the just punishment of my transgressions, helped me to keep the silence

which I observed while the ungodly was in my sight." (10) **blow,** *lit.* conflict or quarrel.[a] (11) **his beauty,**[b] *etc.*, "as easily as the moth-grub, working unseen, destroys 'goodly raiment,' so easily does God's chastisement destroy a man's bodily strength which makes him attractive." — *Cam. Bib.* (12) **stranger,** "only a short time here, and dependent on Jehovah's protection." — *Cheyne.* Gen. xxiii. 4.[c] (13) **recover strength,**[d] "brighten up again, like the morning, with a smiling gleam of light on my countenance."

Submission to God (*vs.* 9). — This language is suited to — I. A gracious soul under a sense of guilt. II. To one visited with a providential reverse of circumstances. III. Or under oppression. IV. Or one arrested by disease. V. Or when God takes away the light of his eyes. Conclude with three general hints — 1. The text shows us the right state of mind under bereaving providences; 2. That there is a school for God's children; 3. That God has appointed a present silence to be the harbinger of future praise. — *R. Cecil.*

Stranger and sojourner.—A stranger is one that hath his abode in a foreign country, that is not a native and a denizen of the place, though he liveth there, and in opposition to the natives he is called a stranger: as if a Frenchman should live in England, he is a stranger. But a *sojourner* is one that intendeth not to settle, but only passeth through a place, and is in motion traveling homeward. So the children of God in relation to a country of their own in another place, namely, heaven, they are denizens there, but strangers to the world; and they are sojourners and pilgrims in regard of their motion and journey towards their country. — *Thomas Manton.* — *The decline of life.* — So have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath has forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirement, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head, and broke its stalk; and at night, having lost some of its leaves, and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and out-worn faces. The same is the portion of every man and every woman; the heritage of worms and serpents, rottenness and cold dishonor, and our beauty so changed, that our acquaintance quickly know us not; and that change mingled with so much horror, or else meets so with our fears and weak discoursings, that they who, six hours ago, tended upon us either with charitable or ambitious services, cannot without some regret, stay in the room alone, where the body lies stripped of its life and honor. — *Jeremy Taylor.*

PSALM THE FORTIETH.

author,— unknown; the time is the exile.

Subject, Thanksgiving and self-dedication.

1—5. (1) **patiently,** Heb. *in waiting I waited;* expressing the intense feeling of expectation.[e] (2) **horrible pit,**[f] he compares his plight to that of a prisoner in a dungeon (Lam. iii. 53, 55), or to that of a traveler floundering in a morass, or quicksand. Quagmires, "treacherous to the last degree," are common in Palestine. **established,** *etc.*, or, made my footsteps firm. (3) **new song,**[g] one freshly started by this new deliverance. (4) **respecteth not,** *turneth not to:* the word generally used of apostasy. **proud,** so are called his high-handed enemies. **lies,** lying apostates, "either men who have forsaken the faith, or have broken their oaths of allegiance." — *Spk. Com.* (5) **reckoned,** they are innumerable. It is not only for his recent deliverance that the Psalmist owes thanks and gratitude to God. God's mercies in the past have been countless, and have laid him under unspeakable obligations.

Sinking but trusting (*vs.* 1). — I. The patience we should exercise: no insensibility, or stubbornness in action, or ease, or sloth. II. Some causes why it is not exercised. 1. Latent scepticism; 2. Self-reproach; 3. Self-confidence; 4. Weariness. III. Some reasons why we should exercise it. 1. The experience of all saints attests its desirability; 2. Our own utter inability; 3. The example of Jesus; 4. Our knowledge of the goodness of God. — *Stems and Twigs.*

The duke's example. — In a town in Bavaria, there is a little tumble-down church where the duke as often as he came that way used to go in and pray. If on coming out of the church he happened to meet any of the peasants, he loved to converse with them pleasantly. One day he met an old man, and after some talk, asked him whether he could do anything for him. The peasant replied, "Noble sir, you cannot do anything better for me than you have already done." "How so? I do not know that I have done anything for you." "But I know it," said the man; "for how can I forget that you saved

a "We may render 'I am worn out with resisting Thy chastisement.'" — *Jennings and Lowe.*

b Job xiii. 28.

c 1 Chr. xxix. 15.

d See Job vii. 19; x. 20, 21.

"David pleads the good impressions made upon him by his affliction. It had set him a-weeping. It had set him a-praying. It had helped to wean him from the world."— *Matthew Henry.*

"They who know that everything is God's ordering are satisfied that He orders all for the best."— *Fénélon.*

"So what signifies wishing and hoping for better times? We may make these times better if we bestir ourselves." — *Franklin.*

e Compare Ps. xxvii. 14; xxxvii. 7.

f "The metaphor of the pit may be used either with reference to a pit-fall for wild beasts, or a dungeon, such as that into which Jeremiah was cast (Jer. xxxviii. 6), and which would often have a damp and miry bottom." — *Perowne.*

g Ps. xxxiii. 3.

"By one and the same act the Lord works our salvation, our enemies' confusion, and the church's edification." — *J. P. Lange.*

my son! He traveled so long in sinful ways that for long he would have nothing to do with church or prayer. Some time ago he was here, and saw you, noble sir, enter this church. 'I should like to see what he does there,' said the young man scornfully to himself, and he glided in after you. But when he saw you pray so devoutly, he was so deeply impressed that he also began to pray, and from that moment became a new man. I thank you for it. This is why I said you can do me no greater favor than you have already done." — *Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

"Verily, were the arch-fiend of hell to start a carriage and pair, and live like a lord, he would have thousands who would court his acquaintance." — *Spurgeon.*

6, 7. Sacrifice . . not,[a] Sacrifice, of slain animals; offering, of the fruits of the earth, the "meal offering." 1 Sa. xv. 22. **desire,** *R. V.*, "hast no delight in." **mine ears,**[b] *etc.*, "God has endowed man with the faculty of hearing, and the endowment implies a corresponding duty of obedience." **burnt . . offering,** all the four kinds of offering provided for in the Jewish system are included in this verse; burnt-offering, symbolizing the dedication of the worshiper to God; sin offering, to reconcile and restore the sinner to God. **hast not required,** "all that God when forming Israel into a nation expressly required was obedience; and this was all that God, still required of each individual Israelite." — *Cheyne.* (7) **come,** *R. V.*, "am come." The Psalmists' answer when aware of the divine requirements. **volume of the book,** or roll; ancient volumes were in the form of scrolls, or rolls.[c] **it is written,** better, "is it prescribed," "is my duty written:" *i. e.* the Psalmist promises to perform just what the "roll" — prob. the law — prescribes.

Life results of God's inward revelation to man (*vs.* 6). — I. A profound conviction of the spirituality of religion. 1. This result is rational; 2. Testing. II. A personal consecration to the Divine will. 1. This is voluntary; 2. Orderly; 3. Joyous. III. A faithful declaration of God's character. He declared — 1. His rectitude; 2. His fidelity; 3. Merciful interposition; 4. Goodness; 5. Revelation. — *Thomas.*

The Caffre converted. — A Caffre, a fine, tall, athletic young man, addicted to all the debasing and demoralizing customs of his nation, but who had occasionally attended public worship, one night resolved to go into the colony of Chumie for the purpose of stealing a horse, which is a common practice with them. He immediately left home, came into the colony, and watched for an opportunity of accomplishing his purpose, which soon presented itself. He found two horses grazing in a sheltered situation near a bush, and he instantly seized one of them, and made off with it as fast as he could. Elated with his success, and rejoicing in the prospect of securing his prize without being detected, he proceeded towards Caffreland, when all at once the thought struck him, "Thou shalt not steal." He could go no further, but immediately drew up the horse, and said to himself, "What is this? I have heard these words before, in the church, but I never felt as I do now. This must be the word of God." He dismounted, and held the bridle in his hand, hesitating whether to go forward with the horse or to return with it and restore it to the owner. In this state he continued for upward of an hour. At last he resolved to take the horse back again, which he accordingly did, and returned home a true penitent, determined to serve God. When he reached his dwelling he could not rest; sleep had departed from him; the sting of conviction abided deep in his conscience, and he could not shake it off. The next day he took an ox out of his kraal (cattle place) and went to the nearest village to sell it, in order that he might buy European clothing with the money, and attend the house of God like a Christian. When he returned with his clothes he went to the minister's house, and told him all that had taken place, and requested to be admitted on probation as a church member. The minister, cheered with his statement, received him: and after keeping him on trial the appointed time, and finding him consistent in his conduct, a short time ago baptized him; and he is now a full member of the Christian church, and adorning his profession.

"Personal and not ritualistic sacrifices are what God delights in" —*Jennings and Lowe.*

"It is more necessary to be saved than to be; better

8—12. (8) **delight,** find personal pleasure in it. Religion must be more than formal doing of duties if it is to be acceptable to God.[d] **thy will,** what thou approvest. **within my heart,** "as if God's law were itself the heart wh. gives life to his whole being." — *Cam. Bib.* (9, 10) **have preached,** *R. V.*, "published," *etc.*, "words are heaped on words to express the eager forwardness of a heart burning to show forth its gratitude." — *Perowne.* **righteousness,** *i. e.* Jehovah's power and willingness to prove Himself faith-

a Ps. li. 16, 17; lxix. 30, 31; Is. i. 11; Jer. vii. 21-23; Ho. vi. 6; Mi. vi. 6-8.

b "Thou hast given me capacity for hearing and obeying Thy law; a more valuable service than the mere offering of sacrifices." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

c *Ewald* would read this clause, "Behold I come *with* the volume of a book written." *etc.*

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man.
When Duty whispers low, Thou must
The youth replies, I can!"
Emerson.

Salvation is placed by the side of a believing look. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." Can we have salvation on easier terms?

A highly esteemed young man was rescued from the water, and appeared to be dead. At length he began to show signs of life; and a thrill of joy ran through the crowd as it was whispered around, "He breathes!" How much greater the joy of men and angels over newly-born souls! "Repentance clothes in grass and flowers the grave in which the past is laid." — *Sterling.*

d "Personal and not ritualistic sacrifices are what God delights in" —*Jennings and Lowe.*

not to be than to have a being in hell."—*Gurnall.*

a "This passage was applied by the fathers, esp. by Augustine, to our Saviour, as bearing the sins of the church, of wh. He is at once the Head and Representative. Ps. xxxviii. 4; lxv. 3; lxix. 5; lxxiii. 26." —*Spk. Com.*

"The will of Jesus swung round instantly and easily, moving like a vane only in the direction of the Higher Will."—*Burton.*

"Doing God's will as if it were my own." —*J. G. Whtitier.*

"The fairest and finest impression ot the Bible is to have it well printed on the reader's heart." — *Arrowsmith.*

"It takes courage to go into the world with a Christianity which you mean to make use of."—*Anon.*

"O God, who art the truth, make me one with Thee in everlasting love; I am often weary of reading and weary of working. In Thee alone is the sun of my desires. Let all teachers be silent; let the whole creation be dumb before Thee, and wilt Thou speak unto my soul?"—*Thomas à Kempis.*

"God gives the tree its nature, and plants it where it can best develop its nature, and looks for fruit according to its nature and place. So, after you have done your best work in the place where God has set you, do not be disturbed and irritated because it is not the rarer, more beautiful work of some other man." —*M. R. Vincent.*

ful to every promise and prophesy made to Israel. (11) **Withhold,** *etc.*, as the Psalmist has been bold to speak for God, he now prays that God will not restrain His mercy, *etc.*, to him. (12) **iniquities,** these, rather than external troubles, most deeply distress him.[a] **taken . . me,** *R. V.*, "overtaken."

The hold of sin (*vs.* 12).— Sin takes hold of men — I. By its power, Prov. v. 22. II. By an accusing conscience. III. By its evil consequences. — *Wolfendale.*

Way to heaven.— "Fine sermon, wasn't it?" asked one of Farmer Peters' boarders, referring to a scholarly discourse with which the Meadowville meeting-house congregation had been favored that morning by a city clergyman. "Mebbe," returned Farmer Peters. "Why," persisted the boarder, "that man knows more about the Bible, he has made a deeper study of Biblical history and geography, than almost any other minister in this country." "Has he, now?" inquired Farmer Peters, mildly. "Well, then, I reckon the trouble must've been with me. You see I'd cal'lated I sh'd hear somethin' about the way to heaven, an' I only learned the way from Jerusalem to Jericho."— *Youth's Comp.*

The Bible the rule of action.— It is written of Boleslaus, one of the kings of Poland, that he carried about him the picture of his father, and when he was to do any great work, or set upon any design extraordinary, he would look on the picture, and pray that he might do nothing unworthy of such a father's name. Thus it is that the Scriptures are the picture of God's will, and therein drawn out to the very life; before a man enters upon or engages himself in any business whatsoever, let him look there, and read there what is to be done, what to be undone; and what God commands, let that be done, and what He forbids, let that be undone.

13—17. (13) **Be pleased,** *etc.*, see Ps. lxx. (14) **ashamed,** *etc.*, Ps. xxxv 4, 5. **backward,** as a routed army. **put . . evil,** *R. V.*, "brought to dishonor that delight in my hurt." (15) **aha,** the exclamation of delight over another's misfortune, *see* Ps. xxxv. 21. (16) **magnified,** extolled, spoken highly of. (17) **poor and needy,** afflicted and poor. **the Lord thinketh,** better *may the Lord think upon me.* **no tarrying,** "the last word is a deep sigh." *Cp.* Daniel's prayer, Dan. ix. 19.

Man's hope in need (*vs.* 17).—I. Human wretchedness. We may admit the grandeur of man. Cannot deny the sorrow, *etc.*, of life. II. Divine thoughtfulness, which indicates — 1. Divine condescension; 2. Divine estimates; 3. Divine provision. — *Burrowes.*

Poor and needy.—We have the comforting thought that, however humble, we have our place. We may be small, and of no reputation, but the Lord thinketh on us, has a place for us, and this should be enough. And as regards our affairs, it is true that they are mere straws in comparison with the great affairs of others; we have only to do with shillings where they have to do with thousands of pounds; we have only to do with aches and pains, where they have to do with life and death. But He who fashioned the creeping thing knows its need, and He who fashioned us knows ours.— *P. H. Power.—The cruelty of persecutors.* —In the St. Bartholomew massacre, at Vassy, when any of the victims desired to have mercy shown them for the love of Jesus, the murderers would say, "You use the name of Christ; but where is your Christ now?" So in the massacre of the prisoners at Trois, "Where is now your God?" cried the demons; "what has become of all your prayers and psalms now? Let your God, whom you call upon, save you if He can." Some of the wretches sung in scorn to their victims these words: "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause;" while others, beating them, cried, "Sing now, 'Have mercy on me, O God.'"— *God's planting.* — You are not to waste time in admiring or envying other men's modes of power, but to give your whole energy to the development of your own mode of power. And if your best is only a single fruit — why, many a time I have seen a gardener point with special pride and pleasure to a dwarf pear-tree which had gathered up its whole little life into one single pear; and if your life's best labor brings to pass but a single result, go back to the thought — God planted me — and be well content, as you will have a right to be, with the inference from that; He planted me that I might do that one thing. — *M. R. Vincent.*

PSALM THE FORTY-FIRST.

author, — prob. David

Complaint of treacherous friends, such as Ahithophel.

1—3. considereth, with "the kindness of a man who does not misinterpret the affliction." **poor,** in sense of affliction, not necessarily of poverty.[a] Used generally of those "afflicted in mind, body, or estate." **time of trouble,** *R. V.*, "day of evil." (2) **thou wilt not,** better as marg. *do not thou.* (3) **strengthen,** *R. V.*, "support" him from sinking into the grave. **bed of languishing,** a part at least of the Psalmist's trouble was a severe illness, which was interpreted to his injury. **make . . bed,** "all his couch dost Thou turn when he falleth sick."—*Delitzsch.* Turn from a couch of sickness to one of health.

The incidental blessings resulting from considering the pious poor.—1. We learn gratitude. 2. We see patience. 3. We often remark the triumphs of great grace. 4. We obtain light on Christian experience. 5. We have their prayers. 6. We feel the pleasure of beneficence. 7. We enter into communion with the lowly Saviour.—*Spurgeon.*

Care for poor.— Thomas Fuller tells how Queen Mary of England, abstracted from her evil counsellors, had good features of character. She erected again the hospital of the Savoy which had been founded by her grandfather, Henry VII.; and her maids of honor, out of her own wardrobe, furnished it with beds, blankets, and sheets; and then he adds, "Were any of those ladies still alive, I would pray for them in the language of the Psalmist: 'The Lord make all their bed in their sickness.' And He is a good bedmaker indeed, who can and will make it fit the person, and please the patient. But seeing such are all long since deceased, it will be no superstition to praise God for their piety, and commend their practice to the imitation of posterity."—*Ker.*—*The three pillows* (*vs.* 3).—When I visited one day, as he was dying, my beloved friend Benjamin Parsons, I said, "How are you to-day, sir?" he said, "My head is resting very sweetly on three pillows—infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom." Preaching in the Canterbury Hall in Brighton, I mentioned this some time since; and many months after, I was requested to call upon a poor but holy young woman, apparently dying. She said, "I felt I must see you before I died; I heard you tell the story of Benjamin Parsons and his three pillows; and when I went through a surgical operation, and it was very cruel, I was leaning my head on pillows, and as they were taking them away, I said, 'Mayn't I keep them?' The surgeon said, 'No, my dear, we must take them away.' 'But,' said I, 'you can't take away Benjamin Parsons' three pillows; I can lay my head on infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom.'"—*Paxton Hood.*

a "The word is one of wide meaning, and is used of the poor (Ex. xxx. 15); of the lean and weak in body (Ge. xli. 19); of the sick in mind (2 Sa. xiii. 4)."—*Perowne.*

b "Thou wilt soon, when he is sick, turn all his being bedridden (into health)."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"Not what we give, but what we share,—
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me."
—*J. R. Lowell.*

4—6. (4) **I said,** in the Heb. I is emphatic, *I for my part.* The poet turns from the compassionate man to give expression to his own feelings. **soul,** "the man's whole 'self,' the living personality wh. results fr. the union of spirit and flesh."—*Cam. Bib.* **sinned,** *etc.*, before God the Psalmist recognizes the reason of his sufferings, but he mourns over the treatment received from his fellow-men. (5) **of me,** *R. V.*, "against me, saying." **When . . perish,** they were watching anxiously for a fatal termination of the disease. (6) **come to see me,** allusion is distinctly made to some individual; we can only suppose that he refers to Ahithophel. **vanity,**[c] hypocritical expressions of condolence. **gathereth . . itself,** *i. e.* collects material for fresh accusation by observing the symptoms of the sick man.

Confession of sin (*vs.* 4).—This confession has been made by—I. The hardened sinner,—Pharaoh. II. The ouble-minded man,—Balaam. III. The insincere man,—Saul. IV. The doubtful penitent,—Achan. V. By the despairing man,—Judas. VI. By the saint,—Job. VII. By the prodigal.—*Spurgeon.*

Relief in prayer.—It is some consolation, it is some relief, to open our hearts to men, and to tell our sorrows to a friend, who can give us no relief but by mingling his tears with ours. What consolation, what relief will it then give to open our hearts, and tell our sorrows to that Friend above, who is ever gracious to hear, and ever mighty to save! To that Friend who never fails, who is afflicted in all our afflictions, and who keeps us as the "apple of the eye!" Art thou, therefore, oppressed with the calamities of life, is thy head bowed down with trouble, or thy heart broken with sorrow? Approach to the altar, go to God, present to Him the prayer of thy heart, and

c "He pretends friendship, and that his errand is to mourn with me, and to comfort me; he tells me he is very sorry to see me so indisposed, and wishes me my health; but it is all flattery and falsehood."—*Matt. Henry.*

The world, though tossed to and fro upon a sea of danger, yet never seems to cast its eye on the shore of safety. "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life."

"So thine own soul commend thee in the ways,
Faint not, nor swerve from thine accepted aim,

He will send help to thee from His holy hill.—*J. Logan.—An American lady.*—The Rev. Dr. Mason, of New York, was some years since requested to visit a lady in dying circumstances, who, together with her husband, openly avowed infidel principles, though they attended on his ministry. On approaching her bedside, he asked her if she felt herself a sinner and perceived the need of a Saviour. She frankly told him she did not; and that she wholly disbelieved the doctrine of a mediator. "Then," said the doctor, "I have no consolation for you; not one word of comfort." Kneeling down by the bedside he prayed for her as a guilty sinner; and then arising from his knees left the house. A day or two after, he received a letter from the lady herself, earnestly desiring that he would come and see her without delay. He immediately obeyed the summons; but what was his amazement, when, on entering the room, she held out her hand to him, and said, with a benignant smile, "It is all true; all that you said on Sunday is true! I have seen myself the wretched sinner which you described me to be in prayer. I have seen Christ, that all-sufficient Saviour you said He was; and God has mercifully snatched me from the abyss of infidelity in which I was sunk, and placed me on the Rock of Ages. There I am secure; there I shall remain. I know in whom I have believed." On the evening of the same day she expired, in fullness of joy and peace in believing.—*R. T. S.*

Most diffident when men most loudly praise,
And unabashed beneath their harshest blame."
—*Youth's Com.*

"The difference between true and false repentance is as great as that between the running of water in the paths after a violent shower and the streams which flow forth from a living fountain."—*Venn.*

"Our Lord applied part of this verse to Judas, the betrayer, John xiii. 18. But it is significant that He omitted the words, 'Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted.'"—*Hom. Com.*

7—9. (7) **whisper,**[a] "whisperers and backbiters are put together among the worst of sinners," Ro. i. 29, 30. **devise my hurt,** *i. e.* indulge in uncharitable speculations as to the cause of his illness, and hope for a speedy fatal issue. (8) **evil disease,** something dishonorable; a punishment which comes for evil doing. **cleaveth,** *lit. is poured out on him,* or *smelted into him.* **rise no more,** never get up from this sick bed.[b] (9) **own . . friend,** *lit. man of my peace.*[c] **eat of my bread,** so was in close and honored association.[d] **lifted . . me,** Heb. *made great his heel,* lifted it to trample me down; like a vicious horse, which kicks his own master. "The words 'he that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me' are quoted by Christ in John xiii. 18 as fulfilled by the treachery of Judas. The words of the psalm are not a direct prediction, but the treachery and the fate of Ahithophel foreshadowed the treachery and the fate of Judas. What saints of old time had suffered by the desertion of friends must be suffered with an aggravated bitterness by the Son of Man. Their experience must be fulfilled in His. *Cp.* John xvii. 12; Acts i. 16."—*Cam. Bib.*

Blessings in disguise.—A naturalist, speaking of the swarms of insects which torment cattle in tropical lands, shows that the sufferings of the cattle issue in their safety. "Observe," says this writer, "that the furious eagerness of the winged insects, which seem to be the agents of death, is frequently a cause of life. By an incessant persecution of the sick flocks, enfeebled by hot damp airs, they ensure their safety. Otherwise they would remain stupidly resigned, and hour after hour grow less capable of motion, gloomier and more morbid in the bonds of fever, until they could rise no more. The inexorable spur knows, however, the secret of putting them on their legs; though, with trembling limbs, they take to flight, the insect never quits them: presses them, urges them, and conducts them, bleeding, to the wholesome regions of the dry lands and the living waters, where their furious guide abandons them, and returns to the pestilent vapors, to its realm of death." Thus David's nemies, like a swarm of winged insects, drove him to loftier heights of light. If he had been left to a level life of care and prosperity he might have fallen a victim to its relaxing influences, but persecutions and tribulations drove him to the higher walks of thought, and feeling, and life. —*Hom. Com.*

a "The Heb. is singularly graphic; it describes the enemies in a group whispering to each other, laying plots against the king; he seems to see them standing round his chamber, if not in his very presence."—*Spk. Com.*

b "He is utterly undone, and our victory is sure."—*Fausset.*

c Jer. xx. 10, marg.

d "The oriental feeling as to the sacredness of hospitality would stamp such conduct with peculiar blackness."—*Perowne.*

La Fontaine said: "Rare is true love: true friendship is still rarer." "In trust," said Queen Elizabeth, "I have found treason." "Friends!" said Socrates, "there is no friend."

10—13. (10) **requite them,**[e] apart from personal feeling it was a *king's* duty not only to repress revolt but also to punish the conspirators. (11) **favourest,**[f] *R. V.*, "delightest in." (12) **before thy face,** so in thine acceptance. (13) **Blessed,** *etc.*, "a later doxology appended, when the Pss. were collected, in order to mark the conclusion of the First Book." **everlasting to everlasting,** "'From æon to æon' means 'both in this æon and in the next.' The doxology thus becomes a creed; no one who disbelieved in a future life could repeat it."—*Cheyne.* **amen, and amen,** "so be it:" the response of the congregation to the doxology of the priests.

Before God's face.—The life of some creatures lieth in the light and

e "Such a wish cannot be reconciled with our better Christian conscience."—*Perowne.*

f "The expression in this *vs.* "*Thou favorest me,*" is characteristic of David. See Ps. xviii. 19; xxii. 8; xxxv. 27; 2 Sa. xv. 26.

warmth of the sun ; and so doth the life of the saints lie in the light and warmth of God's countenance. And, as in an eclipse of the sun, there is a drooping in the whole frame of nature, so when God hides His face, gracious souls cannot but droop and languish, and bow down themselves before Him. Many insensible creatures, some by opening and shutting, as marigolds and tulips, others by bowing and inclining the head, as the solsequy and mallow-flowers, are so sensible of the presence and absence of the sun, that there seems to be such a sympathy between the sun and them, that if the sun be gone or clouded, they wrap up themselves or hang down their heads as being unwilling to be seen by any eye but his that fills them : and just thus it was with David when God had hid his face in a cloud. — *Thomas Brooks.*

"Men do not object to a battle if they are confident that they will have victory; and, thank God, every one of us may have the victory if we will." — *D. L. Moody.*

PSALM THE FORTY-SECOND.

author, — unknown

time prob. the exile

the beginning of Bk. II.

1—3. hart, or hind, as the female is referred to. **panteth,** Syr. *brayeth,* as if a peculiar cry of the thirsty animal were intended. The word is only found again in Joel i. 20. **water-brooks,** or water-courses.[a] (2) **living God,** as the source and sustainer of all life,[b] in contrast with the dead gods of the heathen. **before God,** "the regular formula for the stated visits to the temple" as required by the Mosaic law, Ex. xxiii. 17 ; xxxiv. 23. In the sanctuary God's presence was peculiarly manifested. (3) **my meat,** my daily portion, like my daily meal. **where . . God?** the bitterest of all taunts to the godly man. He is mocked as one forsaken by the God in whom he trusted. "The bitterest ingredient of his cup of sorrow is the taunt of the heathen that his plight demonstrates the importance or indifference of the God whom he serves." — *Kirkpatrick.*

"Not merely a quiet languishing, but a strong, audible thirsting or panting for water, caused by prevailing drought." — *Delitzsch.*

The Forty-second Psalm. — Perhaps somebody will one day write a book which shall gather up the services which unknown men have rendered to their race. Among these the author will surely include this forty-second psalm. It has been for centuries one of the most powerful cordials for the heart-sick and despondent, and its virtue has grown rather than diminished with the lapse of years, and yet we do not know its author, nor its date, nor the peculiar circumstances under which it was written. All we know is that it is the utterance of some one in deep trouble, and that it tells us how he found comfort, and how we may find it under similar circumstances. — *Ker.* — *Thirst.* — I have noticed when traveling among the woods and mountains that when a man was really thirsty, he was not very finical about the particular way of getting a drink. If he had a silver drinking cup with him, he used it of course ; but he seemed to drink with no less relish when he had to use a tin-cup, or a cow-horn, or even to lie flat down on the bank and drink from the stream itself. The amount of it was, he was *thirsty;* and people will not drink pure water when they are not thirsty ; they want something sweetened or spiced to tickle the palate. Only let our churches be filled with souls *thirsting* for the goodness which God has laid up for them in His word and ordinances, and there will soon be interest enough. — *Ker.*

a "The gazelle is constantly found resorting to the rocky ravines in quest of the pools of water left by the winter torrents." — *Wilton.*

b "Probably not without reference to the expression, 'living waters,' the quickening and restorative streams for wh. the thirsty soul longeth." — "A l'enfant il faut sa mère, A mon âme il faut mon Dieu. The infant needs its mother, my soul needs my God."

4, 5. (4) **When . . things,** *R.V.,* "These things I remember and pour out," *etc.*[c] "He desires to indulge the sad pleasure of retrospect" when he led the pilgrims up to the great feasts. **in me,** or upon me.[d] **for,** *R. V.,* "how." **multitude,** throng of pilgrims going to the feasts. **went with them,** *Heb.* went slowly as those in a procession. **I . . with,** *R. V.,* "and led" as a Korahite skilled in song. "The joyousness of these processions was proverbial." **kept holyday,** or keeping festival.[e] (5) **cast down,** utterly prostrate.[f] **O my soul,** appeal to the higher spiritual principle in him. **disquieted,** or *why moanest thou over me?* **hope thou,** "distinguish bet. the *feelings* of faith that God is present, and the *hope* of faith that He will be so." — *F. W. Robertson.* **help . . countenance,** *R. V.,* "health." *Cheyne* following *LXX,* "as the saviour of my countenance." The help of my countenance is a periphrasis for my help. — *Cam. Bib.*

c "In such a recollection there would be mingled feelings of bitterness and consolation. No doubt the thought of those happy days in which he had traveled with the festal caravan to the holy city would make him feel more intensely his present loneliness." — *Perowne.*

Present sorrow, past joy (*vs.* 4). — I. The pleasures the Psalmist remembered. They were connected with — 1. The society he cultivated; 2. The day he observed. 3. The place he frequented; 4. The exercises in which he engaged. II. The sorrow he experienced. 1. Its occasion was the loss of religious privileges ; 2. Its measure was the sensibility of the soul; 3. Its expression was the language of prayer. — *G. Brooks.*

d "He distinguishes between the actual Ego and the afflicted spirit." — *Delitzsch.*

e Ex. xxiii. 14.

f Matt. xxvi. 38; Jno. xii. 27.

"Thrice blest will all our blessings be,
When we can look through them to Thee,
When each glad heart its tribute pays
Of love and gratitude and praise."
—*M. J. Cotterill.*

Hope in God. — As you tarry before God, let it be in a deep, quiet faith in Him, the Invisible One, who is so near, so holy, so mighty, so loving. In a deep, restful faith, too, that all the blessings and powers of the heavenly life are around you and in you. Just yield yourself in the faith of a perfect trust to the ever-blessed Holy Trinity to work out all God's purpose in you. Begin each day thus in fellowship with God, and God will be all in all to you. — *Andrew Murray.*

6—8. (6) **soul . . me,** "in another equally plaintive psalm, too, though at first the poet 'can but moan' when he 'thinks upon God' — that God who seems to have cast off for ever' — yet soon afterwards a wider retrospect restores elasticity to his spirit. So here the poet has recourse to memory as a source of encouragement; he has reached a higher spiritual level." — *Cheyne.* **land of Jordan,** country district east of Jordan.[a] **of the Hermonites,** *R. V.*, "Hermons:" either the two characteristic peaks, or the mountain range in the N. E. beyond Jordan. **Mizar,** a hill of this range, not precisely identified. (7) **Deep . . over me,** fig. taken fr. times of storm to represent the inner conflict through which the Psalmist was passing.[b] "The torrents and eddies of the Jordan suggest the breakers and waves of calamity wh. had gone over his head." **waterspouts,** cataracts, or waterfalls. (8) **command,** send His loving-kindness, as a heavenly messenger. "It is equally possible to render: Jehovah used to give his loving-kindness charge concerning me, And in the night his song was with me, Even prayer unto the God of my life. This rendering gives the best connection of thought. The verse is a retrospect like *vs.* 4, and is a further explanation of the 'remembering God' of which he speaks in *vs.* 6." — *Cam. Bib.*

Waterspouts. — Stand by the sea-coast of Palestine on some windy day, and watch the clouds which hang like a pall along the horizon. Now, suddenly, you shall see on the skirts of the clouds, a mass of black vapor, shaped like a long funnel, its smaller end resting on the sea, and the whole mass at once whirling on its own axis, and driven on by the wind with a terrific roar. Look down now at the sea, and behold how the commotion of its surface answers to the commotion above. Where the waterspout moves with its roar, the deep lifts up its voice in an answering roar. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts." And when these spouts break, as they do sometimes, on the mountains, then woe to the harvests and to the flocks. — *M. R. Vincent.*

9—11. (9) **my rock,** or steep cliff, high above the swirling waters.[c] **mourning,** *lit.* black, clad in mourning raiment. (10) **with a sword,** or *with a crushing.*[d] **bones,** denotes the whole physical organism. **daily,** *R. V.*, "continually." (11) **Why,** *etc.*, *see vs.* 5.

Cheer up (*vs.* 11). — I. The causes of spiritual despondency. 1. The burden of sin; 2. The wickedness of the world; 3. Earthly misfortunes. 4. Bereavements. II. The cure of despondency. 1. A present trust in God; 2. Looking to the future. III. The reasons for trust in God. 1. His present goodness to us; 2. His revealed relation to us. — *W. W. Whythe.*

Hope in God. — Here is God's own prescription for a downcast and disquieted soul. "Why art thou cast down?" Perhaps you are wrongfully disquieted; perhaps because you were trusting too much to riches or to position; perhaps because you have strayed from God, who ought to be your chief joy; or, possibly, your disquietude is His call to you to come back to His side. At all events, it is worth while to find the cause if you can; and in finding the cause you may find the remedy. It bids you not to forget gratitude in your sorrow. It bids you hope, never losing out of your mind the disciplinary purpose of God in all sorrow, and waiting in the confident expectation that "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment," shall work for you "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If not here, why then by and by. — *M. R. Vincent.*

PSALM THE FORTY-THIRD.

author,—as previous psalm, of which this is really a part

Subject, the cry of the exile to God.

1—5. (1) **judge me,** Psalmist asks judgment in the confidence that it will issue in his vindication.[e] **against,** *i. e.* "by delivering me from" the heathen who were destitute of the "milk of human kindness." **deceitful . . man,** the words may be understood collectively, "men of deceit and malignity," as

[a] "To which David had been driven from Jerus. by Absalom his son. *See* 2 Sa. xvii. 22." —*Wordsworth.*

[b] "The abyss above calls on the abyss below, in the voice of the droppings of thy water-spouts.' —*Targum.* "From Mizar the poet looks longingly towards the district round about his home, and just as there, in a strange land, the wild waters of the awe-inspiring mountains roar around him, there seems to be a corresponding tumult in his soul. . . . He feels as though all these threatening masses of water were rolling like so many waves of misfortune over his head."—*Delitzsch.*

[c] Ps. xviii. 2.

[d] "'With a breakage in my bones.' His expression evidently means that the taunts of his adversaries cause him pain like a crushing blow which breaks his very bones."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

Is. xxxviii. 13.

"If the clouds do not disperse until the dark river be past, yet you may walk by God's voice though you see not His face."

[e] Ps. vii. 8, xxvi. 1.

a further description of the "inhuman nation" in general. — *Kirkpatrick.* (2) **God of my strength,** who art the source of my strength. **dost,** *R. V.*, "hast." (3) **light and truth,** there may be an allusion to the Urim and Thummim, as the symbol of light and truth.[a] **tabernacles,** dwelling-place; the plural may have been used with reference to the various courts and buildings of wh. the temple was composed. (4) **my exceeding joy,** source and sustainer of all gladness and bliss. (5) **Why,** *etc.*, Ps. xlii. 5.

Desiring communion with God (vss. 3, 4). — I. The Psalmist's earnest petition. 1. The subject of his request; 2. Its intention. II. The Psalmist's pious purpose. 1. The object of his devotion; 2. Its fervor · 3. Its manner. — *Zeta* in 400 Sks.

The soul's home. —

God only is the creature's home,
Though rough and straight the road:
Yet nothing less can satisfy
The love that longs for God.

How little of that road, my soul,
How little hast thou gone!
Take heart, and let the thought of God
Allure thee further on. — *F. W. Faber.*

a "The clause might be paraphrased — Give proof of Thy providential guidance of the true Israelite, and of Thy fidelity to the covenant." — *Jennings and Lowe*

"The varied conflicts of the soul afford occasion for the exercise of the graces, and thus, through the Divine wisdom and goodness, are made the means of eventual good." — *Henry March.*

PSALM THE FORTY-FOURTH.

author, prob. a poet of the age of the Maccabees

1—3. (1) **fathers have told,** as they were enjoined to do.[b] **work,** *etc.*,[c] comp. Hab. i. 5. (2) **heathen,** *R. V.*, "nations." *cf.*, *vss.* 11, 14. **with thy hand,** these are the emphatic words signifying that Israel owed its possesion of Canaan to the help of Jehovah. **plantedst them,** *i. e.* our fathers. The fig. is taken fr. planting a vine; Ps. lxxx. **the people,** *i. e.* the original heathen population. **cast them out,** better taken as referring to the Israelites, "thou didst spread them out like the branches of a great tree," Ps. lxxx. 9. (3) **For,** *etc.*, see De. viii. 17; Jos. xxiv. 12. **thou . . them,** God's free choice was the ground of His intervention on Israel's behalf.

A Litany of Israel, when hard pressed by the enemy.

God the source of all success (vs. 3). — The passage presents to us the following truths: — I. The co-operation of God secures the success of all right work. II. The spirit of true godliness will acknowledge God's co-operation. III. The recognition of God's co-operation in the work of others is largely useful to ourselves. — *S. Martin.*

The efficacy of prayer. — Heine, the well-known physician of Berlin, lost once very heavily by the bankruptcy of a mercantile house. Hufeland met him a few days after, and expressed his sympathy. "I had rather that you had not reminded me of it," he replied; "thank God, I have got over it." "How have you managed that?" "Well, I was unable to forget it; thought upon it night and day. All my money won so painfully, lost in a moment! Even my poor innocent patients suffered, for my thoughts were wandering. My domestic pleasures vanished: my good wife, otherwise so cheerful, hung her head; we sat opposite each other at table, dumb and sad; our children, that had been so full of joy, looked on with timid fear. I felt that this could not and must not continue. The money was gone, and with it we had lost our peace. I, poor worm of the earth, unable to come out of this distress, took refuge with the Almighty. I hurried to my bedroom, closed the door behind, and fell on my knees to pray with my whole heart, that strength, and courage, and joy, and rest, might be restored to me. Then I felt as if God appeared to me and said, 'Be again of good courage, and promise that thou wilt go joyfully back to thy calling!' And I promised; and wife and children were again cheerful; and I forgot the heaviness. I have got over it, and am once more happy with my God. And prayer has done all this."

b Ex. x. 2; xii. 26, 27; xiii. 8, 10; De. vi. 20; Ju. vi. 13.

c "A term employed here collectively, gathering up in one the deliverance from Egypt, the guidance through the wilderness, and the settlement in Canaan."— *Perowne.*

"It is a solemn thought that the greatness of Divine love has its counterpart in the greatness of His indignation." — *Spurgeon.*

"No man can quench his thirst with sand, or with water from the Dead Sea; so no no man can find rest from his own character, however good, or from his own acts, however religious."-*Bonar.*

4—8. (4) **my King,** a later mode of thinking concerning God: the Psalmist speaks for the whole nation: see the later Ps. lxxiv. 12. **deliverances,** *i. e.* full and complete salvation. **Jacob,** a later conception of the Jewish nation, Ps. lxxix. 7. (5) **push down,** the *Heb.* fig. is taken fr. horned beasts.[d] **enemies,** *R. V.*, "adversaries." **thy name,** "The name of God is the compendious expression for his revealed char. and attributes." **tread . . under,** as Ps. lx. 12.[e] (6) **I will not,** the writer now gives his personal

d De. xxxiii. 17.

e "Probably in the two words there is latent the conception of a wild beast goring an opponent and trampling him

down with his hoofs."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"The less confidence we have in ourselves or in anything beside God, the more evidence have we of the sincerity of our faith in God."—*David Dickson.*

"Who will adhere to him that abandons himself?"—*Sir Philip Sidney*

feeling as leader in some enterprise, comp. *vs.* 3. (7) **thou,** Israel's God (8) **In God we boast,** *R. V.*, "In God have we made our boast and we will," *etc.* Doubtless a musical interlude at this point.

The name of the Lord.—The Lord's name served instead of weapons, and enabled those who used it to leap on their foes and crush them with jubilant valor. In union and communion with God, saints work wonders; if God be for us, who can be against us? Mark well that all the conquests of these believers are said to be "through Thee," "through Thy name:" never let us forget this, lest going a warfare at our own charges, we fail most ignominiously. Let us not, however, fall into the equally dangerous sin of distrust, for the Lord can make the weakest of us equal to any emergency. Though to-day we are timid and defenseless as sheep, He can by His power make us strong as the firstling of his bullock, and cause us to push as with the horns of unicorns, until those who rose up against us shall be so crushed and battered as never to rise again. Those who of themselves can scarcely keep their feet, but like little babes totter and fall, are by Divine assistance made to overthrow their foes, and set their feet upon their necks.—*Spurgeon.*

9—14. (9) **but,** *R. V.*, "but now." **hast cast off,** the leader's personal confidence is sorely tried by present discouragements. **armies,** a term implying large armies. (10) **turn back,** if not defeated, yet unable to accomplish our aims. **for themselves,** or at their own will.[a] (11) **sheep,** some are slaughtered, others are sold as prisoners of war into captivity. **among the heathen,** *R. V.*, "among the nations." (12) **for nought,** "for a mere trifle."[b] (13) **reproach,** by reason of such humiliation; Ps. xxxix. 8. (14) **byword,** or proverb. The neighboring nations, Philistines, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, were always jealous of Israel, and ready to rejoice with a malicious delight at Israel's humiliation.

Rev. G. Wishart.—The name of this eminent man is well known in Scotland, where he acted a distinguished part in the reformation of religion, which rendered him a constant object of the hatred of the Popish party. Cardinal Beaton frequently formed plans to take away his life. At one time he procured a letter to be sent to him as from an intimate friend, the laird of Kinnier, in which he was requested to come to him without delay, as he had been seized with sudden illness. In the meantime the cardinal had provided sixty men to waylay him and deprive him of his life. The letter having been delivered by a boy, who also brought a horse to convey him on his journey. Wishart set out, but suddenly stopping by the way, avowed to the friends who had accompanied him his strong conviction that God did not will that he should proceed; for that there was treachery in this business. They went forward without him, and discovered the whole plot, by which means his life was preserved.—*R. T. S.*

15—19. (15) **My confusion,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "all the day long is my dishonor before me;" obs. how the personal and the representative are blended in this Ps. (16) **of him,** apparently some enemy who was especially insulting. **avenger,** the enemy now taking his opportunity to avenge former defeats.[c] (17) **not forgotten thee,** *i. e.* the national distress was not directly connected with national apostasy.[d] (18) **steps,** or goings. "Neither in respect of inward feeling nor of outward act have we strayed from the right path." (19) **Though . . death,** *Polychr.*, "That thou shouldest have trampled us all like a worm, and with darkness have covered us over." **dragons,** or jackals; a fig. for a place of desolation, such as would be inhabited by jackals.[e] **covered,** *etc.*, or "overwhelmed us with deep gloom."

The joy of believers.—Happy saints! If all the waves of affliction and rolling billows upon which you are tossed in the troublesome sea of this world set you daily, yea hourly, nearer to the fair haven of everlasting happiness. But, O then, be sure you steer your course by the sacred compass of the Word of God; be daily preparing yourselves by a holy life for a happy death, if you desire to enter into a glorious eternity. In vain shall you long for heaven, if you still live in sin, which is but to walk in the way to hell. Unless the image of God be renewed upon your souls while you are yet on earth, never shall you see the face of God in heaven. Daily crucify your corruptions, exercise your graces perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and so prepare yourselves for heaven. Then may you, with comfort, look for Christ's coming, who will receive you up into His kingdom and glory. True believers love the appearing of Christ.—*Willes.*

a "Their enemies rifled them as their prey, at their pleasure, and without any resistance."—*Calvin.*

b "There may poss. be a reference to a Heb. father's right to dispose of his children; but it more prob. indicates a feeling that a people so cast off are treated as worthless."—*Spk. Com.*

De. xxxii. 30; Ju. ii. 14; iii. 8; iv. 2, 9.

"Some sinners repent with an unbroken heart. They are sorry, and yet go on as did Pilate and Herod."—*Nevin.*

c See Ps. viii. 2.

d "The whole of this very remarkable passage claims for the Israelites not only freedom fr. the old national tendency to idolatry, but thorough sincerity in religion, and consistent integrity of life. The only time at wh. such a description could be used with propriety must have been one of national reformation."—*Spk. Com.*

e Jer. ix. 10; x. 22.

20—22. (20) **stretched . . hands,** in the customary attitude of prayer.[a] (21) **search,** *see* Ps. cxxxix.[b] (22) **yea . . slaughter,** or "Nay, but for Thy sake," *etc.* "Not only have we not been unfaithful to Thee, but we are actually suffering as martyrs for Thy sake." — *Kirkpatrick.* Such a protest was no doubt particularly true in the persecution of Antiochus, but not in that period only; *see* Ro. viii. 36.

Perseverance in and through prayer. — Let us not stagger, let us not faint, let us not give over the combat; but let us stand to it stoutly, fight valiantly, play the man, and let our hearts be comforted, for the Lord will come speedily, and with strong hand break the power of the malicious. For as God exhorteth us to fight, so He helpeth us to overcome. He beholdeth us in the conflict; if we faint, He aideth us; if we overcome, He crowneth us. Therefore, in all temptations, let us have recourse to Him by earnest prayer; that "being strengthened with all might by His glorious power, we may be able to resist in the evil day." — *C. Richardson.*—*Martyr song.* — The words quoted by the Apostle Paul, Rom. viii., and enshrined in a triumphant hymn of victory, were sung by the noble Bohemians, who were executed in the midst of a terrible persecution of the Protestants by Ferdinand of Austria, in the Grosser Ring at Prague, June 21, 1621. Forty-seven were executed on two separate days, and among them were those men of the nation most distinguished for rank, learning, and piety. As the first passed on to their death, those still in prison sang to them, "Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." They spent the night after in psalms, prayer, and mutual exhortation. When called forth, one by one, they went to their death with undaunted heart, and took leave of each other with the words: "Farewell, loving friends; God give you the comforts of His Spirit, patience and courage, that what you have confessed with your mouth you may confirm with your death." — *Ker.*—*For thy sake.* — This passage is cited by St. Paul, Rom. viii. 36, apparently from the LXX, in illustration of the fact that the church of God has in all ages been a persecuted church. But there is this remarkable difference between the tone of the Psalmist and the tone of the apostle: the former cannot understand the chastening, and complains that God's heavy hand has been laid without cause upon His people; the latter can rejoice in persecution also, and exclaim, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." — *Perowne.*

23—26. (23) **sleepest thou,** "faith cannot dispense with symbols, and weak faith naturally falls into the worn-out symbols of a lower stage of religion. A 'full assurance of faith' would have rejected the idea of Jehovah's sleeping." — *Cheyne.* Ps. vii. 6; cxxi. 3, 4.[c] (24) **Wherefore . . face,** in anger or indifference. **forgettest,** or dost act as if thou didst forget. (25) **belly,** *etc.*, strong fig. for a prostrate, groveling condition. (26) **for our help,** or, be a help to us. **mercies' sake,** *R. V.*, "loving kindness' sake."

A sleeping God. — In Southeastern India there is a wild race which believes that all the evil in the world is done whilst God is sleeping; if He were not obliged to sleep there would be no sickness, no sorrow, no death. What a comfort to feel that God's eyes neither slumber nor sleep, and that He is never far from any one of us. God is the nearest to us when we want Him the most. — *Hom. Com.*

PSALM THE FORTY-FIFTH.

1—4. (1) **inditing,** *Heb.* boileth or bubbleth up, as an overflowing fountain. **good matter,** or "goodly words," the nobility of his subject inspires excited, joyous feelings.[d] **the king,** *Cheyne,* "I address my work unto the king; be my tongue the pen of a ready scribe;" *i. e.* he needs a nimble penman to keep up with his thoughts about such an exalted subject. (2) **fairer,** *etc.*, placed first very appropriately in a bridal hymn.[e] **grace,** words of graciousness proceed from lips about wh. a smile plays. **therefore,** bec. the will of the king conforms to the will of God. "Physical qualifications correspond to moral qualifications." **for ever,** ref. to God's covenant with David; 2 Sa. vii. 13-29. (3) **Gird . . thigh,** fig. for preparing the royal warrior for the procession of peace. **most mighty,** *R. V.*, "mighty one." **glory and . . majesty,** *i. e.* gird on thy glory and majesty, which should be

a Ps. xxviii. 2; cxliii. 6.

b Compare Job xxxi.

"We many times condemn others and therein pass sentence against ourselves; thus Judah said of Tamar, Bring her forth and let her be burnt, not considering that he spake the word against his own soul. Thus David to Nathan, The man that hath done this thing shall die, not considering that he was the man." — *Venning.*

"Repentance begins in the humiliation of the heart, and ends in the reformation of the life." — *Mason.*

"Real repentance consists in the heart being broken for sin and from sin." — *Nevins.*

c "The sleep of God, a bold metaphor, implies an apparent suspension of His providential government, when His foes are triumphant, and His servants defeated." — *Spk. Com.*

author,— not known

The marriage song of a king. Probably Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter.

Recognized as a *Messianic* Psalm. *Shoshannim,* lilies; the name of a tune. *Song of loves,* a conjugal or love song.

d "His heart is brimming over with fervent thoughts which force themselves into words, and his tongue frames poetry as fast as the pen can write it down." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

e "Beauty was regarded by the

to him as royal robe. (4) **ride**, *R. V.*, "ride on." **prosperously**,[a] to certain victory for virtue and love. **because of**, better "in the cause of." **right hand . . things**, *i. e.* his strength and victory reveals the Divine power with wh. he has been endued.

The King of kings (*vs.* 2). — I. The personal excellencies of Christ, "Thou art," *etc.* 1. They are of a moral and mental character; 2. They are not derived; but His own native meritorious perfections. II. His peculiar official qualifications, "Grace is," *etc.* 1. The doctrine He teaches, the manner in which it is conveyed to the mind; the effect it produces all is grace; 2. The plenitude of this possession. III. His eminent prosperity and success. 1. It descends through Him upon all Hi subjects; 2. It comprehends perpetual increase; 3. We must look even beyond the glory of the latter day. —*D. Katterns.*

The personal appearance of Christ. — We have no account in the Gospels of our Saviour's person. Some writers of an early age (but none so early as to have seen Him) speak of it as wanting dignity, and of His physiognomy as unpleasing. It would be difficult, I believe, to find any better foundation for this strange notion, than an injudicious interpretation of certain prophecies, in a literal meaning, which represent the humiliation which the Son of God was to undergo, by clothing His divinity with flesh, in images taken from personal deformity. But from what is recorded in the Gospels of the case with which our Saviour mixed in what, in the modern style, we should call good company; of the respectful attention shown to Him, beyond anything His reputed birth or fortune might demand; and the manner in which His discourses, either of severe reproof or gentle admonition, were received, we may reasonably conclude that He had a dignity of exterior appearance remarkably corresponding with that authority of speech which, upon some occasions, impressed even His enemies with awe, and with that dignified mildness which seems to have been His more natural and usual tone, and drew the applause and admiration of all who heard Him. External feature, however, is generally the impression of the mind upon the body, and words are but the echo of the thoughts; and in prophecy more is usually meant than meets the ear n the first sound, and most obvious sense of the term employed. Beauty and grace of speech are certainly used in this text as figures of much higher qualities, which were conspicuous in our Lord, and in Him alone of all the sons of men. That image of God in which Adam was created, in our Lord appeared perfect and entire; in the unspotted innocency of His life, the sanctity of His manners, and His perfect obedience to the law of God; in the vast powers of His mind, intellectual and moral; intellectual, in His comprehension of all knowledge; moral, in his power of resisting all the allurements of vice, and of encountering all the difficulties of virtue and religion, despising hardship and shame, enduring pain and death. This was the beauty with which He was adorned beyond the sons of men. In Him, the beauty of the Divine image was refulgent in its original perfection; in all the the sons of Adam obscured and marred in a degree to be scarce discernible; the will depraved, the imagination debauched, the reason weak, the passions rampant! This deformity is not externally visible, nor the spiritual beauty which is its opposite; but, could the eye be turned upon the internal man, we should see the the hideous shape of a will at enmity with God; a heart disregarding His law, insensible of His goodness, fearless of His wrath, swelling with the passions of ambition, avarice, vainglory, lust. Yet this is the picture of the unregenerated man, by the depravity consequent upon the fall, born in iniquity, and conceived in sin. Christ, on the contrary by the mysterious manner of His conception, was born without spot of sin; He grew up and lived full of grace and truth, perfectly sanctified in flesh and spirit. With this beauty He was "adorned beyond the sons of men."

5—8. (5) **Thine . . thee**, *R. V.*, "Thine arrows are sharp. The peoples fall under thee; *They are*, in the heart of the king's enemies." *Polychr.*: "Thine arrows pierce home in the heart of the foes of the King, nations shall under thee fall to the ground." **arrows**, *etc.*, a vigorous picture of the scenes of a battle-field.[b] (6) **Thy throne**, O God, *O Elohim*, prob. means either Thy Divinely-constituted throne or the king is spoken of as God's representative.[c] Whatever may be the precise rendering, there can be little doubt that the words contain a reference to the promise of eternal dominion to the house of David, which was fulfilled in Christ. — *Cam. Bib.* the

Heb. as the outward manifestation of inherent nobleness, or of a nature akin to the Divine. Here the representation is unquestionably ideal; it refers to the Messiah."—*Spk. Com.*

a Re. vi. 2; xix. 11, 15, 16.

"Christ's doctrine must be observed above all other doctrines, be they of angels or of men, because He neither could nor willed to err in His teaching. But in men's doctrine there chanceth oftentimes to be error; and therefore we must forsake their doctrine if cloakedly or expressly they be repugnant to the doctrine of Christ. . . . He being the Wisdom that cannot be deceived, and the Truth that cannot be uttered of man's lips, He hath in this world taught the will of God His Father." —*W. Bruce.*

"The grace which is here specially ascribed to the lips is manifestly but a reflection of the loveliness of the speech which streams from the lips."

We call the prophets the *panman* of Scriptures, whereas they were but the *pan.*" —*Matthew Henry.*

"I have a passion," observed Count Zinzendorf in one of his discourses to the congregation at Herrnhut, "and it is He —He only."

b "The arrows of Christ are the winged words of apostolic teaching, by wh. the hearers were pierced to the heart; not for death, but life eternal; and by wh. His enemies are made to become His friends." *S. Basil and S. Jerome*, through *Wordsworth.*

c "The person before the Psalmist's

sceptre, symbol of government.[a] **right,** *R. V.*, "of equity." (7) **oil of gladness,** with joy symbolized on festive occasions by precious unguents.[b] "The rejoicings of the marriage festival are meant." From this point the psalm becomes a marriage song. (8) **myrrh,**[c] a gum resin celebrated for its aromatic properties. **aloes,** resin of an odoriferous tree. **cassia,** the bark of an aromatic plant. The bridegroom appears, arrayed for the marriage, his garments saturated with costly perfumes, brought from distant lands. **ivory palaces,** adorned with, not built of ivory. **whereby they have,** *R. V.*, "stringed instruments have," *etc.* Music meets the bridegroom as he enters the palace.

Note on verses 6 *and* 7. — These *vss.* are quoted in Heb. i. 8, 9. It is commonly supposed that the force of the quotation lies in the Divine title (ὁ θεός) which, as it is held, is applied to the Son. It seems however from the whole form of the argument to lie rather in the description which is given of the Son's office and endowment. The angels are subject to constant change. He has a dominion for ever and ever; they work through material powers. He—the Incarnate Son — fulfills a moral sovereignty and is crowned with unique joy. Nor could the reader forget the later teaching of the psalm on the Royal Bride and the Royal Race. In whatever way then ὁ θεός be taken, the quotation establishes the conclusion which the writer wishes to draw as to the essential difference of the Son and the angels.— *Bp. Westcott.*

God's arrows are sharp. — Adolph Monod, at Lyons, France, one Lord's day was preaching from the text, "God so loved the world," *etc.* He spoke of Christ as the true God-man, and announced that the next Sabbath he would show how men could be saved by faith in this God-man. But the authorities of this church were opposed to a doctrine so purely evangelical, and informed Monod that if he did not omit the sermon he had announced, they would have him arrested and brought before the Prefect, and dismissed from his office. Monod, notwithstanding, preached his sermon, and the authorities made their complaint. The Prefect demanded the two sermons, and Monod sent them to him. The Prefect, Count de Gasparin, was a Catholic. He came home at evening to his wife, and found the sermons. He never liked sermons, especially evangelical sermons: but he was a man who discharged faithfully the duties of his office. It was necessary that the sermons should be read. He came to his wife with the manuscripts in his hand, complaining that he would have to give up the whole evening to this irksome and protracted labor. She offered, as her husband's worthy helpmeet, to read them with him. They began. With every page they grew more interested. They forgot that it was evening and night. That which at first was an official duty became a service of the heart. They finished the first, and eagerly grasped the second. And what was the result? As a magistrate, Gasparin was forced to deprive Monod of his place, because all the authorities demanded it. But he and his wife became evangelical Christians, living, joyful, and happy believers in Christ. They found that night "the pearl of great price," and it has remained in the family. Their son, Count Agenor de Gasparin, has long been the head and pillar of the evangelical party in France.— *Anec. illus. of O. T. Texts.*

9—12. (9) **honorable women,** *lit. precious ones; jewels.* Reference is prob. to the other wives and concubines of the monarch. **did,**[d] *R. V.*, "doth." **gold of Ophir,** Job xxviii. 6.[e] (10) **forget . . people,** fr. this it would seem that she was a foreign princess; she must adapt herself to the new home and new surroundings. (11) **worship,** render reverence to him. "This exhortation, and the title *lord* for husband reflect the subordinate position of women in ancient times and oriental countries."—*Kirkpatrick.* (12) **daughter of Tyre,** fig. for her princely merchants bringing rich bridal gifts. **rich . . people,** wealthy nobles of Israel.

An offer of marriage (*vss.* 10, 11).—I. The Lord Jesus addresses to us kind and gracious overtures, for a union resembling marriage. II. He expects us to entertain his overtures seriously. III. He requires us to abandon all others for His sake. IV. He promises to be highly gratified with the contemplation of us. V. He commands us to honor Him with our worship and service. — *G. Brooks.*

Worship thou Him (*vs.* 11).—A Spanish boy, who was a Roman Catholic, having a silver crucifix hanging in his bosom, was asked by a person in his company to sell it for half a dollar, at which he shook his head. He was then offered a dollar, to which he answered in broken accents, "No, not for tousand

mind was a visible manifestation of the Godhead; the ideal King of whom his earthly sovereign was an imperfect type." — *Spk. Com.*

[a] Ps. lxvii. 4, xcvi. 10.

[b] Ps. cxxxiii. 2.

[c] Ex. xxx. 23, 24.

"*vs.* 8, describes the burst of jubilant music which welcomed and rejoiced the king as he approached the 'palaces of ivory,' where his bride waited his coming."—*Exp. B.*

"Cling fast to the hand that is leading you, though it be in darkness, though it be in deep waters; you know whom you have believed. Yield not for a single moment to misgivings about future storms. Infinite love, joined to infinite skill, will pilot the way through every strait and temptation." — *J. Alexander.*

[d] "Polygamy was practised even by the best of kings; and the Psalmist is describing the magnificence of an Oriental court, such as it actually existed before his eyes, not drawing a picture of what ought to be in a perfect state of things."— *Perowne.*

[e] 1 Chr. xxix. 4.

"The rich, golden shaft
Hath killed the flock of all affections else
That live in her."

of tousands." Is not this a keen reproof to children in Protestant countries, who live in the awful neglect of God's "unspeakable gift?"

13—17. (13) **within,** *i. e.*, in the inner chamber where she takes off her veil her full beauty is revealed. *R. V.*, "within the palace." **wrought gold,** *R. V.*, "inwrought with gold."—*Polychr.*, "pearls woven in gold." (14) **raiment of needle-work,** or of embroidery. (15) **gladness,** as a festive band, with music and dancing. (16) **instead . . fathers,** if he cannot boast of a long line of royal ancestors, may he at least be blessed with a numerous and noble posterity. **children,**[a] *etc.*, fruits of the royal marriage. The new queen is comforted in separating from her father's house by the vision of her posterity. **mayest,** *R. V.*, "shalt." (17) **thy name,** some refer this and prev. *vs.* to the king.[b] The poet's song will perpetuate the memory of the king among all the nations of the earth.

The Church's beauty and happiness (*vss.* 13–16).— Let us consider — I. Her transcendent qualities. 1. The internal qualities of her mind; 2. The external habits of her life. Suited to these qualities is — II. The felicity prepared for her. 1. In due time she shall be brought to the King's palace; 2. While here she is to make herself ready; 3. The work completed, she shall be introduced. Address — (1) Those who have never yet espoused the Lord; (2) Those who profess to stand in the relation of spouse to Christ.— *C. Simeon.*

The King's daughter. — One day, a poor pious woman called upon two elegant young ladies, who received her with Christian affection, regardless of her poverty, and sat down in the drawingroom, to converse with her upon religious subjects. While thus employed, their brother, a gay youth, came in, and appeared astonished to see his sisters thus situated and employed. One of them instantly started up, saying—"Brother, don't be surprised; this is a King's daughter, though she has not yet got on her fine clothes."— *Whitecross.* *Characteristic of this psalm.* — This psalm is a poetical composition, in the form of an epithalamium, or song of congratulation, upon the marriage of a great king, to be sung to music at the wedding-feast. The topics are such as were the usual groundwork of such gratulatory odes with the poets of antiquity; they all fall under two general heads, — the praises of the bridegroom and the praises of the bride. The bridegroom is praised for the comeliness of his person and the urbanity of his address, for his military exploits, for the extent of his conquests, for the upright administration of his government, for the magnificence of his court. The bride is celebrated for her high birth, for the beauty of her person, the richness of her dress, and her numerous train of blooming bridesmaids. It is foretold that the marriage will be fruitful, and that the sons of the great king will be sovereigns of the whole earth. In this general structure of the poem, we find nothing but the common topics and the common arrangement of every wedding song: but when we recollect that the relation between the Saviour and His Church is represented in the writings both of the Old and New Testament under the image of the relation of a husband to his wife, that it is a favorite image with all the ancient prophets, when they would set forth the loving-kindness of God for the Church, or the Church's dutiful return of love to Him; while on the contrary, the idolatry of the Church, in her apostasies, is represented as the adultery of a married woman; that this image has been consecrated to this signification by our Lord's own use of it, who describes God in the act of settling the Church in her final state of peace and perfection, as a king making a marriage for his son; — the conjecture that will naturally arise upon the recollection of these circumstances will be, that this epithalamium, preserved among the sacred writings of the ancient Jewish Church, celebrates no common marriage, but the great mystical wedding, that Christ is the bridegroom, and the spouse His Church. And this was the unanimous opinion of all antiquity, without exception even of the Jewish expositors. For although, with the veil of ignorance and prejudice upon their understandings and their hearts, they discern not the completion of this or of any of their prophecies in the Son of Mary, yet they allow that this is one of the prophecies which relate to the Messiah and Messiah's people; and none of them ever dreamed of an application of it to the marriage of any earthly prince.

The king's daughter. —

How is she clothed? It matters not;
In faded garments patched and thin,

a For spiritual reference see 1 Pe. ii. 9; Re. i. 6, v. 10, xx. 6.

b This view is supported by the fact that the pronouns are in the masculine gender.

"The psalm had a historical basis; and it has also a prophetic meaning, because the king of Israel was himself a type, and Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of the ideal never realized by its successive occupants."—*Exp B.*

"The Gospel doth not only represent the doctrine of Christ to be believed; but also the life of Christ to be followed; nor shall any have Him for their advocate and propitiation, but such as are willing to have Him for their pattern and example; to copy out and imitate His humility, patience, purity benignity, and self-resignation. None shall be benefited by His death that are unwilling to live His life."—*Worthington.*

"There is no food for soul or body which God has not symbolized. He is light for the eye, sound for the ear, bread for food, wine for weariness, peace for trouble. Every faculty of the soul, if it would but open its door, might see Christ standing over against it, and silently asking by His smile, 'Shall I come in unto thee?' But men open the door, and look down, not up; and thus see Him not."—*Beecher.*

"Let us be thankful for a great past and for the golden present; but let our habitual attitude be one of prayerful and hopeful expectancy, 'looking

Or if she walk in silk attire—
She is "all glorious within."

Is she adorned? Sometimes upon
Her white hands diamonds shine,
Sometimes they're dark, and bear the stains
Of many a toilworn line.

How is she fed? It matters not—
On honey and finest wheat,
Or worker's crust—she daily of
The heavenly food doth eat.

And is she fair? Most passing fair.
The fleshly veil grows thin.
Like flame through a transparent glass
Streams radiance from within.

A daughter of The King! Upon
Her breast His sign she bears.
And sin and shame shrink back abashed
Before the cross she wears. — *Bessie Hart Adams.*

unto Jesus,' who is able to do greater things for his faithful and obedient people." — *J. H. Barrows.*

"The highest joy is an edelweiss; it grows only bosomed in the snow and nursed by tempests. There is no joy like divinely joyful sorrow, as there is no strength like the divinely strengthened weakness. This is the paradox of Christian experience."— *Lyman Abbott.*

PSALM THE FORTY-SIXTH.

author,—prob. Isaiah, referring, (with Pss. xlvii. and xlviii.) to Sennacherib's Invasion.

A hymn of triumph after a great deliverance.

Alamoth. soprano or virgin voices.

1—3. (1) **very . . trouble,** "a help in afflictions hath He let Himself be found exceedingly" (*i. e.* constantly). (2) **removed,** or "changes," undergoes a series of convulsions. Prob. to be understood of political changes and revolutions (*see vs.* 6). **be carried,** totter (and fall).[a] *Polychr.* "though the earth bubble. and though mountains shake in the heart of the sea." (3) **roar,** or rage and foam.[b] — *Cam. Bib. Cheyne, Polychr.* add here the refrain, "Jehovah of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our fortress."

God a refuge. — On this psalm Luther has founded his notable hymn, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott,* "A fortress strong is God our Lord." It breathes the force of battles, faces fearlessly the fire and the scaffold, and thrills in every line with unconquerable faith and Christian heroism. It was written in 1529, during the preparations for the Diet of Augsburg, when the Protestant cause seemed wavering in the balance. During the sitting of the Diet, Luther resided at the Castle of Coburg, and he sang it to the lute every day, standing at the window, and looking up to heaven. When Wittenberg was surrendered to Charles V., and Melancthon, Jonas, and Kreutziger, who, after Luther's death, were the leaders of the German Reformation, were sent into banishment, they entered Weimar in great trouble of spirit. As they passed along the street, they heard a girl singing Luther's hymn. "Sing on, dear daughter mine," Melancthon said; "thou knowest not what comfort thou bringest to our heart." Before the battle of Leipsic, Sept. 17, 1631, Gustavus Adolphus asked his whole army to sing it, and after the victory he thanked God that the word was made good. "The field he will maintain it." Before the Edict of Toleration in 1781, by the Emperor Joseph II., the Protestants of Linz were torn from their families and banished to Transylvania. In their bitter grief they sang with tears the words of this hymn:

"Take, if they will, our life,
Goods, honor, children, wife,
Yet is their profit small,
These things may vanish all,
The city of God remaineth." — *Ker.*

4—7. (4) **river,** *etc.*, one never-failing stream of water supplied Jerusalem.[c] **shall,** *R. V.*, omits. **make glad,** "the gently flowing river, fertilizing all the land over which it is distributed in channels and rivulets, is an emblem of Jehovah's presence, blessing and gladdening His city." — *Cam. Bib. Polychr.* "A brook, whose waters . . . Is the Most High in His habitation." **tabernacles,** the sanctuary with its courts. (5) **right early,** *lit.* at the turning

[a] "By these terms are represented general social convulsions, evidently connected in their origin with a great invasion. The same figs. recur in Ps. xciii." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

[b] "The music, wh. here becomes *forte*, strengthens the believing confidence of the congregation, despite this wild excitement of the elements."—*Delitzsch*

"God is present helping us to bear trouble, to improve it, and to survive it. Present by gracious communications and sweet manifestations; present most when he seems absent, restraining, overruling, and sanctifying trouble. Trust and wait."— *James Smith.*

[c] "In its gentle, undisturbed, refreshing flow, it was an image of the peace and blessing wh. the holy city enjoyed under the protec-

tion of God."—*Perowne.*

a Ex. xiv. 27; 2 Ki. xix. 35.

See Is. viii. 6.

"Not with noise nor tumult, but in silent communication, God's grace and peace refresh the soul. Power is loud, but Omnipotence is silent."

Hezekiah led the waters under cover into Jerus. in the time of siege. 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4.

"The wider a Christian's knowledge of his religion and its triumphs, the broader will be his enjoyment of it. All of its successes will be his successes."

"Leave off to oppose and vex my people. I am over all for their safety."—*Fausset.*

b 2 Ki. xix. 19.

c "Let all believers triumph in this—they have the presence of a God of power—of all power. They are under the protection of a God in covenant, who not only is able to help them, but is engaged in honor and faithfulness to help them.'—*Mat. Henry.*

"The voice which melted the earth speaks at the close of the psalm; not now with destructive energy, but in warning, through which tones of tenderness can be caught."—*Maclaren.*

author and date as previous psalm

A nation's thanksgiving.

d 2 Ki. xi. 12.

As poetic figures see Ps. xcviii. 8; Is. lv. 12.

e Ps. lxv. 5; lxviii. 35; lxxvi. 7-9.

f "God is ever choosing Israel's

of the morning.[a] "The deliverance of Israel from Sennacherib came, it is to be remembered, when it was discovered 'early in the morning' that in the camp of the Assyrians were 185,000 'dead corpses' (2 Kings xix. 35)." (6) **heathen.** *R. V.*, "nations." **melted,** was dissolved. (7) **Lord of hosts,** Jehovah of Hosts. The title is a favorite one with Isaiah, and its use here is significant. "The Psalmist rests his confidence on two principles — the universality of God's dominion, and His covenanted relation to the Heb. as God of Jacob."

Living water. — "This brook will soon run dry," said one. "Nay," quoth his fellow, "it flows from a living spring, which was never known to fail in summer or in winter." A man was reputed to be very rich by those who saw his expensive houses, and horses, and charges; but there were others who judged that his name would soon be in the Gazette, for he had no capital. "There is nothing at the back of it," said one, and the saying meant much. Now, the believer has the eternal deep for his spring of supply, and the all-sufficiency of God as the substance of his wealth. What cause has he to fear? — *Spurgeon.* — *Calmness in a storm.* — When Sir Walter Scott was a schoolboy between ten and eleven years of age, his mother one morning saw him standing still in the street and looking at the sky in the midst of a tremendous thunder-storm. She called to him repeatedly, but he did not seem to hear; at length he returned into the house and told his mother that if she would give him a pencil, he would tell her why he looked at the sky. She acceded to his request, and in a few minutes he laid on her lap the following lines:

Loud o'er my head what awful thunders roll,
What vivid lightnings flash from pole to pole;
It is Thy voice, O God, that bids them fly;
Thy voice directs them through the vaulted sky;
Then let the good Thy mighty power revere,
Let harden'd sinners Thy just judgments fear.

8—11. (8) **Come,** addressed to the heathen nations especially. **desolations,** of Israel's enemies, as cause for astonishment. (9) **wars to cease,** bringing them to an issue by His interposition. (10) **Be still,** cease ye; let your hand sink down.[b] (11) **The Lord,** *etc.*, as *vs* 7.[c]

I am God. — 1. In that He is God, He is an absolutely and infinitely perfect being. 2. As He is God He is so great, that He is infinitely above all comprehension. 3. As He is God, all things are His own. 4. In that He is God, He is worthy to be sovereign over all things. 5. In that He is God, He will be sovereign, and will act as such. 6. In that He is God, He is able to avenge Himself on those who oppose His sovereignty. — *Jonathan Edwards.*

The Lord of hosts is with us. — On Tuesday Mr. Wesley could with difficulty be understood, though he often attempted to speak. At last, with all the strength he had, he cried out, "The best of all is, God is with us." Again, raising his hand, and waving it in triumph, he exclaimed with thrilling effect, "The best of all is, God is with us." These words seem to express the leading feature of his whole life. God had been with him from early childhood; His providence had guided him through all the devious wanderings of human life; and now, when he was entering the "valley of the shadow of death," the same hand sustained him. — *W. C. Larrabee.*

PSALM THE FORTY-SEVENTH.

1—4. (1) **clap your hands,** sign of joy.[d] **people,** *Heb.* plur. *peoples;* heathen nations are summoned to acknowledge the sovereignty of Jehovah by a rehearsal of his deeds. (2) **terrible,** *Polychr.*, "is to be feared." "Fear is not incompatible with reverent joy."[e] (3) **shall subdue,**[f] *Cam. Bib.*, "He subdued . . . (4) He chose," *etc.*, *i. e.* the settlement of Israel in Canaan is a proof of His universal sovereignty. **the excellency,** or the pride of Jacob. A striking description of the Holy Land.

The choice of our inheritance. — I. Distrust of self. We would not choose our own inheritance because of — 1. Our ignorance (1) of ourselves, (2) of the future; 2. Our proneness to self-indulgence. II. Trust in God. 1. In His wisdom; 2. In His goodness; 3. In His interest in us individually. III. Trust in God rewarded. — *Hom. Com.*

God choosing. — It is reported of a woman who, being sick, was asked whether she was willing to live or die; she answered, "Which God pleases." "But," said one, "if God should refer it to you, which would you choose?" "Truly," replied she, "I would refer it to Him again." Thus that man obtains his will of God, whose will is subjected to God. We are not to be troubled that we have no more *from* God, but we are to be troubled that we do no more *for* God. Christians, if the Lord be well pleased with your persons, should not you be well pleased with your conditions? There is more reason that you should be pleased with them than that He should be pleased with you. Believers should be like sheep, which change their pastures at the will of the shepherd; or like vessels in a house, which stand to be filled or emptied at the pleasure of their owner. He that sails upon the sea of this world in his own bottom, will sink at last into a bottomless ocean. Never were any their own carvers, but they were sure to cut their own fingers.— *William Secker.*

5—9. (5) **gone up,** *Polychr.* "marched in with din of battle." Ref. to God's warlike entry into Palestine with Joshua. **shout,**[a] the glad shout of His rescued people. (7) **with understanding,** *R. V., marg.* "in a skilful psalm," *i. e.* with the skill befitting the occasion.[b] (8) **reigneth,** is King; He has manifested His kingly power. **the . . holiness,** *R. V.,* "His holy throne." (9) In the spirit of prophecy the Psalmist beholds the realization of the hope expressed in *vs.* 1. The nations acknowledge Jehovah's sovereignty. **even the people,** *R. V.,* "To be the people." **shields,** princes as the protectors of their people. *Polychr.* "men, of their own free will, from the peoples, join the people of Abraham's God. For to God, our shield, belongs the world."

The mighty God.— A gale had been raging. Our staunch bark was tossed about as if a mere feather upon the billows, and for days "neither sun nor stars appeared." In the wild waste of waters we passed a solitary rock, lofty and massive. The waves beat furiously against it. White-winged sea-birds, weary with their long struggle in the tempest, were clustering on the summit, and pluming themselves in the warm rays that, to appearance, broke through the clouds just there only. Scripture imagery of God as a refuge and high tower rushed upon the mind. It seemed as if those birds, nestled in such security, must be singing the forty-sixth psalm. The church of Christ, in her season of peril, safe on the Rock of Ages, and having the light of God's countenance, came to view. At such a moment one could hear Moses giving forth his triumphal song; the sweet singer of Israel striking aloud his harp; Paul and Silas lifting up their prison psalms as they stand firm on the foundation of the Lord.

PSALM THE FORTY-EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) **greatly,** *R. V.,* "highly." **mountain of his holiness,** *R. V.,* "His holy mountain," *i. e.* Mt. Zion used for the whole city, Ps. ii. 6. (2) **situation,** *R. V.,* "*elevation.*"[c] **whole earth,** or whole *land.* **sides of the north.** In Is. xiv. 13, "the uttermost parts of the north" (*R. V.*), are mentioned as the mythological abode of the gods. This mountain, corresponding to the Olympus of the Greeks, was the *Meru* of the Indians, the *Alborg* of the Persians, the *Arâlu* of the Assyrians and Babylonians. It would seem that the Psalmist boldly calls Mount Zion *the uttermost parts of the north* with reference to this mythological idea. According to this interpretation *vss.* 1, 2 may be rendered as follows: Great is Jehovah and exceeding worthy to be praised, in the city of our God is His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, a joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, the uttermost parts of the north, the citadel of the great King. The sacred mountain of our God is not in the remote recesses of the north, but in the very midst of the city of His choice. Zion is in reality all that the Assyrians claim for their fabled mount of the gods.— *Cam. Bib.* (3) **is known,** "hath made himself known." **refuge,** as the protector of Zion. "He was like an inaccessible citadel, which gives assurance of security to the inhabitants."

Mount Zion.— When I stood that morning on the brow of Olivet, and looked down on the city crowning those battlemented heights, encircled by those deep and dark ravines, I involuntarily exclaimed, "*Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the* inheritance anew, inasmuch as He shows Himself to be the true and mighty protector the reof." — *Perowne.*

"The voice of melody is not so much to be uttered with the tongue as with the hands; that is, it is our deeds, not our words, by which God is here to be praised." —*J. M. Neale.*

[a] Sa. vi. 15; 1 Chr. xv. 28. See also Col. ii. 15; Eph. iv. 8.

[b] "A song, either fine in its structure, or beautiful in its melody."— *Perowne.*

"That is always best which gives me to myself. The sublime is excited in me by the great stoical doctrine. Obey thyself. That which shows God in me, fortifies me. That which shows God out of me, makes me a wart and a wen. There is no longer a necessary reason for my being. Already the long shadows of untimely oblivion creep over me, and I shall decease for ever." — *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

author and date as the two preceding psalms

Subject, God's protecting care of Jerusalem.

[c] "The word seems to denote a graceful wavelike height, not rugged nor precipitous, but rising by a succession of beautiful terraces." —*Spk. Com.*

"Where are finer expressions of joy than the psalms of praise and thanksgiving? There you look into the hearts of the saints as if you looked into a fair and delightful garden — ay, or into heaven itself,—

and you see how lovely and pleasant flowers are springing up there out of manifold happy and beautiful thoughts of God and all His mercies." — *From Preface to Luther's Book of Psalms.*

"O Love divine! — whose constant beam
Shines on the eyes that will not see,
And waits to bless us while we dream,
Thou leavest us because we turn from thee."— *J. G. Whittier.*

city of the great King." And as I gazed, the red rays of the rising sun shed a halo round the top of the castle of David; then they tipped with gold each tapering minaret, and gilded each dome of mosque and church, and at length, bathed in one flood of ruddy light the terraced roofs of the city, and the grass and foliage, the cupolas, pavements and colossal walls of the Haram. No human being could be disappointed who first saw Jerusalem from Olivet. — *J. L. Porter.*— *Note on verse* 2.— Its elevation is remarkable; occasioned not from its being on the summit of one of the numerous hills of Judæa, like most of the towns and villages, but because it is on the edge of one of the highest tablelands of the country. To the traveler approaching Jerusalem from the west or east, it must always have presented the appearance of a mountain city; breathing, as compared with the plains of Jordan, a mountain air; enthroned, as compared with Jericho and Damascus, Gaza or Tyre, on a mountain fastness.— *Stanley.* — *God our refuge.* — We worship no unknown God. We know Him as our refuge in distress, we delight in Him as such, and run to Him in every time of need. We know nothing else as our refuge. Though we are made kings, and our houses are palaces, yet we have no confidence in ourselves, but trust in the Lord Protector, whose well-known power is our bulwark.— *Spurgeon.*

[a] "From 2 Chr. xx. 20, we find that the invaders were encamped at Tekoa, whence, though at a considerable distance, they had a view of Jerusalem."— *Delitzsch.*

"It often happens that men who arraign religion have often been arraigned by it; and their defense of truth is only a refusal upon conscience."— *Bishop Warburton.*

4—8. (4) **assembled,** Sennacherib's vassal kings attacking Judah. **they . . together,** *Polychr.* "all at once they disappeared," *i. e.* fled. But *Cam. Bib.* suggests, "they united their forces, crossed the frontier and entered the land of Judah." (5) **saw it,** from a distance.[a] **and . . marvelled,** *R. V.*, "then were they amazed." **troubled,** *R. V.*, "dismayed." (6) **Fear,** *R. V.*, "trembling," at the defenses, but more at the Divine protection that overshadowed the holy city. (7) **ships of Tarshish,** largest kind of merchant vessels. Here fig. for proud and lofty foe. *Polychr.* "They were scattered as though by an east wind, which dashes to pieces," *etc.* (8) **As . . seen,** the lessons of the ear have now become truths of personal experience through the recent wonderful deliverance of his native city. Ps. xliv. 1.

Opposition overthrown. — I. The opposition of worldly powers to the church. "The kings," etc. II. The manner in which they are subdued — by their own fears; conscience has persecuted those who have persecuted the Church of God. They who have seized the ark of God have been glad to return it with an offering. III. The completeness of their overthrow. As a fleet of ships of Tarshish, dispersed, broken, and engulfed by the east wind. — *Spurgeon.*

Panic. — Nothing is more unaccountable than panic. No man, no body of men can adequately guard against such terror. He who made the ears can easily make them to tingle. He who holds the winds in his fist, can easily make them whisper alarm, or roar dismay. This is specially to be expected when men so act as to have their own conscience against them. Job. xv. 21. But God can at any time so forsake men as that they shall be unmanned, and play the fool exceedingly. Lev. xxvi. 36. Men have fought bravely several battles, and then played the coward.— *William S. Plumer.*

[b] "We have imaged, *i. e.* bodied it forth, or as we should say, vividly realized." — *Spk. Com.*

[c] Nu. xxi. 25, marg.; Jos. xvii. 16.

[d] "The glad sense of freedom, the shout of deliverance, are no less noticeable in this verse than the strong patriotic feeling that breathes in it."— *Perowne.*

[e] "They are to convince themselves by all possible means of the uninjured state of the Holy City in order that they may be able to tell to posterity that such a marvelous helper as is now manifest to them, is Elohim, our God."— *Delitzsch.*

[f] "It is evident that the word al-

9—14. (9) **thought,**[b] we seek to realize thy love by meditation. **thy temple,** as the place where opportunity for thanksgiving was presented. (10) **so thy praise,** "the 'Name of God,' *i. e.* the character that he has established for himself by former mighty deeds, and the praise which he has now won by the recent deliverance, are coextensive." Comp. 2 Chr. xx. 29. **right hand,** the symbol of power. (11) **daughters of Judah,** fig. for the towns and villages of Judah,[c] wh. had fallen into Sennacherib's hands before his overthrow. (12) **Walk,** *etc.* addressed to the delivered people, who were to look round and rejoice that their beautiful city was still free.[d] **tell,** *i. e.* count. (13) **Mark ye well,** set your heart to; observe closely. **consider,** *lit. observe one by one,* so as to get due impression from each.[e] (14) **unto death,** not a part of the psalm.[f] *R. V., marg.* "for evermore."

Her bulwarks. — I. The designation and constitution of Jesus Christ to be King of the church, King of Zion, is the great bulwark of Zion. II. The second bulwark of Zion is the promises of God, which are innumerable. III. The watchful providence of God over the church IV. Another bulwark is God's special presence. God is in a special manner present in His church. V. The last bulwark unto which all others may be reduced, is the covenant of God: "For this God is our God." — *John Owen.*

A permanent portion. — What a portion then is that of the believer! The landlord cannot say of his fields, these are mine for ever and ever. The king cannot say of his crown, this is mine for ever and ever. These possessions shall soon change masters; these possessors shall soon mingle with the dust, and even the graves they shall occupy may not long be theirs; but it is the singular, the supreme happiness of every Christian to say, or to have a right to say, "This glorious God with all His divine perfections is my God, for ever and ever, and even death itself shall not separate me from His love."—*George Burder.*— *Meditation.* — It is both our interest and our duty to meditate upon God's gracious dealings with us. Gratitude urges us to ponder every fresh proof of His goodness to us. And as it is necessary to digest our food for it to nourish and strengthen our bodies, so God's mercies must be spiritually digested by means of meditation, if they are to prove helpful to the spiritual life. By meditation we realize their greatness and their significance; we feel our obligation to God, and are encouraged to trust Him by reason of them.— *Hom. Com.*

PSALM THE FORTY-NINTH.

author,— unknown: a Psalm of the later exile

Subject, a vindication of the ways of God in view o social inequalitiesf

"Here we have the highest level of *O. T.* prophecy of the future life." —*Barton.*

1—4. (1) **all ye people,** "all are called to hear what interests all." Psalmist deals with universal truths. **world,** this temporal, transitory state of existence.[a] **low and high,** lit. *sons of Adam* and *sons of Ish; i. e.* sons of common men and sons of great men.[b] **rich,** so as to escape vanity. **poor,** so as to be free from discontent. (3) **of,** *R, V., omits.* **wisdom,** the Heb. is a plural form to signify wisdom of deep origin and varied form. (4) **parable,** the Heb. *mashal* means *a hortatory illustration.*[c] **dark saying,** an utterance where more is meant than meets the ear. **upon the harp,** *i. e.* with a musical accompaniment. *Polychr.* "I begin on the cithern my song of instruction."

The deep things of God are intended, I. To exercise our minds to understand them. II. To try our faith by believing them — "incline" implies a submissive mind. III. To excite our joy as we grasp them — "upon the harp." IV. To employ our faculties in explaining them to others. — *Spurgeon.*

Music. — "The most sorrowful people have known most and felt most the soul of music. The expression of the sorrows and aspirations of the soul in music ministers to our reserve, while it also flows forth in a stream, sad in itself perhaps, yet productive of a divine cheerfulness. There is a mystery and a meaning in music we can never expound or explore; and it is felt that those natures, which are the greatest burden and mystery to themselves, find most the solace of song in the combinations of all great sounds; we have known this, it is not always that in joyfulness of heart we sing. The girl oppressed by some great trial or loss, as she bends over her needle, or goes about her house-work, will sing; and while she sings, finds unconsciously that her song has been her medicine, and has given to her relief. I have known a woman, disappointed and forsaken, flying to her piano; her fingers rushing over the keys have given liberation to her spirit, and the chords opened the sealed well of tears, and the rains descended, and the floods came. And something like this is a very general experience. Hence we have the poetry for all cultured people, and hymns for holy people; and do we not know what it is to become happy while we sing? Good it is sometimes to utter the dark saying to the harp rather than to others; it composes, allays, and tranquillizes the mind while we utter it."—*E. P. Hood.*

5—9. (5) **days of evil,** the time in which evil men bear sway. This might involve personal calamity. **my heels,** *lit. one who dogs the heels,* so a pursuer, or persecutor.[d] "Better still is the rendering of *R. V., marg.*, which gives a clear sense, and a good connection with *vs.* 6. When the iniquity of them that would supplant me compasseth me about, even of them that trust . . . riches?[e] He is in danger from wealthy and unscrupulous neighbors, who are eager to trip him up and get him into their power."—*Cam. Bib.* (6) **trust . . wealth,** Mk. x. 4. (7) **None . . brother,** *Polychr.*, "Yet, no one can buy himself off." **redeem,** from dying. With all his boasting the rich man cannot control *life.* "The idea of the payment of money as the equivalent of a life was familiar. There were cases in which wealth could deliver from death, when man was dealing with man. But when God claims the life, riches are of no avail."—*Cam. Bib.* (8) **precious,** *R. V.*, "costly,"

moth has no place in the text of the psalm, and is merely a musician's mark."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"He who is not overcome is not conquered, but he who overcomes is a conqueror"—*A. T. Pierson.*

"When the Son of God is conquered, we will be conquered, and not before."—*T. L. Cuyler.*

a Ps. xvii. 14.

b "By the *sons of Adam*, he means the common and lower sort, and by the *sons of great men* the elders and nobles, or such as are raised above their fellows by some dignity"—*Calvin.*

c "The term comprehends all instructions, sayings, proverbs, allegories or parables."—*Spk. Com.*

"The discipline of the teacher of religious truth is the same at all times There must be the bent ear before there is the message which men will recognize as important and true."—*Exp. Bib.*

d "Trans., 'When the evil doing of my supplanters encompasseth me.'" —*Delitzsch.*

e "They are the same men as Jesus meant when He said that it was hard for those who trusted in riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven."

beyond any rich man's payments. **ceaseth for ever,** *i. e.* the would-be purchaser must let it alone for ever.[a] (9) **still live,** connect with *vs.* 7. **for ever,** *R. V.*, "alway." *Polychr.* omits entire *vs.* **corruption,** Ps. xiv. 10.

Boasting in wealth. — "Many years ago Judge B. resided in New Jersey. His family was considered the most aristocratic in town, and not unfrequently some of its members would give their acquaintances to understand that this was their opinion also. On a certain occasion a fishing-party was made up among the ladies. Mrs. Judge B. was one of the number. While fishing, the subject of losing property was discussed. Mrs. B. paused a little, and slipped a splendid gold ring from her finger, and dropped it into the lake, remarking as she did so, that it was 'as impossible for them to become poor as it was for her to recover that ring.' The party returned to their homes, and Mrs. B. gave her fish to the servants. Not long after, the cook came into the sitting-room and showed to Mrs. B. a gold ring that she had taken from one of the fish. The ring dropped into the lake was recovered. Mrs. B., who was so confident that she could never become poor, died a pauper also in Elizabethtown, Nova Scotia; and her husband, the judge, died a pauper in an adjoining town." — *Dict. of Illus.—An inch of time.* — "Millions of money for an inch of time!" cried Elizabeth, the gifted but ambitious Queen of England, upon her dying bed. Unhappy woman! reclining upon a couch — with ten thousand dresses in her wardrobe — a kingdom on which the sun never sets at her feet — all now are valueless; and she shrieks in anguish, and she shrieks in vain for a single "inch of time." She had enjoyed threescore and ten years. Like too many among us, she had devoted them to wealth, to pleasure, to pride, and ambition, so that her whole preparation for eternity was crowded into a few moments; and hence she who had wasted more than half a century, would barter millions for an inch of time. — *R. T. S.*

10—13. (10) **wise . . die,** a continuation of *vs.* 7.[b] **perish,** from the earth, not perish altogether. *Polychr.* "The fool and the dolt alike perish;" "the self-confident braggart and the mere stupid animal." (11) **inward thought,** *Cheyne, Cam. Bib., Polychr.* are agreed in changing the sense of this *vs.* as follows: "The graves are their houses forever, their habitations for generation after generation;" "Even should they have called whole countries their own," *i. e.* after their own names. A narrow grave is the only possession left for all men. (12) **Nevertheless,** spite of all their endeavor, or "so man in splendor hath no continuance;" man's lordliness must come to an end. — *Cam. Bib.* (13) **This their way,**[c] the best rendering appears to be: This is the way of them that are self-confident, and of their followers who approve their sayings.

A life of faith and sense (*vss.* 13–15). — I. The text gives us an account of those who live a life of sense. This their way is their folly — 1. If we consider their condition; 2. Their capacity for better things. II. Consider the state of mind spoken of in the text, which implies a life of faith. Apply:— 1. The deplorable state of the unregenerate; 2. Seriously address young people; 3. Those who do not put their whole trust in God. — *R. Cecil.*

An American merchant. — A young merchant, in one of the large cities of America, was seized with a dangerous illness, which brought him, apparently, to the very confines of the eternal world. In this situation his past neglect of the Saviour rushed with power on his conscience, and in the most solemn manner he vowed to lead a new life if he recovered. Unexpectedly, both to himself and every one else, he gradually attained his former health. During the progress of his recovery, he regarded his vow, and professed decided attachment to the service of God; but when he returned to the business of life, he resumed his gayeties, and indulged in all the vanity of a fashionable life. A friend, who had heard and was deeply affected by his solemn vows when in trouble, reminded him of the affecting scene; he remembered it, and declared his intention of fulfilling all he had said, as soon as he had fulfilled two or three pressing engagements of business. Then he would give up his soul to the work; then he would seek God with all his heart. A few days after the admonition, he attended a fashionable and splendid ball: in the midst of his gayety and mirth, death suddenly entered the festive hall, and the gay and thoughtless merchant fell a lifeless corpse. Oh, immortal sinner, beware of delaying attention to the concerns of eternity. — *R. T. S.*

14, 15. (14) **Like sheep,** lying down in their fold at night. — *Cam. Bib.* "Like sheep are they put into sheol." **feed on them,** *R. V.*, "death shall

[a] "All that is here taught is, that no wealth can save a man from death, bec. the life of men is not in their own hands, or in that of their fellows, but only in the hand of God, who cannot be bribed." — *Perowne.*

"O holy trust! O endless sense of rest!
Like the beloved John
To lay his head upon the Saviour's breast,
And thus to journey on."
—*Longfellow.*

[b] "The observation of universal mortality leaves no place for hope — the wise die, the fool perishes, their wealth goes to others; but this argument would be utterly pointless, had not the just man a different and unfailing hope after death." — *Spk. Com.*

[c] "This is the way of those who have folly, and of those after them who delight to speak in like manner." — *Ewald.*

Self-will is so ardent and active that it will break a wall to pieces to make a stool to sit on.

"Grace is not hereditary, but sordid worldliness goes from generation to generation. The race of fools never dies out. No need of missionaries to teach men to be earthworms, they crawl naturally to the dust." — *Spurgeon.*

be their shepherd." **in the morning,**[a] "the wicked perish in the night and in the morning, *i. e.* the Messianic age, the righteous awake, triumphant over their fallen oppressors."—*Kirkpatrick.* **beauty,** *etc.*,[b] *Polychr.*, "their form soon falls to decay; sheol is become their dwelling." (15) **my soul,** God redeems the godly fr. sudden evil death. What wealth is unable to do God can and will do. Ps. xvi. 10, 11. **receive me,** take me[c] fr. the hand of sheol stretched out to seize and carry me away.—*Polychr.* "When it (sheol) seizes me."

Note on verse 15.—Many commentators find in this passage "the strong hope of eternal life with God, if not the hope of a resurrection." But the context and the parallel passage lead to a different conclusion. Certainly the doctrine of a future life was not to the Psalmist a revealed certainty to which he could appeal for a solution of the enigmas of life which were perplexing him. Probably, as has been said before on Ps. xvi., the truth is that the antithesis in the Psalmist's mind is not between life here and life hereafter (as we speak), but between life with and life without God, and for the moment, in the consciousness of the blessedness of fellowship with God, death fades from his view. The rich man's wealth, which he is tempted to envy, cannot buy from God one moment's prolongation of life; nay, the wicked are doomed to a premature and miserable death: while the Psalmist rejoices in the assured protection and fellowship of God. But whatever may have been the extent or the limitation of the Psalmist's view, his words contain the germ and principle of the doctrine of the resurrection, and for ourselves, as we use them, they will bear the fuller meaning with which they have been illuminated by Christ's resurrection.—*Cam. Bib.*—*The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.*—The poor saints were once the tail, but at the daybreak they shall be the head. Sinners rule till nightfall; their honors wither in the evening, and in the morning they find their position utterly reversed. The sweetest reflection to the upright is that "the morning" here intended begins an endless, changeless day. What a vexation of spirit to the proud worldling, when the Judge of all the earth holds His morning session, to see the man whom he despised, exalted high in heaven, while he himself is cast away!—*Spurgeon.*—*The crowned skeleton.*—"Nearly a thousand years after Christ, the tomb of Charlemagne was opened by the Emperor Otho. The skeleton form of the body was found there, dissolved and dismembered; the various ornaments were all there too; but the frame had sunk into fragments, the bones had fallen disjointed and asunder, and there remained nothing but the ghastly skull wearing its crown still, and nothing to signify royalty but this vain pageant of death in its most hideous form! The various relics were taken up, and are now preserved at Vienna, and they have often since been employed in the coronation of the emperors of Germany, in order to signify their greatness, and their being successors of Charlemagne." How striking a comment does the forty-ninth psalm afford to this strange history! The body itself is nowhere to be found! its last resting-place is empty,—the limbs are dispersed in the form of relics. But though scattered be his limbs, Charlemagne shall yet hear the voice of the King of kings, and stand uncrowned in His presence who wears the crowns of the universe.—*Prot. Churchman.*

16—20. (16) **afraid,** or "fretted," that all the good is with the man you are disposed to envy. (17) **For . . away,** Job xxvii. 18, 19. **after him,** into his grave. (18) **blessed his soul,** pronounced himself to be a happy man.[d] **and . . thyself,** *Polychr.*, "And men say in his praise that he is prosperous." (19) **never see light,** not see light for evermore.[e] (20) **Man,** *etc.*, as *vs.* 12.[f]

Death the great leveler.—I remember an Eastern legend which I have always thought furnished a remarkable though unconscious commentary on these words of the Psalmist. Alexander the Great, we are there told, being upon his deathbed, commanded that when he was carried forth to the grave his hands should not be wrapped as was usual in the cere-cloths, but should be left outside the bier, so that all might see them, and might see that they were empty, that there was nothing in them; that he, born to one empire, and the conqueror of another, the possessor while he lived of two worlds—of the East and of the West—and of the treasures of both, yet now when he was dead could retain no smallest portion of these treasures; that in this matter the poorest beggar and he were at length upon equal terms.—*Abp. Trench.*

a Comp. Ps. xvii. 15; Da. vii. 22; xii. 2; 1 Co. vi. 2.

"The present life was ordained for them that believe not, and they laugh the faithful to scorn; but they who fear God shall be above them on the day of the resurrection."—*Koran.*

b "Whereas their form, falling a prey to the devouring of Hades, becomes habitationless."—*Delitzsch.*

c Ge. v. 24; Ps. lxxiii 24.

"Self-righteousness, that is, no righteousness at all—a righteousness in its own eyes, which can never be a righteousness in the eyes of God—a righteousness in which the impure are to purify the impure, and the unjust to justify the unjust."—*Hare.*

"Self-love is the greatest of flatterers."—*La Rochefoucauld.*

"You will not be happy in your religion until you trust God for your happiness as for everything else."—*Amos R. Wells.*

d Lu. xii. 19.

e "The blackness of sheol will be their portion eternally; but the just shall see light in God's light. Ps. xxxvi. 9."—*Spk. Com.*

f "In this last *vs.* we see the Psalmist's real meaning. He that is 'without understanding,' who has no thought beyond the affairs of this world, he it is who is like the beasts which perish."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

PSALM THE FIFTIETH.

author, — prob. a writer of the prophetic period

Subject, the nature of true sacrifice.

"This is the first of the Asaph psalms, and is separated from the other eleven (Psalms lxxiii-lxxxiii.) for reasons that do not appear." — *Exp. Bib.*

1—3. (1) **mighty . . Lord,** Heb. *El, Elohim, Jehovah.*[a] "*El* indicates God's sovereign power; *Elohim* represents Him as the object of worship; *Jehovah* identifies Him with the covenant God of Israel." *R. V.*, "God, even God;" *Polychr.*, "The God of the gods." **hath spoken,** "breaks the silence wh. has been misunderstood to mean indifference, by proclaiming a great assize." **called . . thereof,** *Polychr.*, "Then trembled the earth from east to west." (2) **perfection of beauty,** Zion is so called,[b] as possessing the sanctuary. **shined,** *R. V.*, "shined forth;" the Heb. word is specially used of theophanies, *i. e.* visible manifestations of God's presence.[c] (3) **come,** *etc.*, God's coming at Sinai is regarded as the model of all His manifestations.[d] **fire,** comp. Da. vii. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7. **tempestuous . . him,** "round about him a mighty storm," *i. e.* the outward symbols wh. express the fearfulness of God's theophanies.

[a] Jos. xxii. 22.

[b] Ps. xlviii. 2; La. ii. 15.

[c] De. xxxiii. 2; Ps. lxxx. 1.

[d] Ex. xix. 16, *etc.*

"As He gave His law in fire, so in fire He will require it." — *Trapp.*

Zion the abode of God (*vs.* 2). — This text suggests — I. That God dwells in the church. 1. In the congregation of the righteous; 2. In their hearts individually. II. That the church is the perfection of beauty only when God dwells in it. Illus.: — World without sun, army without general, ship without pilot. — *W. Nicholson.*

The exordium or beginning of this psalm is the most grand and striking that can possibly be imagined — the speaker GOD, the audience an assembled world! We cannot compare or assimilate the scene here presented to us with any human resemblance; nor do I imagine that earth will ever behold such a day till that hour when the trumpet of the archangel shall sound, and shall gather all the nations of the earth from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other; when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell shall deliver up the dead that are in them. — *Barton Bouchier.*

4—6. (4) **heavens from above,** better, *heavens above*, in contrast to earth beneath. Heaven and earth are summoned to witness the righteousness of God's procedure.[e] (5) **saints,** general designation of the covenanted people of Israel. "Those who have obtained favor, grace in My sight."— *Perowne.* **by sacrifice,** *lit.* upon sacrifice, "as that by means of wh. the covenant was sealed, Ex. xxiv. 8." The human act wh. acknowledges the Divine grace and the entailed responsibilities. (6) **heavens,** put for the powers of heaven, who testify of God's righteousness in other spheres, as a guarantee of the impartiality of His judgment. **shall declare,** present tense, "shall" omitted. **for . . himself,** *Cheyne*, "for God is about to judge,"

[e] De. iv. 26; xxxii. 1; Is. i. 2; Mi. vi. 2.

"The covenant relationship is maintained on their part by offering sacrifices as an expression of their obedience and of their fidelity." — *Delitzsch.*

"He will not entertain us till we resign up ourselves freely to his disposal, that there may be no disputing with His commands afterwards, but, as one under his authority, go and come at His word." — *William Gurnall.*

Visions of God. — God rises upon the sight of some Christians as the sun comes right up against a clear sky, and over a sharp-cut horizon, and upon others as the sun comes up behind clouds, which it is his first work to wear out and disperse with his bright beams. I have seen men that never realized God till they were dying. Some never see Him till the midday of their life. Others see Him early in the morning. Some see Him during sickness; some after sickness; some on the occurrence of some special providence. Sometimes Christians are lifted up, through the susceptibility of their imagination, their affections, and their reason, all conjoined, into such an extraordinary sense of God's glory that it seems as though their soul could not abide in the body, and they think, "Praise God! At last He has had mercy on me, and revealed Himself to me," — supposing that He had not before cast the light of His countenance upon them. — *H. W. Beecher.*

7—11. (7) **Hear . . people,** the whole nation of Israel is called before the bar of its judge.[f] **testify,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "Of thee would I complain." **even thy God,** the name is repeated to give additional force.[g] (8) **reprove,** find fault. **or . . me,**[h] *R. V.*, "And thy . . . are continually before me:" *i. e.* the stated offerings are strictly observed. Comp. Is. i. 11–14. (10) **cattle,** simply four-footed beasts. **thousand hills,** either "upon the mountains where thousands (of cattle) are;" or the "everlasting mountains." — *Polychr.* (11) **know,** "the word used expresses a knowledge wh. masters a subject, compasses it, and makes it its own." **wild beasts . . field,** *Cheyne*, "the roamers of the plain." **mine,** *lit.* "with me," in my mind.

[f] Is. i. 2; Ps. lxxxi. 8.

[g] "As if He should say, 'When you tie Me to your own devices, how far is this presumptuous rashness of yours from the reverence that is due to Me! for, seeing that I am God, My majesty ought to restrain all forwardness, so that all flesh should keep silence when I speak.'"— *Calvin.*

[h] "Judgment is not given bec. the

Outward formality. — It is the very remonstrance which our Lord Himself makes against the Pharisees of His days, for laying so much stress on the

outward observance of their own traditions, the washing of pots and cups and other such like things; the paying of tithes of anise and mint and cummin; the ostentatious fulfilment of all ceremonious observances in the eyes of men, the exalting the shadow to the exclusion of the substance. And have we not seen the like in our own days, even to the very vestment of the minister, the obeisance of the knee, and the posture of the body? as if the material church were all in all, and God were no Spirit, that demanded of those that worshiped Him that they should worship Him in spirit and in truth; as if the gold and ornaments of the temple were far beyond the hidden man of the heart in that which is incorruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. — *Barton Bouchier.*

people had neglected the externals of the law, or had forgotten to offer the sacrifices appointed by the law. They had brought them; but they had brought them as if the *act were everything.*" —*Perowne.*

12—15. (12) **hungry,** the term seems wholly unsuitable for God, but it vigorously declares that He does not need *things*, but wants from His people *spiritual worship.* **world is mine,** Ex. xix. 5; De. x. 14. (14) **thanksgiving,** *lit. sacrifice, thanksgiving;* give God *outspoken gratitude.*[a] *R. V.*, "the sacrifice of thanksgiving." **and pay,** *etc., i. e.* by such spiritual sacrifice are vows discharged. (15) **call upon me,** in trustful prayer. Ps. xci. 15.

Encouragements for the pious in the day of trial (*vs.* 15).—I. The Speaker: possessing—1. Boundless knowledge; 2. Infinite goodness; 3. Omnipotent power. II. The persons addressed. 1. Those who fear God; 2. Who are subjects of trial. III. The duty suggested. Calling upon God should be with—1. Humility; 2. Sincerity; 3. Confidence; 4. Consistency; 5. Importunity. IV. The declaration made. He will deliver—1. At what time He sees best; 2. In what way He sees best; 3. By what way He sees best. V. Notice what grateful returns are required. Thou shalt glorify Me — 1. By a devout acknowledgment of the Divine goodness; 2. By unreserved devotedness to Him; 3. By promoting His interests. Apply—(1) To those who fear God; (2) Those who are humbly seeking God; (3) Those who are living without God. — *Kappa, in* 400 *sks.*

Prayer answered, and God glorified (*vs* 15).— Some time ago the missionaries in the Fiji Islands were threatened with an attack by enraged hostile chiefs, who came forward uttering their threats and brandishing their weapons. The missionaries were unable to repel force by force, even if they had wished to do so. They shut themselves up in the mission-house, and united in earnest prayer to God, entreating His merciful and Almighty protection. After they had continued in prayer for some time, it was observed that there was less of noise outside the house than there had previously been, and at length it ceased altogether. One of their number went out to ascertain the real state of things. At first he found no one, but at length he found a man, and interrogated him thus: — "Where are the chiefs?" "They are gone," said he. "They found you were praying to your God, and they know your God is a strong God, and they are gone." Thus did God honor the prayers of His servants in the hour of their extremity. — *Leifchild.*

[a] Comp. Ps. lxi. 8.

"Instead of the legal 'sacrifice of peace-offerings for a thanksgiving or a vow,' the true worshiper must offer that wh. the victim represents, viz., praise from a grateful heart, and all duties to wh. he is bound by the terms of his covenant with God." — *Spk. Com.*

"Among the heathen the opinion prevailed that the gods ate and drank what was offered to them in sacrifice; these things were however consumed by the priests who attended on heathen altars, and who found that it did much to secure the liberality of the people, to keep up the impression that what was thus offered was consumed by the gods."

16—20. (16) **wicked,** hypocrites, hiding their iniquity under professions and outward observances. **declare,** tell, or number, "as if with a view to their more punctual observance." **or . . take,** *R. V.*, "and that thou hast taken."[\] (17) **hatest,** *etc.*, "the whole discipline of moral education." Ro. ii. 21, 22. (18) **consentedst,** hadst pleasure. Ro. i. 32. **hast . . adulterers,** Heb. *with adulterers is thy portion.*[b] Thou makest common cause with them. (19) **givest,** lettest it loose; givest it free play. (20) **Thou sittest,** "emphasizing the deliberateness of the slander." **slanderest,** givest a wound to.[c] The chief features of the social iniquity are here indicated.

A lunatic beggar in Athens would not believe but that all the ships in the harbor were his. His mistake exceeded not theirs, who persuade themselves that this richer office is theirs, before they are "alive from the dead," and "born of the Spirit," before they are returned to God or to themselves. The Duke of Alva is said to have complained that, "his king sent him in fetters to fight for him;" because without his pardon given him, and while he was a prisoner, he employed him in war. But the Supreme King is a more merciful one, and orders our charity to begin at home; making it our first duty to break off our sins; and then when we have put off these our shackles, go to fight His battles. — *Daniel Burgess.* — *Polluted lips.* — All the mediæval writers teach us, even from the Mosaic law, concerning the leper, how the writer of this psalm only put into words what those statutes expressed in fact. For

[b] "That is, Thou sharest their condition, their feelings, and their fate." — *Spk. Com.*

[c] "Thou didst set a stigma on." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"We look down at our fellows as the eagle looks over the edge of the cliff at the mice which crawl so far below him. This is the selfishness of the moral nature. Our gifts and attainments are not only to be light and warmth in our own dwellings but are as well to shine

through the window into the dark night to guide and cheer bewildered travelers upon the road."—*Henry W. Beecher.*

a "But the long-suffering of God cannot always be abused. The time comes when the sinner is made to feel that God is a righteous Judge."—*Perowne.*

b "Acts in a straight, right manner, opposed to turning aside. In such pure worship and a pure life evince their true piety, and they will enjoy God's presence and favor."—*Fausset.*

"Many favors which God giveth us ravel out for want of hemming: for though prayer purchases blessings, giving praise doth keep the quiet possession of them all."—*Fuller.*

"Thanksgiving is good, thanksliving is better."—*M Henry.*

author,— David

A penitential psalm.

Historical connection, 2 Sa. xi. xii.

c Is. xliii. 25; xliv. 22.

d "David uses three words, transgression, iniquity, and sin, involving every kind and degree of guilt."—*Spk. Com.*

e "Purity as well as pardon is desired by all true penitents."—*Fausset.*

f "The little word *for* in this *vs.* must be understood so as not to imply that his sins must be forgiven him *because* he had confessed them."—*Luther.*

g 2 Sa. xii. 13; 2 Co. vii. 10.

so it is written: "The leper in whom the plague is, . . . he shall put a covering upon his upper lip." As they all, following Origen, say: Let them who are themselves of polluted lips, take good heed not to teach others. Or, to take it in the opposite way, see how Isaiah would not speak to his people, because he was a man of polluted lips, and he dwelt among a people of polluted lips, till they had been touched with the living coal from the altar; and by that, as by a sacrament of the Old Testament, a sentence of absolution had been pronounced upon them. —*J. M. Neale.*

21—23. (21) **kept silence,** *Polychr.* "and must I be silent? I will punish thee, and let thee see how the case stands." Refraining fr. immediate punishment, and on this the wicked presumed, thinking Jehovah to be indifferent.[a] (22) **tear,** *etc.*, Ps. vii. 2. (23) **praise,** *R. V.*, "the sacrifice of thanksgiving," as the expression of a thankful heart. **ordereth,** *etc.*, *lit. that disposes* or prepares *his way. Cam. Bib.*, "He that keepeth my way."[b] **shew,** or "I will make him look with joy." *Polychr.*, "he shall joy in my help."

Salvation. —I. Salvation is the work of God. II. The evidence of salvation is holiness of heart and life. III. The effect of that evidence is praise. IV. The tendency of that praise is to glorify God. God is not glorified by the doubts, and fears, and murmurings of His people, but by their praise. — *Geo. Rogers.*

The silence of God (*vs.* 21). — It sometimes seems as if God cared for nothing. The wicked are at ease. The good are vexed incessantly. The world is full of misery and confusion. The darling of the flock is always made the sacrifice. Some child, in the very midst of its glee, becomes suddenly silent — as a music box, its spring giving way, stops in the midst of its strain, and never plays out the melody. The mother staggers, and wanders through day and night, as if these were mingled into one, and that shot through with preternatural influence of woe. But think not that God's silence is coldness or indifference. When Christ stood by the dead, the silence of tears interpreted His sympathy more wonderfully than even that voice which afterwards called back the footsteps of the brother from the grave, and planted them in life again. God's stillness is full of brooding. Not one tear shall be shed by you that does not hang heavier at His heart than any world upon His hand. — *H. W. Beecher.*

PSALM THE FIFTY-FIRST.

1—4. (1) **thy loving-kindness,** "in all godly sorrow there is hope. Sorrow without hope may be remorse or despair, but it is not true repentance." **blot out,**[c] as from a register. **transgressions,**[d] acts of deliberate rebellion. (2) **Wash me,** like a fuller; *Heb.* implies reiterated washing.[e] (3) **acknowledge,** make unreserved confession.[f] **before me,** a constant burden on my heart; "such consciousness of sin is the first step towards the repentance and confession wh. are the indispensable conditions of forgiveness." (4) **thee only,** so Dav. regards the deep iniquity of his sin wh. had been committed against his fellow-men.[g] **this evil,** *R. V.*, "that which is evil." **mightest,** *R. V.*, "mayest." **speakest,** "when Thou dost pronounce sentence." **clear,** *i. e.* blameless. "Man's sin brings out into a clearer light the justice and holiness of God. Who pronounces sentence upon it. The Psalmist flings himself at the footstool of the Divine Justice. The consequence of his sin, and therefore in a sense its purpose (for nothing is independent of the sovereign Will of God), is to enhance before men the justice and holiness of God, the absolutely Righteous and Pure." — *Cam. Bib.*

True confession is not something extorted by terror and by fear of impending justice. Such an acknowledgment implies only fear and despair. It is not the utterance of a man who arises and goes to his father, but of one whom baliffs arrest while he flees from his father. True confession implies faith in God's pardoning grace, and confidence in His power to make the broken bones rejoice, and to wash the tainted heart whiter than snow. It is a voluntary laying bare of the wound to the eye of a trusted surgeon.— *M. R. Vincent.*

Divine mercy implored.—

Lord! who art merciful as well as just,
Incline thine ear to me, a child of dust!

Not what I would, O Lord, I offer Thee,
Alas! but what I can,
Father Almighty, who hast made me man,
And bade me look to heaven, for thou art there,
Accept my sacrifice and humble prayer.
Four things which are not in Thy treasury
I lay before Thee, Lord, with this petition:
My nothingness, my wants,
My sins and my contrition.— *Southey.*

This beautiful penitential psalm has been on the lips of many of God's saints and martyrs when dying.

5—8. (5) **Behold,** *etc.*, strong poetic fig. to represent Dav.'s deep feeling that from his earliest being he had been sin-stained. **shapen,** born, "All that the speaker means (and is not that a sad confession enough?) is that he belongs to an erring race and drew his first breath in sin."— *Cheyne.* (6) **inward parts,** innermost consciousness. God takes great pleasure in whole-hearted devotion. (7) **hyssop,** used in ceremonial cleansings. Nu. xix. 8; Le. xiv. 4-6. **wash me,** appeals to God Himself to perform the work of the priest. (8) **joy and gladness,** in restoring me to sanctuary privileges.

"He that is contented with just grace enough to get to heaven and escape hell, and desires no more, may be sure he hath none at all, and is far from being made partaker of the Divine nature."— *Janeway.*

The sinner cleansed (*vs.* 7).—I. That which David desired. We must consider him as a—1. Penitent; 2. King; 3. Prophet. II. The means by which it was to be accomplished. 1. Hyssop, the ordinary means of purification under the law; 2. Blood had to be used with the hyssop; 3. Note the manner of its use. Hyssop typifies repentance — linen dyed scarlet, faith — the staff of cedar, holiness of life. All point to Jesus and the new life in Him.— *Pierre du Bosc.*

This psalm has from earliest Christian times, been called, by way of eminence, the Penitential Psalm, the *Miserere*, from its opening words in the Vulgate, *Miserere mei Domine.*

Psalm li.— Nearly every verse has also its special history. Take the first. Henry Vaughan, the poet, who departed this life in 1695, desired the following inscription should be placed on his tomb: "*Servus inutilis, Peccator maximus, Hic jacco. Gloria! Miserere!*" Dr. Carey, the missionary, suffering from a dangerous illness, was asked, "If this sickness should prove fatal, what passage would you select as the text of your funeral sermon?" He replied, "Oh, I feel that such a poor sinful creature as I is unworthy to have anything said about him; but if a funeral sermon should be preached, let it be from the fifty-first psalm and first verse."

9, 10. (9) **Hide . . sins,** do not only forgive but forget.[a] **blot out,** *vs.* 1. (10) **Create,** as Gen. i. 1, "implying that the purification of the heart requires, as it were, a fresh act of creative power;"[b] "as the necessary condition of communion with God." **right,** constant, or steadfast in its allegiance to God.

The new creation.— This "creation" is from nothing. Our creation "in Jesus Christ" is no mere strengthening of our powers, no mere aiding of our natural weakness by the might of the grace of God; it is a creation out of nothing, of that which we had not before. We were dead in trespasses and sins. What is corrupt receiveth not soundness, save by passing away itself and being replaced by a new production. "The old man" passeth not into the new man, but is "put off." It is not the basis of the new life, but a hindrance to it. It must be "put off" and the new man "put on," "created in Christ Jesus."— *E. B. Pusey.*

A new heart (*vs.* 10). — Let us but deeply feel the need of a new heart, and that conviction will secure our cordial assent to the memorable saying with which one of England's greatest men, her bravest and noblest spirits, closed an illustrious career on the scaffold of an ungrateful country. When Sir Walter Raleigh had laid his head upon the block, he was asked by the executioner whether it lay right. Whereupon, with the calmness of a hero, and the faith of a Christian, he returned an answer, the power of which we shall all feel when our own head is tossing and turning on death's uneasy pillow: "It matters little, my friend, how the head lies, provided the heart is right." — *Guthrie.*

[a] "If we wish that God should turn His face from our sins, our own face must be turned towards them. We must not hide them, if we wish that they should be hidden by Him."— *Wordsworth.*

[b] Ti. iii. 5; Eph. ii. 10; iv. 24. With this prayer comp. the promise in Je. xxiv. 7; Eze. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26.

"Let us pray God that He would root out of our hearts everything of our own planting, and set out there, with His own hands, the tree of life, bearing all manner of fruits."— *Fénélon.*

11—13 (11) **away, holy spirit,**[c] although the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit is not taught in the O. T., passages like these, which imply that in the spirit Jehovah personally acts, prepare the way for the N. T. revelation concerning Him, and can be used in the fullest Christian sense. — *Cam. Bib.* (12) **the joy,** wh. was lost in the bitter sense of sin. *Polychr.*, "Give me once more the glad sense of Thy help." **thy free spirit,** *R. V.*, "a free spirit;" free in the sense of willing, generous, spontaneously seeking and

[c] 1 Sa. xvi. 13.

"It is equally admissible to take the words to mean the Spirit of grace, *i. e.* the Divine nature, as manifesting itself in

urging to goodness. (13) **will I teach,** fain would I teach the lessons learnt by sad experience. **be converted,** return.

Uphold me. — I am tempted to think that I am now an established Christian, that I have overcome this or that lust so long that I have got into the habit of the opposite grace, so that there is no fear; I may venture very near the temptation, nearer than other men, This is a lie of Satan. I might as well speak of gunpowder getting by habit a power of resisting fire, so as not to catch the spark. As long as powder is wet it resists the spark, but when it becomes dry it is ready to explode at the first touch. As long as the Spirit dwells in my heart, he deadens me to sin, so that if lawfully called through temptation I may reckon upon God carrying me through. But when the Spirit leaves me, I am like dry gunpowder. Oh, for a sense of this! — *R. M. M'Cheyne.* — *The Holy Spirit.* — Christianity is a Divine power, a power which must be sought in faith, in humiliation, and in prayer: and till the Holy Ghost is duly honored, and His presence be humbly sought, the finest system and the most elaborate organizations will be found devoid of any fruitful life and vigor. — *G. T. Stokes.*

14, 15. (14) **bloodguiltiness,**[a] first, blood violently spilt; then the guilt and penalty of the commission. **thy righteousness,** faithfulness to thy char. and promises. (15) **O Lord,** Adonai, or Master. **my lips,** wh. had been sealed by the consciousness of unconfessed and unforgiven sin.

The dumb learning to praise God. — A beautiful incident occurred only a short time since in the school to teach mutes articulation and lip-reading, at Mystic River, Connecticut. Miss P., having a desire to learn to speak and read the lips of her speaking friends, was recommended to try Mr. Whipple's school. She made rapid progress, and was much aided by the natural alphabet, the invention of her teacher. This alphabet curiously suggests sound, or the right position of the organs to utter sound, as well as form; and whenever a mute pupil can read and write it, he or she can generally give any of the forty sounds of our difficult language with great precision and discrimination, and often with remarkable correctness. This young lady mastered the alphabet with little difficulty, and one day came to her teacher with something written on her slate, which she asked him to correct. It proved to be the Lord's Prayer, put into the language of articulation. Perceiving her agitation, the teacher could scarce restrain his own tears as he corrected a few unimportant errors of pronunciation, and delicately returned it. The next morning the young lady came exultingly to her teacher, exclaiming: "I prayed last night for the first time in my life with my voice;" and neither of them could restrain their emotions. He ventured to ask her if she had ever prayed before. "Oh, yes; I have thought my prayers, but I never spoke before." "My lips shall praise Thee, O God." "Attend to the voice of my supplications, O Lord." — *Bib. Ill.*

16, 17. (16) **desirest not,** *R. V.*, "delighted not in." **not sacrifice,** spoken relatively, not absolutely. Sacrifice without the crushed spirit is simply dead formality and useless as worship to a moral, living God. Ps. 1. 8–15. **delightest not,** *R. V.*, "hast no pleasure." (17) **broken spirit,** humbled, meek, penitent.[b] **contrite,** bruised, worn, broken-hearted for sin, as against God.[c] "The deeper the sense of sin, and truer the sorrow for it, the more heartfelt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and reconciliation. The tender, humbled, broken heart is therefore the best thank-offering."— *Perowne.*

An old Hebrew parable. — A poor penitent came up to worship before the Lord who had just risen from a sick bed. He could now scarcely sustain his tottering limbs. The words of the psalm were like a cordial to his sinking spirit. One after another brought his sacrifice, and was accepted; but the penitent had none. At length he drew near the priest, and said, "Last night a poor widow and her children came to me, and I had nothing to give her but two pigeons which were ready for sacrifice." "Why, then, art thou come to me, my son?" "I heard them sing, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.' Will He not accept mine? God be merciful to a me a sinner!" The old priest was melted, and the tears started in his eyes as he raised the poor penitent. He laid his hands on his head: "Blessed be thou, my son! Thine offering is accepted. It is better than thousands of rivers of oil. Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee, and give thee peace!" — *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

influencing the moral nature of man." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"The word rendered 'willing' comes by a very natural process, to mean nobles. God's servants are princes and lords of everything besides, themselves included. Such obedience is freedom."—*Maclaren*

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety."

a Most suitably referred to the case of Uriah.

Ge. iv. 10.

"Inspect the neighborhood of thy life; every shelf, every nook of thy abode; and, nestling in, quarter thyself in the farthest and most domestic winding of thy snail-house."—*Richter.*

"Oh! the unspeakable littleness of a soul which, entrusted with Christianity, speaking in God's name to immortal beings, with infinite excitements to the most enlarged, fervent love, sinks down into narrow self-regard, and is chiefly solicitous of its own honor."—*W. Ellery Channing.*

b "The inward part of a man is said to be broken and crushed when his sinful nature is broken, his ungodly self slain, his inpenetrable hardness softened, his haughty vainglorying brought low,—in fine, when he is in himself become as nothing, and when God is everything to him."—*Delitzsch.*

c Fr. Lat, *con*, and *terere*, to rub, or grind.

"Nothing that is broken bears any value, except the heart, which becomes more valuable the more it is broken."—*Persian Prov*

18, 19. That this is an addition made to the original psalm, during the time of the Babylonian exile, or later, for liturgical purposes, has been maintained by a large number of the commentators who ascribe the rest of the psalm to David. The verses seem to imply that Jerusalem was in ruins and that sacrificial worship was suspended. "A comparison of similar expressions in lxix. 35; cii. 16; cxlvii. 2, makes it almost certain that the words are a prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem and the reëstablishment of sacrificial worship there." —*Cam. Bib.* (19) **sacrifices of righteousness,** those offered in a right spirit. *Cp.* iv. 5; Deut. xxxiii. 19. **with burnt offering,** *etc.* The term *ōlāh,* "burnt offering," denotes the sacrifice as "ascending" in smoke and flame: *kālīl,* "whole burnt offering," denotes the sacrifice as entirely consumed. It was the rule that the burnt offering should be wholly consumed, to symbolize the entire self-dedication of the worshiper; and the second designation is added in order to emphasise this idea of the sacrifice. *Cp.* Deut. xxxiii. 10; 1 Sam. vii. 9.

"Amazing love, that sets my spirit free,
And makes my broken life complete in Thee."—*Mrs. M. S. Corning.*

"Here is love's offering to my King
Which in glad sacrifice I bring—
Here is my heart."
—*E. Leidick.*

A broken heart.—

Saviour, is there anything
I have failed to bring?
Lies my offering at Thy feet
Incomplete?"

* * *

Nay; but I am satisfied,
Having all besides.
Since that erring heart of thine
On my shrine
Broken, contrite, suppliant lies—
Sweetest sacrifice!
In that offering thou dost bring
Everything.

"O Patient watcher over all!
If broken lives may best complete
Thy circle, let our fragments fall
An offering at Thy feet."
—*Carl Spencer.*

PSALM THE FIFTY-SECOND.

author,— prob. David

1—5. (1) This verse states the theme of the psalm; the contrast between man's wrongdoings and God's loving kindness. The two halves of the verse correspond to the two divisions of the psalm. The statement of the second line is abruptly introduced, but it is virtually the answer to the question of the first. What avails it thee to boast of successful evil doing? it is vain: the loving kindness of God (endureth) all the day. **mighty man,** or insolent tyrant.[a] (2) **mischiefs,** *R. V.*, "very wickedness." destructive malignity. **razor,** wh. will cut suddenly, before one is aware. (3) **lovest,** so art bad *at heart.* (4) **devouring words,** *lit.* words of swallowing up.[b] **deceitful tongue,** *Polychr.*, "Thou deceitful tongue, thou!" identifies the offender with the offending member. (5) **likewise,** act by thee as thou dost act towards others, only with far more terrible effect. **destroy,** break thee down as a house: seize thee, as coals are taken, raked out fr. the hearth: root thee out, pluck up, and tear away thy tent. **dwelling place,** *R. V.*, "tent."

Subject, the futility of plots against the righteous.

Historical connection 1 Sa xxii.

a So Prayer Bk. version.

b "Malicious words tending to undermine the character and reputation of others."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

Apostates (*vs.* 5). — In the long line of portraits of the Doges, in the palace at Venice, one space is empty, and the semblance of a black curtain remains as a melancholy record of glory forfeited. Found guilty of treason against the state, Mariano Falieri was beheaded, and his image, as far as possible, blotted from remembrance. Every one's eye rests longer upon the one dark vacancy than upon any one of the fine portraits of the merchant-monarchs; and so the apostates of the church are far more frequently the theme of the world's talk than the thousands of good men and true who adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. — *Spurgeon.*

"A lie always needs a truth for a handle to it, else the hand would cut itself which sought to drive it home upon another."—*Beecher.*

6—9. (6) **see,** *R. V.*, "see it." **laugh,** not in pleasure at his destruction, but at the vindication of God's righteousness.[c] **him,** *R. V.*, "him, saying." (7) **not God his strength,** the very root of his evil. **wickedness,** *Cheyne.* "his substance." (8) **But,** *R. V.*, "But as for me." **olive tree,** Ge. viii. 11. "The righteous man is like an evergreen olive tree, while the wicked is rooted up. He is God's guest, enjoying His favor and protection."—*Kirkpatrick.* (9) **wait on,** or proclaim Thy Name. **before,** *R. V.*, "in the presence of."

c "There is such a thing as a shout of righteous joy at the downfall of the tyrant and oppressor, at the triumph of righteousness and truth over wrong and falsehood."—*Perowne.*

Stier advises men in business to add to their three columns of pounds, shillings and pence, a fourth column for the blessing of God.

"Let thy face, like Moses', shine to others, but make no looking-glass for thyself." — *Jeremy Taylor.*

The mercy of God (*vs.* 8). — I. It is tender mercy. II. It is great mercy. III. It is undeserved mercy. IV. It is rich mercy. V. It is manifold mercy. VI. It is abounding mercy. VII. It is unfailing mercy. — *Spurgeon.*

The olive tree. — There is something strongly indicative of health and vigor in the fresh look of a flourishing olive tree; but especially when a grove of them is seen together, and the sun shining on their glossy leaves. The trunk is of a moderate height, and gnarled in a picturesque manner; the foliage is of a deep and peculiar green, and under a passing breeze the uppermost leaves turn round, and show a fine silvery hue. Hence the full meaning of the words, "His beauty shall be as the olive tree:" and again, "The Lord called thy name a green olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit." It is not the evergreen verdure of the tree merely that is referred to, but its health and vigor. Where could we find a better emblem of the church in a flourishing condition than just such a grove of olives as this, with the peaceful notes of the turtle dove poured forth from the midst, and the sun's living light over all, like the Sun of Righteousness shining over His peaceful church? — *Nar. of Mission to Jews.*

PSALM THE FIFTY-THIRD.

author, — prob. David

Subject, see Ps. xiv., of which this is a repetition with very slight changes.

Mahalath, a melancholy tune, adapted to the sombre strain that pervades the psalm.

1—3. (1) **fool,** always with added idea of wicked; ref. to class of men; *Polychr.*, "The fools." **There is no God,** not a speculative denial of the existence of a Supreme Being, but a practical denial of His providential care. **none,** *i. e.* among the fools. (2) **looked down,** illus. fr. Divine exam. of Sodom, Ge. xviii. **seek,** *R. V.*, "seek after." **filthy,** indulged sin polluting us, as well as bringing us under Divine punishment.

God inspecting man. — I. God's profound interest in humanity. 1. Because of the dignity of man's nature; 2. Because of the peculiarity of man's moral condition; 3. Because of the capabilities of man's nature. II. God's searching scrutiny of humanity. His is the scrutiny of — 1. An all-seeing Being; 2. An infinitely holy Being; 3. An infinitely merciful Being. — *Hom. Com.*

"Whoever considers the study of anatomy, I believe, will never be an atheist; the frame of man's body, and the cohesion of its parts, being so strange and paradoxical, that I hold it to be the greatest miracle of nature." — *Lord Herbert.*

A question for atheists. — Napoleon the First, with all his disdain for men, bowed to one power that he was pleased to regard as greater than himself. In the heart of an atheistic age he replied to the smattering theorists of his day, "Your arguments, gentlemen, are very fine. But who," pointing up to the evening sky, "who made all these?" — *J. B. Clarke.* — *No God.* — The Chinese acknowledge no God in their creed, and yet their houses and shops and streets are full of idols. The reverse of this is seen in Christendom; our creed is full of God, and then we shut Him out from our shops homes and hearts. — *Hom. Com.*

"Self-love exaggerates our faults as well as our virtues." — *Goethe.*

4—6. (4) **no knowledge,** are they so utterly devoid of understanding. *Cam. Bib.* suggests, "have not the . . . been made to know?" *i. e.* taught by sharp experience their error. *Polychr.*, "shall not . . . be made to feel?" **they . . called,** *R. V.*, "and call not." (5) **There,** *etc.*, ref. to some historic event in wh. God greatly exalted His power in the overthrow of Israel's enemies. **despised,** this catastrophe is God's answer to the atheism of the foolish. (6) **out of Zion,** the center fr. wh. Jehovah manifests his earthly sovereignty. **captivity,** *etc.*, this also seems to be full of later associations than any of David's time. But instead of "bring back the captivity," we may read, "turn the fortunes."

"I regard that man as lost, who has lost his sense of shame." — *Clautus.*

Superstitious fear. — There is a fond and superstitious fear, when men are afraid of their shadows, as Pisander was afraid of meeting his own soul, and Antenor would never go forth of the doors, but either in a coach closed upon all sides, or with a target borne over his head, fearing, I guess, lest the sky should fall down upon it, according to that in the psalm, "*They fear where no fear is.*" — *John King.*

PSALM THE FIFTY-FOURTH.

author, — David; time, his exile

A confident prayer of the oppressed.

Historical connection 1 Sa. xxiii. 14-24; xxvi. 1.

1—3. (1) **by thy name,** exertion of those powers wh. are revealed as the attributes of thy character.[a] **judge me,** do me justice. (2) **of my mouth,** uttering the deep desires of my heart. (3) **strangers,** *Polychr.*, "barbarians," the Ziphites, who were Jews, but alien to him in spirit. **oppressors,** *R. V.*, "violent men." **seek,** *R. V.*, "have sought."

a Ps. xx. 1.

The Covenanter's prayer. — Mr. Alexander Peden, a Scotch Covenanter, with some others, had been, at one time, pursued both by horse and foot, for a considerable way. At last, getting some little height between them and their persecutors, he stood still and said, "Let us pray here, for if the Lord hear not our prayer, and save us, we are all dead men." He then prayed, saying, "O Lord, this is the hour and power of Thine enemies, they may not be idle. But hast Thou no other work for them than to send them after us? Send them after them to whom Thou wilt gi'e strength to flee, for our strength is gane. Twine them about the hill, O Lord, and cast the lap of Thy cloak over puir auld Saunders, and thir puir things, and save us this ae time, and we will keep it in remembrance, and tell to the commendation of Thy guidness, Thy pity and compassion, what Thou didst for us at sic a time." And in this he was heard, for a cloud of mist immediately intervened between them and their persecutors; and in the meantime, orders came to go in quest of James Renwick, and a great company with him. — *Cheever.*

Who can limit the power of Christ to save? Has He ever yet done all that, as God, He might or could do?

"No strangers are more strange than they who cast off the bands of civility and nature, whereby they were bound."—*Dickson.*

4—7. (4) **with . . soul,** or the upholder of my life. (5) **in thy truth,** or in fidelity to Thy promise made to me. (6) **I . . sacrifice,** *R. V.*, "with a freewill offering will I sacrifice." (7) **hath delivered,** spoken in faith wh. rejoices in a deliverance that is not, as yet, an acomplished fact. **seen,** *etc.*, a common idiom in psalms.[a] It occurs twice in the inscription on the Moabitish stone. **his,** *R. V.*, "my," *Polychr.* "Mine eye feasts on my foes." This is not the spirit of the Gospel. But deliverance to the Psalmist will be a vindication of God's fidelity, a proof of his moral government, as such it causes him to rejoice.

A theme for wonder. — 1. At His unmerited grace, that He should side with *me.* 2. At His gracious power, for who can resist Him? 3. At His practical help, for He has upheld my soul. — *Spurgeon.*

Faith. — God is personally interested in every one whose confidence is reposed in Him. In his distressing wanderings, David never passed beyond the Divine care. In his extremest danger he was covered by the shield of the Divine protection. It was his faith in these things that enabled him to live a triumphant life, even in the midst of incessant persecutions and perils. It is true of all men and in all ages that life can become victorious only through Faith. Faith enlarging the horizon of life, realizing the future and invisible, feeling the presence of God, and resting in His promises, transforms common men into heroes (Heb. xi. 32–40). — *W. Jones.*

a Ps. xxii. 17; lix. 10; xcii. 11; cxviii. 7.

"The Christian needs a reminder every hour; some defeat, surprise adversity, peril; to be agitated, mortified, beaten out of his course, so that all remains of self will be sifted out."—*Bushnell.*

One of the most important, but one of the most difficult things for a powerful mind, is to be its own master; a pond may lie quiet in a plain, but a lake wants mountains and compass to hold it in.

PSALM THE FIFTY-FIFTH.

Author,— prob. David
time, Absalom's rebellion

The prayer of one who is betrayed by his friends.

1—5. (1) **Give ear,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. v. 1, 2; xvii. 1. **hide not,** veil not Thyself; comp. La. iii. 56.[b] (2) **mourn,** *etc.*, or I go wandering to and fro, restless and agitated with doubts and fears. **make a noise,** or moan aloud. (3) **oppression,** pressure which forced David into a condition of great perplexity. **cast iniquity,** rend, "They set mischief in motion against me:" or, "They make evil doings slide upon me." "A metaphor fr. the practice of rolling stones down upon an enemy." **in . . me,** *R. V.*, "in anger they persecute me." (4) **sore pained,** or writhes.[c] (5) **horror,** or trembling,[d] a rare word in the Heb.

God hiding Himself. — I. An evil to be dreaded: "Hide not thyself," *etc.*, 1. By long delay in an urgent case. 2. In the sinner's case by refusing to hear altogether. II. Causes which may produce it. 1. In the man. 2. In the prayer itself. 3. In the manner of the prayer. III. Evils which will follow — a list which the preacher can readily think of. IV. Remedies for the evil. There is none of it should continue; but heart-searching, repentance, importunity, pleading the name of Jesus, *etc.*, will lead to its removal. — *Spurgeon.*

Great answers to prayer. — It is said that a man once asked Alexander to give him some money to portion off a daughter. The king bade him go to his treasurer and demand what he pleased. He went and demanded an enormous sum. The treasurer was startled, — said he could not part with so much without an express order, and went to the king, and told him that he thought a small part of the money the man had named might serve for the occasion. "No," replied Alexander, "let him have it all. I like that man: he does me honor; he treats me like a king, and proves, by what he

b "God is said to 'veil His ear' when the right state of heart leaves the praying one, and consequently that which makes it acceptable and capable of being answered is wanting to the prayer."—*Delitzsch.*

c Comp. Matt. xxvi. 38, 39; 2 Cor. i. 8, 9.

d Job xxi. 6; Is. xxi. 4; Eze. vii. 18. "Man's plea to man is that he never more will beg and that he never begged before; man's plea to God is that he did obtain a former suit, and there-

fore sues again How good a God we serve, that, when we sue, makes His old gifts the examples of His new."—*Quarles.*

a In his flight fr. Abs. Dav. did lodge in the wilderness, 2 Sa. xv. 28, xvii. 16.

b Je. xxv. 4.

"We are all too apt to utter this vain desire, for vain it is; no wings of doves or eagles could bear us away from the sorrows of a trembling heart. Inward grief knows nothing of place. Moreover, it is cowardly to shun the battle which God would have us fight."—*Spurgeon.*

"The Hindoos who desire to escape from trouble, often exclaim, 'Could I but fly, these things would not be so.'"—*Roberts.*

"Short passes, quick ejections, concise forms and remembrances, holy breathings, prayer like little posies, may be sent forth without number on every occasion, and God will note them in His book."—*J. Taylor.*

c "The sudden outburst of these fervent, impetuous feelings gives an irrgularity to the whole poem. But this is natural"—*Perowne.*

d Ge. xi. 7.

e Not "violence and strife" personified, as some older versions, and Rabbinical interpretators.

A man once complained to his minister that he had prayed for a whole year that he might enjoy the comforts of religion, but found no answer to his prayers The

asks, that he believes me to be both rich and generous." "Let us," says Mr. Newton, in quoting this anecdote, "go to the throne of grace, and put up such petitions as may show that we have honorable views of the riches and bounty of our King."

6—8. (6) **be at rest,** *Polychr.*, "and alight." The Psalmist watching the flight of some wild doves to their nests in the crags of the mountains, wishes he could escape to some solitary place where he might be free from persecution. (7) **wander,** *etc.*,[a] see Je. ix. 2. **and remain,** *R. V.*, "I would lodge." (8) **hasten my escape,** *R. V.*, "haste me to a shelter." **tempest,**[b] a figure for the malevolent hostility of party-strife raging in the city.

The dove. — The classical bards of Greece and Rome make frequent allusions to the surprising rapidity of the dove, and adorn their lines with many beautiful figures from the manner in which she flies. Sophocles compares the speed with which she cleaves the ethereal clouds to the impetuous rapidity of the whirlwind; and Euripides, the furious impetuosity of the Bacchanals rushing upon Pentheus, to the celerity of her motions. And Kimchi gives it as the reason why the Psalmist prefers the dove to other birds, that, while they become weary with flying, and alight upon a rock or tree to recruit their strength, and are taken, the dove, when she is fatigued, alternately rests one wing and flies with the other, and by this means escapes from the swiftest pursurers. The Orientals knew well how to avail themselves of her impetuous wing on various occasions. It is a curious fact that she was long employed in those countries as a courier, to carry tidings of importance between distant cities. Ælian asserts that Taurosthenes communicated to his father at Ægina, by a carrier pigeon, the news of his success in the Olympic games, on the very same day in which he obtained the prize. The Romans, it appears from Pliny, often employed doves in the same service; for Brutus, during the siege of Mutina, sent letters tied to their feet into the camp of the consuls. This remarkable custom has descended to modern times. Volney informs us that in Turkey the use of carrier pigeons has been laid aside, only for the last thirty or forty years, because the Kurd robbers killed the birds and carried off their dispatches. — *Paxton.*

A lodge in the wilderness—

"Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
Some boundless contiguity of shade.
Where rumor of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more. My ear is pain'd,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd."— *Cowper.*

9—11. (9) **Destroy,** lit. *swallow up*, as did the earth Korah and his followers, Comp. Neh. xvi. 32; or frustrate their counsels. Observe the change in the tone of the psalm from mourning and melancholy to passionate indignation.[c] **divide their tongues,** *lit. slit their tongues.* Evidently alluding to the breaking up of the schemes of the Babel builders.[d] **I have seen,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "Thou beholdest." **violence,** *etc.*, the signs of revolutionary movements. (10) **they go,** *i. e.* my enemies who are plotting against me; like watchmen patrolling in siege against the Psalmist.[e] (11) **Wickedness,** or destruction. "The city is become the home of destruction." "In the city all kinds of party passions have broken loose." **streets,** Heb. broad place, or square; *Polychr.*, "market place."

Evil in the city. — "The tone of sadness and melancholy now gives way to one of hot and passionate indignation;" and the poet sketches the sad scenes which he had witnessed in the city, and the painful experiences through which he had passed. The word which is rendered "streets" and "markets" denotes "the large open spaces at the gates of the oriental cities, where were the markets, the courts of justice, and general places of public concourse." Every phase of life seems to have become depraved. "Wickedness was in the midst" of the city. The whole city in all its parts and at all times was full of wickedness; and the result was distress and grief. Where wickedness abounds, misery will not be wanting. Sin is the fruitful parent of sorrow. It is well that trouble does follow transgression. We wonder not that David's heart was stirred with grief and indignation as he beheld the city so filled

with untiring wickedness and sore anguish. No person of enlightened piety can contemplate the sins and sorrows of a great city without emotions of deep grief and earnest solicitude. — *Hom. Com.*

12—15. For . . me, this personal enmity by a whilom friend is the keenest pang in his cup of suffering. The Psalmist appears here to renew a kind of soliloquy. The person referred to is usually regarded as Ahithophel.[a] (13) **mine equal,** one so honored and esteemed as to be treated like an equal. **guide,** my associate, *R. V.*, "companion." **acquaintance,** better, intimate friend; confidant. (14) **sweet counsel,** or familiar intercourse. **in company,** or in the throng of festal worshipers. (15) **seize upon,** or surprise. **them,** the party led by Ahithophel and Absalom. **quick,** *R. V.*, "alive." **hell,** the grave, sheol,[b] *R. V.*, "pit." **in their dwellings,** *Polychr*, "in their storehouse," *i. e.* in their hearts. "The mournful recollections of past friendships, so cruelly outraged give way to a fierce invocation of vengeance, and the individual disappears behind the whole body of the Psalmist's enemies. It will be noted that he avoids any personal execration of his old friend."

Treacherous friends.—Religion had rendered their intercourse sacred; they had mingled their worship, and communed on heavenly themes. If ever any bonds ought to be held inviolable, religious connections should be. There is a measure of impiety, of a detestable sort, in the deceit which debases the union of men who make professions of godliness. Shall the very altar of God be defiled with hypocrisy? Shall the gatherings of the temple be polluted by the presence of treachery? All this was true of Ahithophel, and in a measure of Judas. His union with the Lord was on the score of faith; they were joined in the holiest of enterprises; he had been sent on the most gracious of errands." — *Spurgeon.*

Severed friendship. —

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted — ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining —
They stood aloft, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between; —
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been. — *Coleridge.*

16—18. (16) **call upon God,** the mode of the Psalmist is here again changed. **Lord,** "Here and *vs.* 22 the name JEHOVAH is significant. It is the covenant-God of revelation to whom he can appeal, and under whose protection he can rest." — *Kirkpatrick.* (17) **Evening,** *etc.*, mentioned first bec. the day began at sunset. The resort of the troubled, anxious soul was frequent prayer.[c] The three chief parts of the day are put as a poetical expression for "the whole day," or "without ceasing." (18) **hath delivered,** *R. V.*, "redeemed," in past times. With the memory Dav. renews his hope. **many with me,** having hostile purposes against me. *R. V.*, "they were many that strove with me."

Prayer (*vs.* 17).— I. The nature of prayer. It is an acknowledgment of the being and providence of God; 2. It re-establishes communion between God and man; 3. It is the grand means by which we obtain our spiritual blessings from God; 4. Only that is real prayer which is presented through Christ. II. The manner in which the Psalmist performed this duty. It was distinguished by — 1. Fervor; 2. Regularity; 3. Frequency. III. The confidence of success which he expresses. It is founded on — 1. His knowledge of God's disposition; 2. His belief of the Divine promise; 3. His experience

minister repiled, "Go home now, and pray, Father, glorify Thyself."

a "It is not open enemies, who might have had cause for it, that are opposed to him, but faithless friends and among them that Ahithophel, of Giloh, the scum of perfidious ingratitude."—*Delitzsch.*

b Ahithophel committed suicide, 2 Sa. xvii. 23. Absalom died a sudden and violent death. 2 Sa. xviii. 14.

Comp. Nu. xvi. 30-33.

"That is a slight pain which is removed by one cry. Rooted griefs, overwhelming sorrows, demand many repetitions. Trouble finds ease in tautology. It is absurd to look for cool, logical sequence in such a heart's cry as this psalm. The psalmist feels that the defection of his false friend is the worst blow of all."—*Exp. Bib.*

"The Psalmist means that he will always pray; he will run a line of prayer right along the day, and track the sun with his petitions."—*Spurgeon.*

c Comp. Da. vi. 10; Lu. vi. 12, xviii. 1; Ac. iii. 1; Ph. iv. 6; 1 Th. v. 17.

"From a singular conformity of practice in persons remote both as to age and place, it appears probable that some idea must have obtained generally, that it was expedient and acceptable to pray three times every day. Such was the practice of David, and also of Daniel, and as a parallel, though, as far as connected with an idolatrous system, a different case, we are informed that 'It is an invariable rule with the

Brahmins to perform their devotions three times every day; at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset.'" (Maurice.) — *Burder.*

"Every day is a thanksgiving day. Every morning a blessing of strength, every evening a bundle of mercies, every night a benediction of peace, for each of God's children! We may not see the angels, or hear the sweep of their wings, but we receive the blessings of their hands." — *Isaac W. Gowan.*

"Exult and praise thy God, who has made and redeemed thee, for to God you owe all those many and inestimable benefits which you daily receive from His merciful bounty, for, even were you a holy angel, your gratitude as such should still be beneath His goodness and infinite grandeur." — *Thomas à Kempis.*

"If, then, I were a nightingale, I would do the part of a nightingale. If I were a swan, I would do like a swan But now I am a rational creature, and I ought to praise God; this is my work. I do it; nor will I desert this part so long as I am allowed to keep it, and I exhort you to join in th· same song." — *Epictetus.*

of past favors. We may be satisfied that God hears us when — (1) We feel access to the throne of grace; (2) When we have direct answers to prayer; (3) When we are cheered with the hope that God will hear. Apply. — *Gamma in* 400 *Sks.*

Prayer. —

Dart up thy soul in groans: thy secret groan
Shall pierce His ear, shall pierce His ear alone.
Dart up thy soul in vows: thy secret vow
Shall find Him out, where heaven alone shall know.
Dart up thy soul in sighs: thy whispering sigh
Shall rouse His ears, and fear no list'ner nigh.
Send up thy groans, thy sighs, thy closet vow:
There's none, there's none shall know, but heaven and thou.
Groans freshed with vows, and vows made salt with tears,
Unscale His eyes, and scale His conquered ears:
Shoot up the bosom shafts of thy desire,
Feathered with faith, and double-forked with fire,
And they will hit: fear not, where heaven bids come,
Heaven's never deaf, but when man's heart is dumb. — *Quarles.*

Regular prayer. — The point to be insisted on is the having some season set apart for prayer, on which nothing shall be suffered to intrude. And what better season can be found than the morning? In the days of the old Roman empire, the gateways of rich and powerful citizens were thronged in the morning with dependents, each bearing his basket, and waiting for the daily gift of food. So it is fitting that our heavenly Father's gate should daily witness our presence, at the opening of the day, awaiting our share of the bread of heaven to nourish us for the day's responsibilities, trials, burdens, and temptations. And what is true of prayer regarded as petition, is equally true of prayer viewed as communion or as worship. It is fitting that the fresh energies of the morning, the clear, unwearied thought, the vigorous perception, the new enthusiasm, should be first called out towards Him. Then we are quicker to take His meaning, and calmer to face the coming issues of the day, and better disposed for that concentration of mind and heart which is indispensable to the effectiveness of prayer. — *M. R. Vincent.* — *Prayer the forerunner of mercy.* — There was once a young man who had begun to pray, and his father knew it. He said to him, "John, you know I am an enemy to religion, and prayer is a thing that never shall be offered in my house." Still the young man continued earnest in supplication. "Well," said the father, one day, in a hot passion, "you must give up either God or me. I solemnly swear that you shall never darken the threshold of my door again, unless you decide that you will give up praying. I give you till to-morrow morning to choose." The night was spent in prayer by the young disciple. He arose in the morning, sad, to be cast away by his friends, but resolute in spirit that, come what might, he would serve his God. The father abruptly accosted him: "Well, what is the answer?" "Father," he said, "I cannot violate my conscience, I cannot forsake my God!" "Leave immediately," said he. And the mother stood there; the father's hard spirit had made hers hard too; and though she might have wept, she concealed her tears. "Leave immediately," said he. Stepping outside the threshold, the young man said, "I wish you would grant me one request before I go; and if you grant me that I will never trouble you again." "Well," said the father, "you shall have anything you like; but mark me, you go after you have had that; you shall never have anything again." "It is," said the son, "that you and my mother would kneel down, and let me pray for you before I go." Well, they could hardly object to it; the young man was on his knees in a moment, and began to pray with such unction and power, with such evident love to their souls, with such true and Divine earnestness, that they both fell flat on the ground, and when the son rose, there they were; and the father said, "You need not go, John; come and stop, come and stop;" and it was not long before not only he, but the whole of them, began to pray, and they were united to a Christian church. — *Spurgeon.*

19—21. (19) **God . . old,** *R. V.*, "God shall hear, and answer them," *etc.*, ref. to the judicial char. of God's government. **Because they,** *R. V.*, "the men who." **no changes,** the word used probably means a change, in the

sense of *succession*, as of garments, of troops relieving guard, servants leaving work, and the like.[a] **therefore they,** *R. V.*, "And who." (20) **He,** *i. e.* Dav.'s treacherous friend, of whom he cannot keep from thinking. **be,** *R. V.*, "mere." **broken,** *R. V.*, "profaned." **covenant,** of friendship. (21) **The words of,** *R. V.*, omits. **were . . than,** *R. V.*, "was smooth as." **butter,** his words flow sweet and smooth like cream. —*Spk. Com.* **war,** lit. *war his heart;* absorbed in hatred.

Flattery and churlishness. — A chameleon once met a porcupine, and complained that he had taken great pains to make friends with everybody; but, strange to say, he had entirely failed, and could not now be sure that he had a friend in the world. "And by what means," said the porcupine, "have you sought to make friends?" "By flattery," said the chameleon. "I have adapted myself to all I met; humored the follies and foibles of every one. In order to make people believe that I liked them, I have imitated their manners, as if I considered them models of perfection. So far have I gone in this, that it has become a habit with me; and now my very skin takes the hue and complexion of the thing that happens to be nearest. Yet all this has been in vain; for everybody calls me a turncoat, and I am generally considered selfish, hypocritical, and base." "And no doubt you deserve all this," said the porcupine. "I have taken a different course; but I must confess that I have as few friends as you. I adopted the rule to resent every injury, and every encroachment upon my dignity. I would allow no one to even touch me without sticking into him one or more of my sharp quills. I determined to take care of number one; and the result has been that, while I have vindicated my rights, I have created a universal dislike. I am called old 'Touch-me-not;' and if I am not as much despised, I am even more disliked than you, Sir Chameleon."

[a] "Change of fortune, *i. e.* those who are always prosperous."—*Calvin.*

"Moral change for the better, *i. e.* amendment."—*Gesenius and Fuerst.*

"Changes from prosperity to adversity."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"Christian! thou knowest thou carriest gunpowder bout thee. Desire them that carry fire to keep at a distance. It is a dangerous crisis when a proud heart meets with flattering lips."—*Flavel.*

22, 23. (32) **burden,** or "portion;" that which is appointed to man to bear. **righteous to be moved,** *Polychr.*, "totter," *i. e.* no final disaster; or *Cam, Bib.*, "moved for ever;" there will be an end to their suffering. (23) **bloody** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "bloodthirsty;" words wh. seem prophetic of the fate of Ahithophel and Absalom.[c] **but,** *i. e.* "but as for me."

God as our care-bearer (*vs.* 22). — I. Let us notice some of the burdens which most commonly afflict mankind. 1. Burdens of the flesh; 2. Of the mind; 3. Of the heart; 4. Of the conscience. II. Consider the encouragement we have to cast our burdens on the Lord. — *J. M. Sherwood.*

Happiness of confiding in God. — There once lived in an old brown cottage a solitary woman. She tended her little garden, and knit and spun for her living. She was known everywhere, from village to village, by the name of "Happy Nancy." She had no money, no family, no relatives, and was half blind, quite lame, and very crooked. There was no comeliness in her, and yet there, in that homely, deformed body, the great God, who loves to bring strength out of weakness, had set His royal seal. "Well, Nancy, singing again?" would the chance visitor say, as he stopped at her door. "Oh yes, I'm for ever at it." "I wish you'd tell me your secret, Nancy. You are all alone, you work hard, you have nothing very pleasant surrounding you; what is the reason you're so happy?" "Perhaps it's because I haven't got anybody but God," replied the good creature, looking upward. "You see, rich folks like you depend upon their families and their houses; they've got to be thinking about their business, of their wives and children; and then they're always mighty afraid of troubles ahead. I ain't got anything to trouble myself about, you see, 'cause I leave all to the Lord. I think, well, if He can keep this great world in such good order, the sun rolling day after day, and the stars shining night after night, and make my garden things come up the same, season after season, He can certainly take care of such a poor thing as I am; and so you see I leave it all to the Lord, and the Lord takes care of me." "Well, but, Nancy, suppose a frost comes after your fruit-trees are all in blossom and your plants out; suppose ——" "But I don't suppose — I never can suppose — I don't want to suppose, except that the Lord will do everything right. That's what makes you people unhappy — you're all the time supposing. Now, why can't you wait till the suppose comes, and then make the best of it?" "Ah, Nancy, its pretty certain you'll get to heaven, while many of us, with all our worldly wisdom, will have to stay out." "There you are — at it again," said Nancy, shaking her head: "always looking out for some black cloud. Why, if I were you, I'd keep the devil at arm's length,

[b] Matt. vi. 25; 1 Pe. v. 7.

[c] Ps. v. 6; xxxvii. 38; Pr. x. 27.

"He is declaring a universal truth. However crushing our loads of duty or of sorrow, we receive strength to carry them with straight backs, if we cast them on Jehovah. The promise is not that He will take away the pressure, but that He will hold us up under it."—*Maclaren.*

"It appears to us that this *vs.* contains the very words of the Psalmist's smooth-tongued enemy. . . If we take them as spoken ironically, they are drawn swords to Dav."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"To all that have a desire to walk with God, prayer is the key to open the day, and the bolt to shut in the night."—*J. Taylor.*

instead of taking him right into my heart. He'll do you a desperate sight of mischief." She was right. We do take the demon of care, of distrust, of melancholy foreboding, of ingratitude, right into our heart. We canker every pleasure with gloomy fear of coming ill. We seldom trust that blessings will enter, or hail them when they come. — *Bib. Ill.*

"Trust Him for a way when there is no way, for light when there is no light, for all things when you have nothing, for joy when there is only sorrow, for life when you are in the midst of death. Thus you will find at last that faith is not only righteousness, but life and joy and peace."—*T. T. Munger.*

Cast thy burden upon the Lord.—

What can it mean? Is it aught to Him
That the nights are long and the days are dim?
Can He be touched by the griefs I bear,
Which sadden the heart and whiten the hair?
Around His throne are eternal calms,
And strong glad music of happy psalms.
And bliss unruffled by any strife.
How can He care for my little life?

And yet I want Him to care for me
While I live in this world where the sorrows be.
When the lights die down from the path I take
When strength is feeble and friends forsake;
When love and music, that once did bless,
Have left me to silence and loneliness,
And my life-song changes to sobbing prayers,
Then my heart cries out for a God who cares.

"It takes considerably more piety to make a man thankful to God for what he has done than prayerfully dependent upon God for what we would like to have him do."—*C. H. Parkhurst.*

Oh, wonderful story of deathless love!
Each child is dear to that heart above.
He fights for me when I cannot fight,
He comforts me in the gloom of night;
He lifts the burden, for He is strong,
He stills the sigh and awakens the song:
The sorrows that bowed me down He bears,
And loves and pardons *because He cares.*

— *Marianne Farningham.*

PSALM THE FIFTY-SIXTH.

author,— David at the time of his exile

Subject, God's word of promise the outcast's hope.

1—4. (1) **man,**[a] **. . up,** like a wild beast pouncing upon his victim. **daily,** *R. V.*, "all the day long." (2) **swallow me,** hungrily pant for me. *Polychr.* "are snatching." **O thou most High,** is prob. not an exclamation. (3) **afraid,** by reason of these watching and proud Philistine enemies. **I will trust,** I, is emphatic; the poor, weak one will betake himself to God for protection. (4) **In God,** *i. e.* by his help. This is the true refrain, or key-note, of the Psalm. **his word,** of promise. **what . . me,** *R. V.*, "what can flesh do unto me?"

Trust in God.— Whensoever we are afraid of any evil, we are still to put our trust in God. I. What is it to put our trust in God? 1. To keep our hearts from desponding or sinking down under any fears. 2. To comfort ourselves in God. 3. To expect deliverance from him. II. What is there in God we ought to put our trust in? 1. In his promises. 2. In his properties. His power, wisdom, justice, mercy, all-sufficiency. III. Why should we in all our fears put our trust in God? 1. Because there is none else can secure us from our fears. Whereas, 2. There are no fears but God can secure us from them, either by removing the thing feared, or by subduing the fear of the thing.—*Bp. Beveridge.*

Faith.— There is nothing like faith to help at a pinch; faith dissolves doubts, as the sun drives away the mists. And that you may not be put out, know your time of believing is always. There are times when some graces may be out of use, but there is no time wherein faith can be said to be so. Wherefore, faith must be always in exercise. Faith is the eye, is the mouth, is the hand; and one of these is of use all day long. Faith is to see, to receive, to work, or to eat; and a Christian should be seeing, or receiving, or working, or feeding all day long. Let it rain, let it blow, let it thunder, let it lightning, a Christian must still believe.— *J. Bunyan.*

[a] "Heb. *enosh*, wh. has always the sense of weakness and fragility, and is placed in antithesis to Elohim."—*Spk. Com.*

"The customary devotion of prayer twice a day is as the falling of the early and the late dew; but if you will increase and flourish in the works of grace empty the great clouds sometimes, and let them fall into a full shower of prayer; choose out the seasons in your own discretion, when prayer shall overflow like Jordan in the time of harvest"— *J. Taylor.*

5—9. (5) **wrest my words,** distort, or pervert them with design to get accusation against him.[a] (6) **hide themselves,** set an ambush, lie in wait. **mark my steps,** as hunters track game; (Ps. xlix. 5). **when they wait,** *R. V.*, "even as they have waited;" *i. e.* watched for an opportunity. (7) **Shall . . iniquity?** or on account of such iniquity is there escape to them? The original is very obscure. *Polychr.*, "according to their malice weigh out to them," *i. e.* pay them what they deserve. (8) **tellest,** dost keep an exact account of the days and adventures of my fugitive life. **my wanderings,** in that period of homelessness and exile.[b] **tears . . bottle,** a bold but expressive metaphor. "As the traveler carefully preserves water, milk, or wine in leather bottles for a journey, so Dav. trusts that God keeps in memory every tear which he sheds." (9) **turn back,** baffled and checked.

Fear dispelled by faith (*vss.* 8, 9).—I. Learn from this experience of the Psalmist not to go over and over your troubles alone. II. Learn to treat more with God and less with man. III. Let us take encouragement from a consideration of the Divine sympathy. IV. While we live among enemies let us remember that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. A word to the ungodly:—God knows your wanderings also. — *R. Cecil.*

Tear-bottles (*vs.* 8). —The custom of putting tears into the *ampulla* or *urnæ lacrymales*, so well known among the Romans, seems to have been more anciently in use in Asia, and particularly among the Hebrews. These lachrymal urns were of different materials, some of glass, some of earth, and of various forms and shapes. One went about to each person in the company at the height of his grief with a piece of cotton in his hand, with which he carefully collects the falling tears, and which he then squeezes into the bottle, preserving them with the greatest care. This was no difficult matter; for Homer says the tears of Telemachus, when he heard of his father, dropped on the ground. They were placed on the sepulchres of the deceased as a memorial of the affection and sorrow of their surviving relations and friends. It will be difficult to account, on any other supposition, for the following expressions of the Psalmist: "Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle." If this view be admitted, the meaning will be: "Let my distress, and the tears I shed in consequence of it, be ever before Thee." — *Paxton.*

10—13. (10) **In God,** *see vs.* 4. (11) **afraid,** *see vs.* 3. *R. V.*, makes this a question. "What . . me?" (12) **vows,**[c] made on former occasions of deliverance. **praises,** *R. V.*, "thank-offerings," in addition to the votive offerings. (13) **soul,**[d] or life. **wilt . . deliver,** *R. V.*, "hast thou not delivered." **feet from falling,** into surrounding dangers. **light of the living,** *i. e.* as a living man; that henceforth I may be free from trouble, and walk before God in the clear daylight, no longer dwelling in darkness, but in "the light of life." —*Pul. Com.*

Vows to be performed (*vs.* 12). — I. What vows are upon you? 1. There may be some of a personal and particular nature, into which we cannot inquire; 2. There are some common to us all, made at our baptism, confirmation, at the Lord's table. II. The obligations which are thereby entailed upon us: the least we can do is to render praises — 1. In a way of devout acknowledgment; 2. In a way of total surrender of ourselves to God. — *C. Simeon.*

The power of God. —The Thracians had a very striking emblem expressive of the almighty power of God. It was a sun, with three beams — one shining upon a sea of ice, and dissolving it; another upon a rock, and melting it; and a third upon a dead man, and putting life into him. How admirably does all this harmonize with the Gospel, which an inspired Apostle calls "*the power of God* unto salvation, to every one that believes it!" It melts the hardest heart into uniform obedience to the Divine will, and raises those who were dead in trespasses and sins to a life of righteousness. — "*Pray without ceasing.*" — A sailor coming to London, where he had never been before, visited St. Paul's. When carelessly passing, he heard the words, "Pray without ceasing," uttered by the minister. One fine evening, some seven years later, he was walking the deck, with his feelings soothed by the pleasing aspect of nature, when all of a sudden darted on his mind the words, "Pray without ceasing!" "What words can these be?" he exclaimed: "I think I have heard them before: where could it be?" After a pause — "Oh, it was at St. Paul's in London; the minister read them from the Bible. What! and do the Scriptures say, 'Pray without ceasing?'" The poor fellow now found the lightning of conviction flash on his conscience, the thunders of the law shake

[a] "This description is singularly applicable to David's position among the envious nobles at the court of Achish." —*Spk. Com.*

[b] 1 Sa. xxvi. 20.

"The lachrymatories used in Greece and Rome are, I believe, unknown to the Hindoos. A person in distress, as he weeps, says, 'Ah! Lord, take care of these tears; let them not run in vain.' 'Alas! my husband, why beat me? my tears are known to God.'"—*Roberts.*

"The tears that His children shed and give to Him to keep cannot be tears of rebellious or unmeasured weeping, and will be given back one day to those who shed them, converted into refreshment,

'Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.'"
— *Exp. Bib.*

[c] Ps. lxvi. 13, 14; Ec. v. 4, 5.

[d] Ps. cxvi. 8

"The respect or relation which lies between God, considered as an unchangeable Being, and one that is humble, and supplicates, and endeavors to qualify himself for mercy, cannot be the same with that which lies between the same unchangeable God, and one that is obstinate and will not supplicate or endeavor to qualify himself. That is, the same thing or being cannot respect opposite and contradictory characters in the same manner. It is not, in short, that by our supplication we can pretend to produce any alteration in the Deity, but by an alteration in ourselves, we may alter the relation and respect lying between Him and us." — *Wollaston*, Phil. iv. 6.

"I have so much business to do today that I shall not be able to get through it with less than three hour's prayer." — *Martin Luther.*

his heart. Now he began, for the first time, to pray; but praying was not all! "Oh," said he "if I had a Bible, or some good book!" He rummaged his chest, when, in a corner, he espied a Bible which his anxious mother had, twenty years before, placed in his chest, but which till now he had never opened. He snatched it up, put it to his breast, then read, wept, prayed; he believed, and became a new man. — *Whitecross.*

PSALM THE FIFTY-SEVENTH.

author, — David

Time of his exile; a cave psalm.

A psalm of confidence in God during a time of trouble.

Historical connection, 1 Sa. xxii. 1.

Al-taschith, see Ps. lviii., lix., lxxv.; "destroy thou not," initial words of a song, to the tune of wh. this was to be sung.

1—3. (1) **my soul,** self or life. **trusteth,** better, takes refuge. He seems to take refuge in a cave, he really takes refuge in God. **shadow . . wings,** *see* Ps. xvii. 8.[a] **calamities,** *lit.* destructions; hostilities. (2) **most high,** *R. V.*, "Most High." **performeth,** or surely completes what He begins.[b] *Polychr*, "who requites me." (3) **from . . up,** more prop. rendered *R. V.*, "When he that would swallow me up reproacheth." **mercy and truth,** "it is in virtue of the loving kindness which is the foundation of His covenant, and of the faithfulness which is an inalienable attribute of His nature, that God will send help to His servant."

Him that would swallow me up. — If I were to take you to my house, and say that I had an exquisitely fat man, and wished you to join me in eating him, your indignation could be restrained by nothing. You would pronounce me to be crazy. There is not in New York a man so mean that he would not put down a man who should propose to have a banquet off from a fellow man, cutting steaks out of him, and eating them. And that is nothing but feasting on the human body, while they all will sit down, and take a man's soul, and look for the tenderloins, and invite their neighbors in to partake of the little titbits. They will take a man's honor and name, and broil them over the coals of their indignation, and fill the whole room with the aroma thereof, and give their neighbor a piece, and watch him, and wink as he tastes it. You all eat men up. . . . You eat the souls, the finest elements of men. You are more than glad if you can whisper a word that is derogatory to a neighbor, or his wife, or his daughter. . . . The morsel is too exquisite to be lost. Here is a person's hope for this world and the world to come, and you have it on your fork, and you cannot refrain from tasting it, and give it to some one else to taste. You are cannibals, eating men's honor and name and rejoicing in it — and that, too, when you do not always know that the things charged against them are true; when in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the probabilities are that they are not true. — *H. W. Beecher.*

a Ps. xxxvi. 7; lxiii. 7; De. xxxii. 11; Ru. ii. 12; Matt. xxiii. 37.

b Ps. cxxxviii. 8; Phi. i. 6.

4—6. (4) **lions,** Ps. xxii. 21. **I lie,** *etc.*, the idea is: though my life be in great danger from blood-thirsty men, I will lie down and sleep secure under the protection of God. **teeth are spears,**[c] Pr. xxx. 14; Ps. lv. 21. **tongue . . sword,** by reason of blasphemy. (5) **exalted,** *i. e.*, "*manifest* Thy glory and Thy majesty in the exercise of universal dominion."[d] (6) **prepared a net,** Ps. vii. 15, 16; ix. 15. **fallen themselves,** allusion may possibly be to Saul's adventure in cave of Engedi.[e]

My soul is among lions. — How came I there? If for God's sake, then I may remember. — 1. So was my Lord in the wilderness; 2. The lions are chained; 3. Their howling is all they can do; 4. I shall come out of their den alive, unhurt, honored; 5. The Lion of Judah is with me; 6. I shall soon be among the angels. — *Spurgeon.*

Arrows. — The arrows were usually made of light wood, with a head of brass or iron, which was commonly barbed. Sometimes they were armed with two, three, or four hooks. The heads of arrows were sometimes dipped in poison. Horace mentions the poisoned arrows of the ancient Moors. They were used by many other nations in different parts of the world; and if we believe the reports of modern travelers, these cruel weapons are not yet laid aside by some barbarous tribes. The negroes in the countries of Bornou and Soudan fight with poisoned arrows; the arrow is short, and made of iron; the smallest scratch with it causes the body to swell, and is infallibly mortal, unless counteracted by an antidote known among the natives. Everywhere, the poison used for this inhuman purpose was of the deadliest kind; and the slightest wound was followed by almost instant death. From this statement it will appear that arrows were by no means contemptible instruments of destruction, although they are not to be compared with the tremendous inventions of modern warfare. We are not, therefore, to be surprised that so

c "The mingled figures of wild beasts and weapons of war heighten the picture of danger." —*Fausset.*

d "The prayer of God's exaltation is at the same time a prayer for his own deliverance, but it is — may we not say? — a less selfish and a nobler prayer."—*Perowne.*

e 1 Sa. xxiv.

The praying men of the Fourteenth Massachusetts Regiment in the civil war, while stationed in Fort Albany, took an agent of the Christian Commission to see their praying-place. They showed him the bomb-proof of the fort, which afforded them an undisturbed and

many striking allusions to the arrow, and the trodden bow, occur in the loftier strains of the inspired writers. The bitter words of the wicked are called "their arrows;" "their teeth are spears and arrows;" and the man that beareth false witness against his neighbor is "a sharp arrow."—*Paxton.*

safe retreat. Every place of prayer is a bomb-proof to its occupants.

7—11. (7) **fixed,** steadfast in the confidence of faith.[a] The Heb. word denotes the firm and ready attitude of his mind. **sing . . praise,** use both voice and instrument to give expression to trust. *R. V.*, "sing, yea, I will sing praises." (8) **my glory,** *i. e.* my soul, as the noblest part of man, Ps. xxx. 12.[b] **psaltery,** *etc.*, or harp and cithern. **awake early,** "my song shall itself awake the morning."[c] (9) **sing,** *R. V.*, "sing praises." "The Psalmist's joy is too great to be confined within any narrower limits than those of the entire earth." (10) **unto the heavens,** Ps. xxxvi. 5. **clouds,** *R. V.*, "skies." (11) **exalted,** *vs.* 5.

a Ps. li. 10.

b Ac. ii. 26.

c "With the music of stringed instruments and with song he will awake the not yet risen dawn, the sun still slumbering in its chamber."—*Delitzsch.*

The fixed heart (*vs.* 7). — I. On what was David's heart fixed? 1. On God and His service; 2. On a diligent study of the lively oracles of God; 3. On the duty of prayer; 4. On furthering the interests of Zion. II. Why should we do likewise? 1. Because indecision degrades the character; 2. There is no solid reason why the heart should not be fixed on God; 3. Spiritual religion as developed in the Gospel requires it; 4. Without it we shall never accomplish anything truly great and good in God's service; 5. It will be a source of no small comfort in old age and death. — *Jonathan Brace.*

"Who can tell the glory of the summit of the mountain of the mercy of God which reaches to the heavens, whose base is refulgent with glory!"—*R. A. Griffin.*

A steadfast heart. — The ideal perfect Christian life would be a life in contact with God along its whole line. It would be everywhere and always in communion with God. God's will and God's love would fill and move in every inlet and curve of the life, as the ocean in its gulfs and creeks and round its promontories; and upon this high plane, the general tenor of the life would be more even. There would be no struggles for the vision of God's face when His face should be constantly unveiled. There would be fewer, or, perhaps, no seasons of special communion with God, when the whole life should be one long communing with Him. The seer on Patmos, in his vision of the heavenly Jerusalem, saw no temple therein. There was no need of the special forms and occasions of worship where the spirit lived forever in the immediate presence of Christ. — *M. R. Vincent.*

"The incense of the temple was to be beaten to typify the breaking of the heart in prayer."—*T. Watson.*

PSALM THE FIFTY-EIGHTH.

author, — unknown; time, Josiah's reign

1—5. (1) **Do,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "Do ye indeed in silence speak righteousness." The Psalmist is expostulating with the judges who are dumb when they ought to speak. — *Polychr. Cheyne,* "Speak ye indeed what is right ye gods? Do ye judge men without partiality? The judges addressed as 'gods' bec. they rep. God, the supreme Judge." (2) **Yea, in heart,** *etc.*, better, "Nay;" inwardly these judges were continually contriving some scheme of injustice against the weak, the poor, the widow. **weigh,** *R. V.*, "weigh out." Spoken sarcastically; instead of weighing in the balances of justice, they weigh out and distribute their own violence.[d] (3) **as soon as . . born,** giving earlier signs of their depravity.[e] (4) **poison,** *etc.*, De xxxii, 33.[f] **adder,** or asp. The "adder" was supposed to be "deaf," on account of its being very difficult to charm. It was thought obstinately to set itself against the charmer, and, as it were, stop its ears against him.— *Pul. Com.* So the judges refuse to listen to God's prophets. (5) **charmers,** whisperers, referring to the inarticulate murmurs of the serpent-charmers. **never so wisely,** or however well versed he may be in his art.

A bold protest against unrighteous judges.

d "Ye pretend indeed to hold the balance of justice, and nicely to weigh out to each his just award, but violence is the weight with wh. ye adjust the scales."—*Perowne.*

e Eph. ii. 3; iv. 18.

"The Psalmist, however, does not here declare the general doctrine of original or birth sin; he speaks simply of the desperately wicked."—*Spk. Com.*

Serpent-charming. — One day a rattlesnake entered our encampment. Among us was a Canadian who could play the flute, and who, to divert us, marched against the serpent with his new species of weapon. On the approach of his enemy, the haughty reptile curls himself into a spiral line, flattens his head, inflates his cheeks, contracts his lips, displays his envenomed fangs and his bold throat; his tongue flows like two flames of fire; his eyes are burning coals; his body, swollen with rage, rises and falls like the bellows of a forge; his dilated skin assumes a dull and scaly appearance: and his tail, whence proceeds the death-announcing sound, vibrates with such rapidity as to resemble a light vapor. The Canadian begins to play upon his flute — the serpent starts with surprise, and draws back his head. In proportion as he is

f Job xx. 14-16; Is. xi. 8.

"The accusation of Psalmist sets in sinister light the flagrant contradiction between the spirit in which these men exercised their office and the source from which they derived it, and thus sharpens the reproach of the question."—*Exp. Bib.*

struck with the magic notes, his eyes lose their fierceness, the oscillations of his tail become slower, and the sounds which it makes become weaker and gradually die away. Less perpendicular upon their spiral line, the rings of the charmed serpent are by degrees expanded, and sink one after another on the ground, in concentric circles. The shades of azure green, white and gold, recover their brightness on his quivering skin, and slightly turning his head he remains motionless, in the attitude of attention and pleasure. At this moment the Canadian advances a few steps, producing with the flute sweet and simple notes. The serpent inclining his variegated neck, opens a passage with his head through the high grass, and begins to creep after the musician; stopping when he stops, and beginning to follow him again as soon as he advances forward. In this manner he was led out of the camp, attended by a great number of spectators, both savages and Europeans, who could scarcely believe their eyes, which had witnessed this effect of harmony.—*Chateaubriand.*

a Job vi. 15.

"When he shooteth his arrows let them be blunted."—*Revised Eng. Bib.*

b "Evidently this is nothing more than a poetical hyperbole, and need not be explained therefore as a popular error, or a mistake in natural history."—*Perowne.*

The popular impression (snail melting) is used to illustrate a great truth; the wicked may prosper for a time, but the day will come when they will melt away, when there shall not be, as in the snail, a provision made for their renewing opportunities.

6—8. (6) **Break,** *etc.*, the expression suits rather the wild beast than the serpent; the "lions" of the second clause of the verse. (7) **continually,** *R. V.*, "apace," as some torrent, swollen for a time, and then utterly gone: as winter torrents do."[a] **when . . pieces,** render "When he shoots out his arrows, let them be as if they were headless:" as if they had been "lopped at the points." (8) **As,** *R. V.*, "Let them be as." **snail . . melteth,** *Polychr.* "Like the snail that dissolves as it crawls;" bec. the slug leaves a slimy trail the idea is taken that it dissolves as it goes along; the idea is manifestly an incorrect one.[b] **that . . seen,** *Polychr.* "which the sun has never seen," *i. e.* vanish as if they had never existed.

Imprecatory passages in the Psalms (*vss.* 6–8)—I shall attempt to show—I. That granting that David really expressed these unkind feelings, we are here by no means warranted to copy his example. II. To prove that he never at all expressed them. III. Point out the real meaning of the passages in question. IV. Conclude with a few short practical observations.—*H. A. Herbert.*

The wicked.—Rottenness smells sooner or later too strong to be concealed. There is a time when the leprosy cannot be hidden. At last the old house can no longer be propped up, and falls about the tenant's ears: so there is a limit to a man's self-gratulation; he is found out amid general scorn, and can no longer keep up the farce which he played so well. If this happen not in this life, the hand of death will let light in upon the coveted character, and expose the sinner to shame and contempt.—*Spurgeon.*—*The wicked* are all, so to speak, human abortions; they are and for ever remain defective beings, who have not accomplished the great purpose of their existence. Heaven is the one end for which man is created, and he who falls short of it does not attain the purpose of his being; he is an eternal abortion.—*O. Prescott Hiller.*

c Pr. i. 31; Is. iii. 10.

"The wicked are compared to a heap of thorns, some green, some dried up, lighted under a caldron, and then swept away by a sudden storm . . . before they have heated the pots."—*Spk. Com.*

"Ere your caldrons know the thorn, His winds shall sweep away greenwood and brands that glow."—*Keble.*

"The Arabs kindle a fire in a large stone pitcher, and when it is hot they mix the meal in water, as we do to

9—11. (9) **Before,** *etc.*, *read:* "Before your pots can feel the thorns [the fire of the thorn-bush] while the flesh is yet raw, He shall sweep them away with a whirlwind in wrath." It is another figure for the swift destruction of the wicked and their schemes, taken from the experience of travel in the desert. The travelers have lighted a fire of dry thorns or brambles under their cooking pots. It blazes up rapidly, but even so, before the pots are heated and the meat in them cooked, a sudden whirlwind sweeps away the fire and undoes their work. The fire represents the malicious will of the evil-doers, the pots with the meat, the plans which they are devising: but let them work never so rapidly, the whirlwind of Divine judgment will annihilate their schemes.—*Cam. Bib.* (10) **wash . . wicked,** such terrible vengeance was common in ancient times, but is painful for us even to contemplate. (11) **a man,** *R. V.*, "men." **reward,** or fruit.[c] **he is a God,** *R. V.*, "there is a God."

A reward for the righteous (*vs.* 11).—I. What are the discriminating features which distinguish the righteous? They are known—1. By the genuineness and spirituality of their faith; 2. By the rectitude and purity of their principles; 3. By the consistency of their conduct. II. What is that reward to which the righteous are entitled? 1. It is a gracious and voluntary one; 2. It is distant and remote; 3. It is suitable and proportionate; 4. It is glorious and eternal. III. What evidences have we for crediting the assertion in the text? 1. From the character of God; 2. From the positive declarations of Scripture; 3. From the general consent of mankind. Apply—(1) Try to

be of the righteous; (2) Be reconciled to afflictions, *etc.*: (3) Let the infidel be silenced; (4) What will become of the wicked? — *Beta in* 400 *Sks.*

Fall of Robespierre. — Robespierre had possessed the courage to place over the altars of the churches, which had been transformed into temples dedicated to Reason, the inscription, "There is a Supreme Being" (*un Etre Suprême*); and he was soon, in his own person, to experience that he had not been mistaken. Betrayed by his own companions, accused of wishing to raise himself to the rank of a dictator, to be a new Cæsar to the new republic, Robespierre stood as a prisoner before that very tribunal of terror himself had called into existence. He was busy signing sentences of death at the town hall, when a number of Jacobins and national guards forced the door of the Hôtel de Ville, and arrested him. He tried to blow out his brains with a pistol, but the attempt was unsuccessful, and only ended in the shattering of one of his jaw-bones. Bleeding profusely, he was dragged before Fouquier Tainville, to hear his doom, and then to be delivered into the hands of the executioner. In observance of the customary forms, however, he was first taken to the Tuileries, where the Committee for Public Safety were sitting in the bedroom of Marie Antoinette. To this room Robespierre was dragged, and insultingly thrown on a great table that stood in the centre. The day before he had been sitting at this table, with power over the life and property of every Frenchman; but yesterday he had been signing sentences of death there. They lay still scattered about: and these papers were now the only bandage the suffering man had to staunch the blood which profusely flowed from his wound. It was strange to see how they greedily drank up the blood of the man who had signed them. A *sansculotte* who stood by was moved with compassion, and gave Robespierre a rag from an old tri-colored flag, that he might cover the wounds in his face. As the ex-dictator lay groaning amidst the blood-stained sentences, an old national guard raised his arm, and pointing to the fearful spectacle, exclaimed, "Robespierre was right; there is a Supreme Being!" — *Life of Queen Hortense.*

PSALM THE FIFTY-NINTH.

author, — David since his exile

Prayer for help against treacherous enemies.

Prob. historical connection, 1 Sa. xix. 11-18.

1—5. (1) **defend me,** *lit. lift me up above.*[a] (2) **bloody men,** blood-thirsty, who purposed to take his life. (3) **lie in wait,** secret plots have long been going on. **mighty,** or *shameless ones.* **are gathered,** *Heb.* "assemble," preparing now for an open attack. **not . . sin,** without my transgression; apart from any occasion in my sin. (4) **run,** *etc.*, "both words denote the prompt and officious servility of hirelings." **awake,** *i. e.*, arouse thee in my defense, as Ps. vii. 6. (5) **God of hosts,** "the first title implies that He has the power, the second that He is under the obligation to punish the 'nations' for their offenses." — *Kirkpatrick.* 1 Sa. i. 3. **awake,** *R. V.*, "arise." **heathen,** or nations: "the prayer for a judgment upon personal enemies is expanded into a prayer for a judgment upon all the enemies of Israel: and in that general judgment the treacherous Israelites who are iniquitously plotting against the Psalmist's life will meet their due reward." — *Cam. Bib.*

The activity of the evil a rebuke for the good. — I. Their activity, "run." II. Unanimity — "*they* run." III. Their care — "prepare themselves." IV. Their readiness — "without my fault." — *Spurgeon.*

Treachery. — Suppose we were always and at all places armed and provided both against the assaults of hostility and the mines of treachery, it will yet be but an uncomfortable life to be ever in alarms. Though we were compassed round with fire to defend us from wild beasts, the lodging would be unpleasant, because we must always be obliged to watch that fire, and to fear no less the defects of our guard than the diligence of our enemy. — *Cowley* — *David's prayer.* — They were all round the house with the warrant of authority, and a force equal to the carrying of it out. He was to be taken dead or alive, well or ill, and carried to the slaughter. No prowess could avail him to break the cordon of armed men, neither could any eloquence stay the hand of his bloody persecutor. He was taken like a bird in a net, and no friend was near to set him free. Unlike the famous starling, he did not cry. "I can't get out." but his faith uttered quite another note. Unbelief would have suggested that prayer was a waste of breath, but not so thought the good man, for he makes it his sole resort. He cries for deliverance and leaves ways and means with his God. — *Spurgeon.*

[a] Ps. xviii. 48.

"A metaphor borrowed fr. an attacking host, wh., getting a firm footing on the walls of a beleaguered city, is ready to rush in over them, or through them, as already broken, into the city."—*Hengstenberg.*

make paste, and daub it with the hollow of their hands upon the outside of the pitcher, and this soft pappy dough spreads and is baked in an instant; the heat of the pitcher having dried up all its moisture, the bread comes off in small thin slices, like one of our wafers." — (D'Arvieux.)—*Burder.*

"It is the Being that is the precious thing. Being is the mother to all little Doings, as well as the grown-up deeds, and the mighty heroic Sacrifice; and these little Doings, like the good children of the house, make the bliss of it."—*George Macdonald.*

"What is prayer but the breathing forth of that grace which is breathed into the soul by the Holy Spirit? When God breathed into man the breath of life, he became a living soul; so when God breathes into the creature the breath of spiritual life it becomes a praying soul."-*W. Gurnall.*

6—10. (6) **return at evening,** the Psalmist likens his foes to the wild scavenger dogs, which come out in the evening, and prowl about the streets of Eastern cities. **at evening,** means *every evening.*[a] (7) **belch,** pour out as from a spring. **swords,** *etc.*, they threaten him with death, or boast that "he will soon be got rid of." **doth hear?** "They think themselves irresponsible for their words. No one will hear or know what they say."—*Pul. Com.* (8) **laugh,** at the absurdity of the plots of the wicked. Ps. ii. 4. (9) **his strength,** *R. V.*, "O my strength, I will wait upon thee."[b] **defence,** or high place. (10) **shall prevent me,** *Cam. Bib.*, "shall come to meet me;" in ans. to *vs.* 4. **my desire,** these words should be omitted, as not in the original. *See my enemies,* means look calmly upon them. *Polychr.* "Let me behold the end of my foes."

Dogs in the East.—The streets are so narrow and rugged that it is almost impossible to go along without a light; and, moreover, one is in danger from the hungry and savage dogs that infest the streets. During the day they act as scavengers, and, whether walking about or lying, are quiet enough; but when the night comes on they arouse themselves and assume quite another character. They go about in all the ferocity of their nature, barking and howling continually, and ready to pounce upon any one if without a light. The Psalmist could hardly select a more graphic comparison of the importance of revealed truth than a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path (Ps. cxix. 105). I shall never forget one night in Jerusalem, in returning from the English consul's house to my lodgings at the other end of the city, when, in a lonely dark spot, surrounded by these ferocious brutes, my light nearly went out. I never felt more anxious in my life. The incident gave me a perfect idea of the description which the Psalmist gives of his enemies, "They return at evening," *etc.*—*Mills.*—*Who doth hear?*—They are free from all restraint, they fear no God in heaven, and the government on earth is with them. When men have none to call them to account, there is no accounting for what they will do. He who neither fears God nor regards man sets out upon errands of oppression with gusto, and uses language concerning it of the most atrociously cruel sort. David must have been in a singular plight when he could hear the foul talk and hideous braggings of Saul's black guards around the house. After the style in which a cavalier would have cursed a Puritan, or Claverhouse a Covenanter, the Saulites swore at the upstarts whom the king's majesty had sent them to arrest. David called them dogs, and no doubt a pretty pack they were, a cursed cursing company of curs. When they said, "Who doth hear?" God was listening, and this David knew, and therefore took courage.—*Spurgeon.*

11—15. (11) **Slay them not,** by a sudden destruction; rather deal with them so as to make them a warning. **scatter them,**[c] make them wanderers. **by thy power,** *Cheyne,* "by thine army," *i. e.* the heavenly host of invisible angels. **our shield,** Ps. iii. 3. (12) **For . . lips,** *Polychr.*, "A sin of their mouth is every word on their lips." **pride,** prob. manifesting itself in insolence and taunts. (13) **Consume,** *exterminate:* make an end of them. Apparently inconsistent with *vs.* 11; but burning indignation does not study logical inconsistency. **that . . be,** *R. V.*, "that they be no more." (14) **and,** *R. V.*, omits. **at evening,** *etc.*, as *vs.* 6. (15) **Let . . wander,** *R. V.*, "They shall wander." **for meat,** wh. they cannot find.[d] **grudge,** "tarry all night," remain, eager for food and expecting it.

Dog.—Is it the influence of Christianity extending its law of kindness to the lower animals, or something in the nature of northern dogs and northern men, which makes dogs among us Anglo-Saxons, and all the associations connected with them, so entirely different from what they are in the East? Imagine the effigy of an Oriental saint reposing with its feet on a dog, like that of William the Silent, the heroic Prince of Orange, on the faithful spaniel which rescued his life in the night attack of the Spanish troops, and like so many a sculptured knight of mediæval times! The very presence of such an image would, in Oriental eyes, be the greatest desceration an enemy could inflict on a sacred edifice. And in the Bible how exceedingly contemptuous, and how inapplicable to English dogs, are the terms employed in describing canine habits.—*From Wanderings Over Bible, Lands and Seas.*

16, 17. (16) **But I,** the pronoun is emphatic. **in the morning,** *i. e.* every fresh morning. Comp. *vs.* 6. **trouble,** *R. V.*, "distress." **defense,**[e] or high tower, as *vs.* 9. (17) **O my strength,** *etc.*, as *vs.* 9.

[a] "Saul's emissaries returned in the evening, prowl about the gates, and go to and fro in the city, prob in order to occupy every egress, and cut off David's flight."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] "David here ascends the watch-tower of faith, whence he can look down calmly on the violent assaults of his foes, fully assured that they can do nothing but by the permission of God."—*Calvin.*

"How weak soever the believer finds himself, and how powerful soever he perceives his enemy to be, it is all one to him, he hath no more to do but to put faith on work and to wait till God works."—*David Dickson.*

[c] Je. xxx. 11; Eze. xii. 15, 16.

[d] "Now David mocks at their wicked attempts, and says that after they have wearied themselves all day long, they shall fail of their object."—*Calvin.*

"Prayer is the channel into which godly sorrow pours forth itself, and runs down in brinish tears, while the Christian is accusing himself of, and judging himself for, his abominations with deep shame."—*W. Gurnall*

[e] "His inaccessible stronghold, his unapproachable asylum."—*Delitzsch.*

The heavenly chorister.— I. His song is sweet in contrast with the revilings of others — "but I." II. It treats of subjects which terrify others — "Thy power." III. It grows louder on tender themes — "Thy mercy." IV. It has its choice seasons — "in the morning." V. It is tuned by experience — "for Thou hast." VI. It is all to God's glory — "*Thy* power," "*Thy* mercy," "*Thou* hast."— *Spurgeon.*

Cure for despondency. — Doth sorrow and anguish cast down a man's heart, and may he complain that his soul is disquieted within him? Let him fetch an herb out of the Lord's garden called hearts-ease: an inward joy which the Holy Ghost worketh in him. This is heaven upon earth: this may well be called hearts-ease, it is a holy, a happy herb to comfort the spirits. Those which we call penal evils are either past, present, or to come. Here is hearts-ease for all these. Miseries past are solaced, because God hath turned them to our good. Miseries present find mitigation; and the infinite comfort that is with us, within us, sweetens the bitterness that is without us. Miseries future are to us contingent, they are uncertain, but our strength is certain — God: "I know whom I have trusted." — *T. Adams.*

Ps. xviii. 1, 2.

"'To Thee will I harp.' Glad praise is ever the close of the vigils of a faithful, patient heart. The deliverance won by waiting and trust should be celebrated by praise."

"Patient waiting on God, and importunate calling upon God, are not inconsistent."

PSALM THE SIXTIETH.

author,— unknown, vss. 5-9 (see also Ps. cviii.) belong to the time of David; the rest to that of the Maccabees

1—5. (1) **cast us off,**[a] ref. seems to be to some signal failure and defeat. **scattered.** *Polychr.*, "dispersed us." Poss. indic. a defeat of one of the army divisions.[b] **displeased,** *R. V.*, "been angry." **turn thyself,** *R. V.*, "restore" us again. (2) **earth,** better *land*, as if with an earthquake. **broken,** *R. V.*, "rent." (3) **hard things,** or hardship. **wine of astonishment,**[c] *R. V.*, "the wine of staggering." "The cup of God's wrath is a common metaphor for His judgments. It is like some drugged potion, which robs the drinker of reason, and makes him reel helplessly along, the mockery of all beholders."— *Cam. Bib.* (4) **banner,** raised the standard as a signal for war. **displayed,** *etc. Polychr.*, "whereto they may flee from the bow." *R. V., marg.* "That they may take themselves to flight fr. the bow." *i. e.* God has deliberately sent forth Israel to defeat. (5) **thy beloved,** same as those that *fear Thee.*

God's banner over his people (*vs.* 4).— I. What banners God has given to us— 1. In the elevation of His Son; 2. In the records of His Word; 3. In the experience of His saints. II. For what end are they displayed to us? 1. To confirm our confidence in Him; 2. To assure us of victory over our enemies. Apply:—(1) Fear God; (2) Trust in Him.— *C. Simeon.*

The great conflict.— The people of God fight for the banishment of ignorance and the promotion of knowledge; for the overthrow of error and the enthronement of truth; for the destruction of evil and the diffusion of goodness; for the utter defeat of the father of lies, and the complete, universal, and perpetual triumph of the King of truth. Here is a holy war — a war against all injustice, falsehood, error, oppression, evil; and in favor of righteousness, truth, kindness, holiness.— *W. Jones.*—*The 60th Psalm* is memorable in the history of the Secession church of Scotland. When Ebenezer Erskine, in 1740, had to leave his church, he took his place with an immense multitude below the battlements of Stirling castle, and sang the first five verses of this psalm. Looking down on the field where the heroic Wallace gained a decisive victory for his country, the words have in them the ring of battle.— *Ker.*

Aram-Naharaim, Syria of the two rivers, or Mesopotamia.

Zobah, prob. bet. the Euphrates and the Orontes.

a Ps. xliv. 9.

b Comp. case of Ai. Jos. vii.

c Is. li. 17, 22; Je. xxv. 15.

If you want your spiritual life to be more healthy and vigorous you must just come boldly to the throne of grace. The secret of weakness is little faith and little prayer.

6—8. (6) **spoken,** promised, sworn. **in his holiness,** and the promise cannot fail. His holiness includes the whole essential nature of God's moral character. **divide . . mete out,** *i. e.* I will distribute Canaan among my people — both the western region, of which Shechem was the chief town (1 Ki. xii. 25), and the eastern, which contained the valley of Succoth. God is rep. as a victorious warrior portioning the land to His chosen people. (7) **Gilead . . Manasseh . . Ephraim . . Judah,** represent the security of all David's territory. **strength,** *R. V.*, "defense." **lawgiver,** *R. V.*, "sceptre." (8) **washpot,** vessel used for washing the feet; sign of disgrace. **cast . . shoe,** "Edom is regarded as the slave to whom the master throws his shoe to clean."[d] **triumph,** or "Unto me, O Philistia, shout loudly." *Cheyne*, "over Philistia shall I break into shouting."[e]

Names of countries.— It is a good rule to refer the names of countries to their actual physical aspects. "Are not the terms Edom and the Red Sea to

d "The king regards Moab as a vessel fit only for the meanest uses, — he casts the shoes, which he takes off in order to wash his feet, to Edom as a mere slave." — *Spk. Com.*

e "If the text of *vs.* 8*c* is correct, Philistia is addressed with bitter sarcasm, and bidden to repeat her

ancient shouts of triumph over Israel now, if she can." *Exp. Bib.*

By far the greater part of our petitions don't press for immediate answers. They wind round our Father in heaven the silken thread of communion, not to draw down blessings, but to bind us to God.

be referred to the red sandy soil? Would Albion ever have gained the name if it had not been for her white cliffs? Was Greenland not the glad welcome given by the hardy Icelanders to that green oasis? And is not the White Sea so called from its proximity to the regions of ice and snow?" — *Notes and Queries.* — *Succoth.* — What says David? "God hath spoken in His holiness, hath made an express and inviolable promise, that I shall be ruler of His people Israel. I will rejoice, therefore; away with every alarming apprehension; I will even exult and triumph. Nay more; I will divide Sichem, and mete out the valley of Succoth; I will look upon the whole land as my own, I will divide it, and dispose of it, just as if it was already in my possession." Why should not you and I also say — "God hath spoken in His holiness; hath expressly and solemnly declared the promise of an all-sufficient Saviour is to you?" We will rejoice, therefore; confiding in this most faithful word, we will bid adieu to all disquieting fears, and make our boast of this glorious Redeemer. — *Hervey.*

a Eph. vi. 19: Phi. iv. 13.

Be full of prayer whenever you attempt to preach, and go from your closet to your pulpit with the inward groanings of the Spirit pressing for utterance at your lips.

"No heights of grace are too elevated for us, the Lord being our leader, but we must beware of high things attempted in self-reliance. Excelsior is well enough as a cry, but we must look to the highest of all for guidance."

9—12. (9) **Who will,** or "Oh for one to conduct me." **strong city,** the wonderful rock-built city of Petra.—*Hengstenberg.* (10) **hadst cast us off,** *vs.* 1. *R. V.*, "Hast not thou, O God, cast us off? And thou goest not forth, O God, with one host." God has for the moment deserted Israel, as no one can lead Israel to victory. (11) **help,** *marg. salvation.* **from trouble,** *R. V.*, "against the adversary." (12) **do valiantly,**[a] Ps xviii. 16; Nu. xxiv. 18.

The soulwinner's question. — I. The object of attack; the strong city of man's heart, barricaded by depravity, ignorance, prejudice, custom, *etc.* II. Our main design. To penetrate, to reach the citadel for Jesus. III. Our great inquiry. Eloquence, learning, wit, none of these can force the gate, but there is One who can. — *Spurgeon.*

Faith and sight. — So long as sight and reason find footing in matters, there is no place for faith and hope; the abundance of human helps puts not grace to proof, but the strength of faith is in the absence of them all. A man is stronger when he goeth on his feet alone, than when he standeth by a grip in his infancy, or leaneth on a staff in his old age: the two feet of faith and hope serve us best when we are fixed on the Rock of Sion alone. — *William Struther. — The friendship of Christ.* — "What do you do without a mother to tell your troubles?" asked a child who had a mother of one who had none. "Mother told me whom to go to before she died," answered the little orphan. "I go to the Lord Jesus; He was mother's Friend, and He is mine." "Jesus Christ is in the sky. He is a way off, and He has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It is not likely He can stop to mind you." "I do not know anything about that," said the orphan. "All I know, He says He will; and that's enough for me."

author,— unknown; time, prob., reign of Josiah

PSALM THE SIXTY-FIRST.

Thanksgiving of an exiled king on his restoration.

Neginah, upon a single stringed instrument.

1—4. (1) **cry,** *i. e.* plaintive cry. (2) **end of the earth,** this expression natural in the mouth of an exile. To a Jew Jerusalem was the centre of the earth. **cry,** *R. V.*, "call." **overwhelmed,** fainteth.[b] "A Jewish community, living at a great distance from Judea, believes itself to be endangered by the neighboring heathen, and longs to be transported to Jerusalem (*vs.* 4)." — *Polychr.* **higher than I,** better, "Lead me upon a rock that is too high for me," so a place of perfect security, which without Thee I cannot reach. (3) **hast been,** in times of former trouble. **shelter,** *R. V.*, "refuge." (4) **abide . . ever,** the resolve of a restored one, who, by exile, has been led to value his religious privileges; or perhaps a prayer: "Let me abide. . . . Let me take refuge, *etc.*"

b Pr. Book Vers. "is in heaviness."

Ps. xiii. 6.

Laborers on an English railway lately found a thrush's nest under a rail, with the hen peacefully sitting on four eggs, undisturbed by the thunder of passing trains.

The heart's cry and desire. — I. A recognition of a place of safety; then, II. We have this place brought before us, as abundantly sufficient, when personal weakness has been realized. III. This place cannot be attained without the help of another's hand. IV. The character of this refuge, and the position of a believer when availing himself of it: the place of refuge is "a rock," and the position of the believer is "upon a rock."— *P. B. Power.*

Send me to the rock. — There is a mint of meaning in this brief prayer. Along the iron-bound coast of our northern shores, lives are lost because the rocks are inaccessible to the shipwrecked mariner. A clergyman of one of the coast villages has with immense labor cut steps up from the beach to a

large chamber, which he has excavated in the chalk cliffs; here many mariners have been saved; they have climbed the rock, which had else been too high for them, and they have escaped. We have heard of late, however, that the steps have been worn away by the storms, and that poor sailors have perished miserably within sight of the refuge which they could not reach, for it was too high for them: it is therefore proposed to drive in iron stanchions and to hang up chain ladders that shipwrecked mariners may reach the chambers in the rock. The illustration is self-interpreting. — *Spurgeon.* — *Gratitude.* — It is inexpressibly important to keep the mind up to a full realization of all that God has done in one's personal history. When a man's own history goes for nothing with him, he may be regarded as having sunk below the level of a man; but if he will watch how God has developed his life, how wondrously He has turned it, how gently He has withdrawn it into 'shelter' when the storm was coming, how graciously He has placed it in the 'strong tower' when sounds of war shook the air, he will be moved from thankfulness to eloquence, and will say to those who doubtfully look on — "In God is my salvation and my glory."

"'When my heart is overwhelmed.' Troubles are of various kinds; some are provoking, some are gnawing, some are perplexing, and some are overwhelming; but whatever form they assume, they are troubles, and are part of the wear and tear of life."—*P. B. Power.*

5—8. (5) **the heritage** the possession. "Possession" is the term regularly used of Israel's "occupation" of the land of Canaan. — *Polychr.* "Thou hast granted the inheritance to these," *etc.* (6) **prolong,** *lit. days to the king's days wilt Thou add.*[a] **as,** "shall be as." "The writer, lifted up above himself and above sublunary things, abiding, as he does, in the spiritual tabernacle under the shelter of God's wings prays for long continuance of days for the true King, the ideal King, Messiah, of whom David and his house are types." — *Pul. Com.* (7) **abide,** *sit* on his throne, or judgment-seat. **mercy,** *R. V.*, "loving kindness." **which,** *R. V.*, "that they."

[a] The royal house of David is prob. meant; with distant reference to Messiah.

The heritage of the people of God (*vs.* 5). — I. The text implies that there are those who fear God's name. 1. All do not fear God; 2. State the nature of true fear of God. II. Those who do fear God have an inheritance. 1. Supplies in the time of need; 2. Consolation in the time of trouble; 3. Victory in the time of conflict; 4. Peace of conscience. — *Studies for Pulpit.*

Abiding. — His restoration to his home, to his throne, and to the privileges of the sanctuary, he may have regarded as an emblem of his ultimate reception into a peaceful heaven, and his mind may have glanced rapidly from the one to the other. On earth, after his restoration, he would have no fear that he would be banished again; in heaven, of which such a restoration might be regarded as an emblem, there would be no change, no exile. — *Barnes.* — *The saints' inheritance.* — Come, believers, come to the top of Pisgah, and take a prospect of the Holy Land. Seest thou the land that is afar off? behold, that is the land of promise, where, after our weary pilgrimage, we shall have an everlasting glorious rest. There the flourishing vines are ever laden with full clusters of the richest grapes. Oh, how happy then shall we be, when, instead of the waters of the wilderness, we shall come to drink of the wines of Canaan. There the rivers do continually flow with milk and honey — here we are compassed with enemies, but there we shall have perfect tranquillity, an eternal security, an unchangeable felicity. Oh, that we had the wings of a dove, that we might fly from this high mountain to that Holy Land. — *Willes.*

Prayer is the cry of those that cannot do and do not know, unto One who does know and who can do.

The fountain is unsealed, but you only sip a few drops. The bread of life is before you, yet you only eat a few crumbs. The treasury of heaven is open, but you only take a few pence. O! man of little faith, wherefore do you doubt? Awake to know your privileges; awake and sleep no longer.

"True righteousness is found only in the dweller with God, and they who anchor themselves in Him, as a tree in the earth, are both stayed on and fed from Him."—*A. McLaren.*

PSALM THE SIXTY-SECOND.

author, — prob. David; time, Absalom's rebellion

A Psalm of confidence in God.

Jeduthun, see Ps. xxxix.

1—4. (1) **Truly,** or *only.* **waiteth,** *etc.*, or my soul is silently waiting unto God.[b] Ps. xxxiii. 20. (2) **rock,** Ps. xviii. 2. **defence,** *R. V.*, "high tower," an asylum in time of danger. (3) **imagine mischief,** assault; rush with violence; *R. V.*, "set upon," rage tumultuously. **ye . . slain,** *R. V.*, "that ye may slay him." **bowing wall,** bulged out, and ready to fall. *R. V.*, Like a bowing wall, like a tottering fence. **tottering fence,** or hedge. (4) **excellency,** rank, and dignity suitable to a king. **with their mouth,** *lit.* with *his* mouth, one arch-traitor being in Dav.'s thought.

[b] "'Only unto God my soul is silence,' *i. e.* is hushed into perfect resignation before Him."—*Perowne.*

A tottering wall. — In consequence of heavy rains and floods, and unsound foundations, it is very common to see walls much out of perpendicular, and some of them so much so that it might be thought scarcely possible for them to stand. "Poor old Raman is very ill, I hear." "Yes, the wall is bowing." "Begone, thou low caste; thou art a *kutte-chivver*," *i. e.* a ruined wall. "By

"The natural mind is ever prone to reason, when we ought to believe; to be at work, when we ought to be quiet; to go our own way, when we ought steadily to walk on in God's ways, however trying to nature." *Geo. Müller.*

"All grace comes from the God of grace; not only the first seed of grace, but its growth and increment; and God usually sheds His grace in a way of communion with His people. Now, by prayer the Christian is led into most intimate communion with God; and from communion follows communication."—*Gurnall.*

"What is a consecrated heart? It is a heart which, in every respect, rests entirely content with God alone, which finds no relish, nor tastes any delight in anything in which he is not." — *Haeftenus.*

a "This is the only truly worthy representation of God. Power without love is brutality, and love without power is weakness. Power is the strong foundation of love, and love is the beauty and crown of power."—*Perowne.*

Ps. cxlv. 6, 7.

"Build not thy nest on any tree of earth, seeing God hath sold the forest to Death; but rather soar upwards to the sure and immutable refuge in the Clefts of the Rock."—*Rutherford.*

the oppression of the head man the people of that village are like a ruined wall."—*Roberts.*

5—8. (5) **wait thou,** *Polychr.*, "silently submit." (6) **rock,** *vs.* 2. **be moved,** *comp. greatly moved* of *vs.* 2. (7) **In God,** it depends upon God to defend the honor of His saints. **refuge . . God,** *Polychr.* "my Refuge is God!" (8) **all times,** whether prosperous or disastrous. **pour . . heart,** give free flow to your anxieties.

Waiting. — God brings men to His consummations *only by his own road.* Whatever *apparent* prosperity they may reach by other roads, no matter how long, is not of God's giving; and therefore, no matter how tedious God's way is, or how tortuous, or how long God keeps them walking in it, they are to keep *His* way if they would win His good. And this is often a severe trial of faith. It is as when one has been traveling for long hours over a rough road, amid storm and mist, with night drawing on, looking, as he gains the top of every successive hill, for the spires of the city to which he is going, and seeing instead only a new stretch of dreary road, and a new hill to be climbed — he is tempted to think his guide has lost the way, and to take matters into his own hands. To the man who waits on God it is indispensable that he trust his guide. — *M. R. Vincent.*— *Confidence of a child.* — In a public school in New York on an alarm of fire, a terrible panic ensued, and many of the scholars were injured by rushing to the doors, and one of the teachers, a young lady, jumped from a window. Among the hundreds of children with whom the building was crowded was one girl, who, through all the frightful scene, maintained composure. The color, indeed, forsook her cheek, her lip quivered, the tears stood in her eyes, but she did not move. After order had been restored, and all her companions had been brought back to their places, the question was asked her, how she came to sit so still when everybody else was in such a fright. "My father," said she, "is a fireman, and he told me if there was an alarm of fire in the school, I must just sit still."

9—12. (9) **low degree,** in the social scale. **high degree,** in the same social scale. **to . . balance,** *R. V.*, "in the balances they will go up; they are," *etc.* **altogether,** the sum of their weights is lighter than nothingness. (10) **in oppression,** or be not ye overcome by the temptation to unjust acquisitions. (11) **twice,** a source of strength against the temptation to follow might rather than right, or these two things have I heard, *God is powerful, God is merciful.* (12) **for,** *etc.*, the Psalmist understands that both power and mercy are shown in God's strict and righteous dealings.[a]

God's power (*vs.* –1). — I. God's power acts with infinite ease. II. God's power is never exhausted by exertion. III. God's power is regulated by His other perfections. IV. God's power is only limited by His will. — *W. W. Whythe.*

The spendthrift turned miser (*vs.* 10). — A young man who ran through his patrimony, spending it in profligacy, was at length reduced to utter want and despair. He rushed out of his house intending to put an end to his life, and stopped on arriving at an eminence overlooking what were once his estates. He sat down, ruminated for a time, and rose with a determination that he would recover them. He returned to the streets, saw a load of coals which had been shot out of a cart on to the pavement before a house, offered to carry them in, and was employed. He thus earned a few pence, requested some meat and drink as a gratuity, which was given him, and the pennies were laid by. Pursuing this menial labor, he earned and saved more pennies; accumulated sufficient to enable him to purchase some cattle, the value of which he understood, and these he sold to advantage. He now pursued money with a step as steady as time, and an appetite as keen as death, advancing by degrees into larger and larger transactions, until at length he became rich. The result was that he more than recovered his possessions, and died an inveterate miser. When he was buried, mere earth went to earth. With a nobler spirit, the same determination might have enabled such a man to be a benefactor to others as well as to himself. But the life and its end in this case were alike sordid. — *Smiles.*

PSALM THE SIXTY-THIRD.

1—3. (1) **my God,** the term employed is *El,* the strong God, so the refuge of one who feels weak.[a] **early,**[b] the Heb. fig. for *earnestly.* **my flesh,** or body ; *see* Ps. lxxxiv. 2. **longeth,** a peculiar word, "faints with desire," pineth. **thirsty,** *R. V.*, "*weary.*" "These words are certainly metaphorical, not literal : it is the 'water of life' for which he thirsts ; the spiritual refreshment with which God revives the fainting soul."—*Cam. Bib.* (2) **To see,**[c] the *A. V.* has transposed the clauses of this *vs.* All the best commentators trans. with *Cheyne,* "In such wise do I long for Thee, in the sanctuary to behold Thy power and glory." (3) **better than life,** God's favor and grace are properly esteemed to be more important than prolonged life. The Psalmist prayed that he might see God's power, but it was the revelation of loving kindness wh. led him to sing praises.

Sunshine and storm. — When my blood flows like wine, when all is ease and prosperity, when the sky is blue, and birds sing, and flowers blossom, and my life is an anthem moving in time and tune, then this world's joy and affection suffice. But when a change comes, when I am weary and disappointed, when the skies lower into the sombre night, when there is no song of bird, and the perfume of flowers is but their dying breath, when all is sunsetting and autumn, then I yearn for Him who sits with the summer of love in His soul, and feel that all earthly affection is but a glow-worm light, compared to that which blazes with such effulgence in the heart of God."—*Beecher.*— *Early at worship* (*vs.* 1)— It is said that the Jogers, or pilgrim saints of Ceylon, will take their station at the foot of the cypress, and there remain night and day, watching and watchful, heedless of sunshine or of storms, impelled by the tradition that the leaves of the ancient tree, falling only at distant and uncertain intervals, can, if gathered and eaten, restore the wasting form to all the energies of youth. A plant of nobler growth has been sown in our world, the leaves of which never fade, nor are its fruits consumed. The latter are for meat and the former are for medicine ; and out of the heavenly sanctuary issue the waters which maintain their freshness. Not at long and unknown intervals do they descend. Regularly and ever weekly are they within our reach. Shall we think it an unwelcome task to tarry a few moments beneath the consecrated shade, while we await the first shaking of the blessing-laden boughs? — *Miss Henderson.*

4—8. (4) **Thus,** *R. V.*, "so" comp. note on *vs.* 2 ; with the old earnestness and affection.[d] **lift . . hands,** the usual Eastern attitude of prayer. Ps. xxviii. 2. (5) **My . . satisfied,** *Polychr.*, "Therewith is my soul sated." **marrow and fatness,** fig. allusion to the sacrifice of the tabernacle worship.[e] The Psalmist has an inward spiritual joy in God, though separated from His worship. **joyful lips,** or lips of jubilee.[f] (7) **therefore,** *R. V.*, "and." **shadow,** *etc,* Ps. xvii. 8. (8) **followeth hard,** in earnest seeking.[g] *Polychr.*, "clings close."

Following after God (*vs.* 8). — I. The state of mind here depicted. It includes — 1. A persuasion that God alone is the portion of the soul ; 2. A choice of God as that portion ; 3. Ardent desires after nearness to God ; 4. Earnest use of the means which have been appointed to bring us near. II. The reasons why this state of mind should be cultivated. 1. It forms a safeguard against temptation ; 2. It supplies a perpetual stimulus to devotion ; 3. It imparts an impulse to do good to ourselves and others ; 4. It turns every religious service into a source of pleasure. — *G. Brooks.*

Remember — and meditate. — The meditation of anything hath more sweetness in it than bare remembrance. The memory is the chest to lay up a truth, but meditation is the palate to feed upon it. The memory is like the ark in which the manna was laid up ; meditation is like Israel's eating of the manna. When David began to meditate upon God, it was sweet to him as marrow. There is as much difference between a truth remembered and a truth meditated, as between a cordial in the glass and a cordial drunk down. — *John Wells.*

9—11. (9) **lower parts,** or *Sheol,*[h] (10) **fall . . sword,** *R. V.*, "be given over to." "Like Savonarola, and like the Scotch Covenanters, the Psalmist has no sense of any incongruity between deeply spiritual musings and vehement

author,—unknown ; probably same as Ps. lxi.

A psalm of longing after God.

"With the singing of this Ps. the worship of the early church was accustomed to begin."—*W. E. Barton.*

a "The spirit and soul of the whole Book of Psalms is contracted into this Psalm."—*St. Chrysostom.*

b "The noun, wh. signifies 'the dawn, the early morning,' and the verb 'to seek,' are both from the same root, meaning 'to break in,' and so to seek."—*Perowne.*

c "The two words 'strength' and 'glory' are associated with the ark of the covenant. 1 Sa. iv. 21; Ps lxxviii. 61."—*Kay.*

d "As I adored Thee in the sanctuary, and as I seek Thee now (*vs.* 1), even so will I bless Thee throughout my life, which is only precious so far as it has the loving kindness of God shining upon it."—*Spk. Com.*

e "Reference is immediately to the sacrificial meal wh. accompanied the thank-offering, here used as an image of thanksgiving."—*J. H. Michaelis.*

f Ps. xlii. 8 ; cxix. 55 ; cxlix. 5 ; Song Sol. iii. 1.

g "The strength of this clinging of the soul to God is tried and increased by absence of the external accessories of public worship."—*Wordsworth.*

h "What may be called the human

force of character remains even amid thoughts whose impassioned earnestness is not of this world, and whose strain of intensely exhausted spiritual fervor is such as but very few can reach."—*Perowne.*

"Meditation is prayer in bullion, prayer in the ore—soon melted and run into holy desires. The laden cloud soon drops into rain; the piece charged soon goes off when fire is put to it. A meditating soul is in *proxima potentia* to prayer."—*William Gurnall.*

It is certain that the nearer we come to heaven or to a meetness for glory, the more we are impressed with the value and privilege of prayer.

author,—unknown

denunciations of his enemies."—*Cheyne.* **foxes,** or jackals, which feed on dead bodies. (11) **the king,** the connection is unintelligible unless the king is identified with the Psalmist, whose enemies are destroyed. **by him,** *i. e.* God. **mouth . . stopped,** "those who 'speak lies are those who rebel against God and His king, deluding men by false promises to join an undertaking which is false in its principles and aim."

Liar's prayer answered (*vs.* 11).— A certain poor widow, who lived in Galway, had a little cabin and a plot of potato ground, for which she paid three pounds a year. She had with difficulty collected enough money to pay her half year's rent. She took her money to the bank, and got a thirty-shilling note in exchange for it. She gave this note to a neighbor, whom I shall call Brien, and asked him to pay her rent at the same time that he paid his own, and thus save her a long walk to the agent's office. This Brien promised to do. Some time afterwards a driver came from the agent, and asked the widow for her rent. She told him that she had sent it, and when Brien was applied to, he denied all that the widow had said. The widow could not raise the money to pay her rent a second time: and the agent told her that if she did not he must turn her out of her cabin. At last she took proceedings against Brien, in the hope of obliging him to give back her property. Before the magistrate he denied receiving the money; and when cross-questioned, he exclaimed: "I never did, I never did receive any money from the woman. May I drop down dead this minute, if ever I got any money from her!" That moment he fell dead. In the pocket of his coat was found a note bearing the marks which had been described by the widow.—*W. C. Wilson.*

PSALM THE SIXTY-FOURTH.

A prayer for deliverance fr. cunning and malicious enemies, dating from the persecution of Manasseh.

1—6. (1) **in my prayer,** *R. V.*, "in my *complaint.*"[a] **fear,** including, of course, the danger that produced the fear. (2) **secret counsel,** *etc.*, *Cheyne*, "the conspiracy of the ungodly." **insurrection,** throng; noisy, tumultuous assembly; contrast bet. secret machinations and open attack. (3) **whet,** or sharpen. **bend,** *etc.*, or, have aimed their arrow, *lit. tread* their bow.[b] **bitter,** venomous. (4) **fear not,** God who is on the side of the upright. (5) **encourage,** take every means to secure their object. **commune . . privily,** striving to secure secrecy for their plots.[c] **see them,** *Polychr.*, "who, they think, sees us?" (6) **search,** *etc.*,[d] "the Psalmist hears them exulting in the secrecy of their plans, in the depth and subtlety of their thoughts." *Cheyne.*—"They think our acts of injustice, [and say] 'We have accomplished a well thought out thing,' and the inward part of each one [is unsearchable], and the heart [of every one] is deep."

Omniscience ignored (*vs.* 5).—I. It is a fact that this notion has great influence upon the conduct of man. II. It is a fact that this notion is utterly untruthful and delusive. III. It is a fact that God has often in human experiences shown the delusiveness of this notion, and that the time is fixed for the complete demolition of its delusiveness. 1. Character is often seen through by man; 2. Retribution often follows men's deeds in the present world; 3. The future state will show that God saw.—*Analyst.*

Bitter words.— We saw in the Museum at Venice an instrument with which one of the old Italian tyrants was accustomed to shoot poisoned needles at the objects of his wanton malignity. We thought of gossips, backbiters, and secret slanderers, and wished that their mischievous devices might come to a speedy end. Their weapons of inuendo, shrug, and whisper, appear to be as insignificant as needles; but the venom which they instil is deadly to many a reputation.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

7—10. (7) **shoot . . arrow,**[e] comp. *vss* 3, 4. (8) **own tongue,** it is best to render, "And they are made to stumble, their own tongue being against them." The conseq. of their own slanders. **all . . away,** "all that gaze upon them shall shake the head."—*Jennings and Lowe.* (9) **wisely consider,** *Polychr.*, "acknowledge," *i. e.* understand that it is God's operation. Job xxxiv. 26, 27. (10) **glad,** Ps. xxxii. 11.

The tongue.— "The tongue is a little member," saith the apostle James, and therefore a light member; yet it falls heavy, as heavy as lead. A man were better to have his house fall upon him, than that, in this sense, his tongue should fall upon him. Some have been pressed to death because they would

a Ps. lv. 1, 2.

b "The allusion is to the mode of bending a bow by treading on it, here, and in Ps. lviii. 7, transferred to the arrows."—*Fausset.*

c Pr. i. 11.

d Trans. "They devise iniquities. They accomplish a cunning devise; and each man's inward part and heart is deep."—*Revised Eng. Bible.*

e "'And God shooteth at them an arrow suddenly; their wounds are there,' *i. e.* they are already wounded, the wounds are instantaneous."—*Spk. Com.*

Comp. Pr. xviii. 7. "The bitterness of

not speak, but stood mute before the judge; but more have been pressed to death by their sinful freedom, or rather licentiousness in speaking; this hath brought them to judgment, and cast them in judgment. A strange thing, that the fall of a man's tongue should oppress his body and whole estate: yet so it is, the weight of a man's tongue falling upon him crushes him to powder. — *Joseph Caryl.* — *Words* are but wind, is the common saying, but they are such wind as will either blow the soul to its haven of rest, if holy, wholesome, savory, spiritual, and tending to edification, or else sink it into the Dead Sea and bottomless gulf of eternal misery, if idle, profane, frothy and unprofitable.— *Edward Reyner.*

PSALM THE SIXTY-FIFTH.

author,— Isaiah, or, unknown: date, prob. period of Sennacherib's invasion

Praise for a bountiful harvest for the feast of first fruits.

1, 2. (1) **waiteth,** or is silent.[a] *Polychr.* "befits." "To Thee silent resignation is praise."[b] **Sion,** De. iv. 48. **vow,** when there was any special outpouring of praise in the temple, there would almost always be a performance of vows. Both depended on some deliverance or favor having been granted. — *Pul. Com.* (2) **flesh,** all human beings.[c] The answers to prayer of which Israel is abundantly conscious fill the Psalmist with a longing that all mankind may have recourse to the same divine Friend. — *Cheyne.*

The glorious certainty of the fact that God hears prayer. — By hearing prayer is meant in Scripture taking account of our requests and answering them (1 John v. 14, 15). This involves all that is most glorious in God's revealed attributes. His infinite knowledge, which not the most timid or rapid desire, or speechless lifting up of any heart, escapes. His wisdom to discern, whether, when, how, to grant our requests. Foreknowledge — for long preparation may have been needful, though the prayer be uttered and granted in a moment. Righteousness, to grant no petition, however fervent, which it would not be right to grant. Love — to take fatherly interest in our childish ways, small needs, and often ignorant and impatient desires; and to care for our best welfare. And almighty power — to carry out all that wisdom, righteousness, and love direct, and to make "all things work together," *etc.* (Rom. viii. 28). The certainty that God hears prayer rests on His faithfulness and the promises which fill the Bible; on the commands which lay on us the duty as well as confer the privilege of prayer; on the examples, still more abundant in Scripture than these commands and promises of prayer answered (including our Saviour's own example); on the daily experience of God's church. If any truth in the scope of human knowledge rests on a firm foundation of experience it is this. — *Pul. Com.*

3—7. (3) **Iniquities,** "manifold guilt." *Heb.* words, matters, or instances of iniquity, suggesting a long roll of sins, wh. crowd the memory of the Psalmist. **purge them away,**[d] "make atonement for:" *lit. cover them out of sight.* (4) **Blessed,** happy is he; *i. e.* the house of Israel. **of thy holy temple,** *Polychr.*, the holiness of Thy temple."[e] (5) **By terrible,**[f] *etc.*, *Cheyne,* "fearful-glorious" bec. they affright the ungodly, but cause the godly to sing praises. **wilt thou,** or dost thou; the tense indicates continuous action. **confidence,** *i. e.* the object of confidence. **afar . . sea,** *Heb. sea of distant ones;* the dwellers on distant coasts and islands. (6) **mountains,** the actual hills are fixed by Divine creative power. (7) **seas . . people,**[g] "He controls alike the turbulent elements of nature, and the tumultuous hosts of the nations which they symbolize." — *Kirkpatrick.* **noise,** *R. V.*, "roaring."

Consolation in God (*vs.* 3). — Let us notice — I. His complaint. 1. What are we to understand by the expression? 2. Who is there amongst us that has not reason to adopt the same language in reference to his own soul? II. His consolation. 1. From the free grace and mercy of God; 2. From the sufficiency of the means ordained by God. Apply: — (1) Acquaint yourselves with your own ways that you may be humbled; (2) And with God, that you may be at peace. — *Simeon.*

Nearness to God is the foundation of a creature's happiness. This doctrine appears in full evidence, while we consider the three chief ingredients of true felicity, *viz.*, the contemplation of the noblest object, to satisfy all the powers of the understanding: the love of the supreme good, to answer the utmost propensities of the will, and the sweet and everlasting sensation and assurance of the love of an Almighty Friend, who will free us from all the evils

controversy has perhaps been a greater hindrance to truth than the assaults of atheism. Wherever this Marah flows — in the Church, the home, the social circle, the nation — it poisons life."—*Pul. Com.*

[a] "Praise is fitly shown to Thee by a holy silence, more expressive than words. The silence implies a soul filled with thoughts too big for utterance; these at last untie the tongue; and the psalm wh. follows is their expression."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] "What is intended is that submission or resignation to God, wh. gives up its cause to God, and allows Him to act on its behalf."—*Delitzsch.*

[c] "God can no more divest Himself of His attribute of hearing prayer than of being."— *Calvin.*

[d] "*Thou* is emphatic. 'We are powerless to rid ourselves of our iniquities. Thou alone canst cover them and condone them.'"— *Jennings and Lowe.*

[e] Ps. xxxvi. 8; Je. xxxi. 12, 14.

[f] De. x. 21; 2 Sa. vii. 23; Ps. cvi. 22; cxlv. 6.

[g] Ps. xlvi.

"Christian joy that does not bear the stamp of this very day and date is a Silurian deposit, an evangeli-

cal relic, piety fossilized.!" — *C. H. Parkhurst.*

which our nature can fear, and confer upon us all the good which a wise and innocent creature can desire. Thus all the capacities of man are employed in their highest and sweetest exercises and enjoyments. — *Isaac Watts.*

8—10. (8) **tokens,** signs in nature of the Div. presence. **outgoings,** *etc.*, *Polychr.* "the ends of the East and the West," denoting the whole world;[a] "places where morning and evening have their birth."[b] (9) **wateredst it,** *lit. thou has made it plentiful.* Or, *saturated it*, reference being to the refreshing effects of rain. **river of God,** trans. "The stream of God is full of water," omitting **with.** So the Arabs still call *the rain.* Rain is spoken of as a brook or channel, with reference to the irrigation of the land by means of such. **so provided,** *R. V.*, "prepared the earth," *i. e.* by the gracious rains. (10) **Thou,** *etc.*, man raises ridges, *etc.*, but Thou alone refreshest, and quickenest the life. **settlest,** term well describing the influence of genial rains, *Polychr.* "make its clods even!"

Prayer for harvest. — This beautiful psalm, first of grace, then of nature, inverting the order of Ps. xix., seems to have taken early possession of the heart of the Christian Church. There is a prayer which has come down to us from the Church of Alexandria, alluded to by Origen, first half of the third century, in which its language is largely used, and applied to the land of Egypt: "Send rain out of thy treasures upon those places which stand in need of it. Renew and make glad the face of the earth by its descent that it may bring forth and rejoice in the rain-drops. Raise the waters of the river to their just height; renew and make glad the face of the earth by its ascent; water the furrows and increase their produce. Bless, O Lord, and crown the year with the riches of thy goodness, for the sake of the poor, the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger." — *Ker.*

Works of God.—

Wonderful indeed are all His works.
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
Had in remembrance always with delight:
But what created mind can comprehend
Their number, or the wisdom infinite
That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
I saw when at His word the formless mass,
The world's material mold, came to a heap;
Confusion heard His voice, and wild uproar
Stood ruled, stood vast infinitude confined;
Till at His second bidding darkness fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung;
Swift to their several quarters hasted then
The cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire;
And this ethereal quintessence of heaven
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
That roll'd orbicular, and turned to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move;
Each had his place appointed, each his course;
The rest in circuit walls this universe.— *Milton.*

11—13. (11) **crownest,** a bountiful harvest may well be spoken of as the "crown of the year." **thy paths,** *Heb. tracks of chariot-wheels;*[c] "allusion perh. to an unusually copious fall of the 'latter rain,' looked for as a special blessing." (12) **wilderness,** or *steppe:* patches of verdure in the uncultivated country used for pasturage. **little hills,** *R. V.*, omits "little;" summits of verdant hills. (13) **covered over,** so actually hidden by the rich harvest they bear. **they shout,** man's action being poetically applied to inanimate nature.[d]

Spring. — Only look at the people's faces, as they meet one another by the way, some fine morning in the first burst of spring! How full of good-humor they are, how warmly they salute, how disposed they seem to be more generous and charitable than usual! You may explain it physiologically, I am quite aware; but then, it is not less God coming to you, in and through physiological laws and processes, with an opportunity of improvement, with a tide to bear and lift you, if taken at the flood, toward a permanently better, a permanently sweeter and more gracious spirit. It is a Divine means of

a Comp Arab expression, "The two Orients," to denote east and west.

b "Briefly *vss.* 5-8 may be summed up thus: the whole wide world, its mountains and its seas, and all the dwellers in the world from one end of it to the other, are in the hand of God, wait upon Him, and He makes all to rejoice." —*Perowne.*

"God's grace fructifies through Israel to all. How clearly the Psalmist had grasped the truth that God had limited the knowledge of Himself to one spot of earth in order to its universal diffusion! The light is focussed and set in a tower that it may shine out over sea and storm."

"He that makes but one step up a stair, though he be not much nearer to the top of the house, yet he has stepped from the ground, and is delivered from the foulness and dampness of that. So, in this first step of prayer—O Lord, be merciful unto me—though a man be not established in heaven, yet he has stepped from the world and the miserable comforters thereof."—*Donne.*

c De xxxiii. 26; Ps. xviii. 10; Is. lxvi. 15.

d "Nothing can be more beautiful, or more truly poetical, than the figure by wh. the valleys waving with corn are said themselves to shout and sing."—*Perowne.*

"The seasons will keep their own true time,
You can hurry nor furrow, nor sod;

grace. What you have to do is, just to seize the vernal feeling that has risen in you, and cherish and go forth with it: namely, by starting from the height of it, under the impulse of it, with new resolves and endeavors to *cultivate* the genial and generous temper; and by seeking to put it at once, before it fades, into some corresponding deed. Now, while it is upon you, go and *give* something to somebody's need; go and *do* something for somebody's good. — *Tipple.—The footsteps of God*, when He visits the land with rain, create fertility. It was said of the Tartar hordes, that grass grew no more where their horses' feet had trodden; so, on the contrary, it may be said that the march of Jehovah, the Fertilizer, may be traced by the abundance which He creates. For spiritual harvests we must look to Him, for He alone can give "times of refreshing" and feasts of Pentecost. — *Spurgeon.*

It's honest labor and steadfast thrift
That alone are blessed by God."
—*Alfred Austin.*

"People in passing fields or gardens, after a fine rain, say, 'Ah! how these fields and trees are laughing today.' 'Yes, you may well laugh; this is a fine time for you.' 'How nicely these flowers are laughing together.'"—*Roberts.*

PSALM THE SIXTY-SIXTH.

author and date, same as Ps. lxv. and lxvii.

Subject, celebration of God's great deeds on behalf of His people.

1—4. (1) **Make . . noise,** *Cheyne*, "Shout ye merrily." **ye lands,** all parts of the earth. (2) **Sing . . name,** *Cam. Bib.*, "Hymn forth the glory of His name;" celebrate afresh the revelation of God's char. **make . . glorious,** *lit. make glory His praise.*[a] "Give glory as praise unto Him." (3) **terrible . . works,** *R. V.*, "How terrible are Thy works;" *see* Ps. lxv. 5.[b] **submit,** *etc., lit. lie, i. e.* yield feigned and reluctant obedience.[c] (4) **All the earth,** including its inhabitants.[d]

Praising God for His mighty works. — I. The reason of this praise. 1. The nature of His works; 2. The constancy of His works; 3. The influence of His works. Calculated — (1) To excite awe; (2) To check rebellion against Him; (3) To inspire confidence in Him; (4) The necessity of observing His works. II. The enthusiasm of this praise. The praise is to be offered — 1. Heartily; 2. Joyfully; 3. Openly. III. The universality of this praise.—*Hom. Com.*

Terrible in Thy works. — The earthquakes in New England occasioned a kind of religious panic. A writer, who was then one of the ministers of Boston, informs us, that immediately after the great earthquake, as it was called, a great number of his flock came and expressed a wish to unite themselves with the church. But, on conversing with them, he could find no evidence of improvement in their religious views or feelings, no convictions of their own sinfulness; nothing, in short, but a kind of superstitious fear, occasioned by a belief that the end of the world was at hand. All their replies proved that they had not found God, though they had seen "the greatness of His power" in the earthquake. — *Edward Payson.*

a "Let His praise be such as will glorify Him, or be honorable to Him."—*Fausset.*

b Re. xv. 3.

c Pr. Bk. Ver. "Shall be found liars unto Thee."

d Ps. xxii. 27; Re. v. 13; vii. 9.

5—7. (5) **Come and see,** or consider the story of ancient Israel, of wh. the Psalmist now reminds them. **terrible,** *etc.*, "see how, to save His people, He has to smite their enemies." (6) **turned . . laid,** as at crossing of the Red Sea.[e] **flood,**[f] *R. V.*, "river;" as distinct from the "sea," may refer to the river Jordan, crossed under the leadership of Joshua. **there,** or in those instances or at those places. (7) **for ever,** or continuously; the past does but illustrate the present. **behold,** or keep watch,[g] *R. V.*, "observe;" to protect Israel fr. every foe. **exalt themselves,** or exhibit exultation.[h]

God's special dealings with nations seen in history (*vss.* 5–7). — It is said of the ungodly that "the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His hands" (Is. v. 12). But the Psalmist was of a different spirit. He had seen much that had thrilled his heart with admiration and delight, and he would have others to enter into his joy. "Come and see the works of God." Israel may be called the model nation. As "a city set on a hill." Israel has been set on high for the instruction of other nations and peoples (1 Co. x. 11). The principles and laws by which God governed and judged Israel are the principles and laws according to which He deals with His people everywhere, in all times and in all lands. God changes His methods, but not His laws. His dispensations alter, but He Himself is the same. Hence His judgments of Israel and of the nations are full of instruction to us. Israel was the chosen people, "unto whom were committed the oracles of God." God is represented as keeping guard over them. He was their Watchman, and His eye was ever on "the nations" around, ready to warn and defend His own people. Let us be sure that in like manner He is

e "Such allusions are especially numerous about the time of the Babylonish captivity, but are too common and natural a topic to determine the date of this psalm." — *Spk. Com.*

f Heb. nâhâr, the river.

g Ps. xi. 4.

h Ps. ii. 12; lxviii. 18; Is. xxxvii 23.

"Live not so much upon the comforts of God as upon the God of comforts. Ps. lxiii. 3."—*Mason.*

"God's guidance of His people is a constant drying up of the sea and of the Jordan, and the joy over His mighty deeds is

always receiving new materials."—*E. W. Hengstenberg.*

now standing in watch over the interests of truth and righteousness, and that He will overrule all things for the advancement of the kingdom of His Son."—*Pul. Com.*

8—12. (8) **ye people,** or nations; the appeal being to surrounding nations. (9) **holdeth . . life,** *Polychr.*, "caused our souls to revive;" keeps us safe in state of extreme peril.[a] **moved,** "He has not abandoned their foot to tottering unto overthrow." (10) **as silver is tried,** the fig. of the purifying fire is common in Scrip.[b] (11) **Thou,** God deliberately gave them over into the power of the enemy as a punishment for sin. **net,** or poss. *prison-fortress. Cheyne,* "into the dungeon;" signify the depressed spirits of a conquered people. The fig. of the hunter is, however, frequent in the Ps. **affliction,** or burden, like that laid on the horse or camel. (12) **ride . . heads,** as those wounded on a battle-field.[c] **wealthy place,** lit. *abundance, refreshment. Polychr.*, "into the open air;" the opposite fr. the privations endured.

Stability the gift of God (*vss.* 8, 9). — I. What a mercy it is to be upheld in the ways of God! 1. To how many snares and dangers we are exposed; 2. How many in like circumstances have fallen; 3. What would be the probable consequences of our falling? 4. What occasion have we given to God to let us fall. II. The duty of those who experience this mercy. 1. To acknowledge God in our steadfastness; 2. Bless and adore Him for His great goodness; 3. Walk humbly and carefully before Him; 4. Commit ourselves continually to Him. Here arise two questions:—(1) Are our souls really alive to God? (2) Have our feet been kept from falling?—*Simeon.*

Affliction. — In the ancient times a box on the ear given by a master to a slave meant liberty; little would the freed man care how hard was the blow. By a stroke from the sword the warrior was knighted by his monarch; small matter was it to the new-made knight if the royal hand was heavy. When the Lord intends to lift His servants into a higher stage of spiritual life, He frequently sends them a severe trial; He makes His Jacobs to be prevailing princes, but He confers the honor after a night of wrestling, and accompanies it with a shrunken sinew. Be it so: who among us would wish to be deprived of the trials if they are the necessary attendants of spiritual advancement?—*Spurgeon.*

13—15. (13) **burnt offerings,** expressive of entire consecration. (14) **uttered,** *lit. opened.* The verb used elsewhere means "to talk at random," "to prattle."[d] (15) **fatlings,**[e] or fat lambs. **incense,** or ascending smoke. *Polychr.*, "with rams consumed in sweet smoke."[f] **bullocks with goats,** sparing no expense in the endeavor to present a worthy sacrifice.

A good test. — "I pay more attention," says Mr. Booth, "to people's lives than to their deaths. In all the visits I have paid to the sick during the course of a long ministry, I never met with one, who was not previously serious, that ever recovered from what he supposed the brink of death, who afterwards performed his vows, and became religious, notwithstanding the very great appearance there was in their favor when they thought they could not recover."—*Cheever.*

16—20. (16) **Come and hear,**[g] comp. *vs.* 5. **all . . God,** not limited to Israel, but wherever they are to be found. **my soul,** or life; with evident reference to some remarkable personal deliverance. (17) **extolled,** *lit. extolling was under my tongue. R. V., marg.* "and high praise was under my tongue," *i. e.* even while he prayed he had praises ready, bec. he felt certain of God's favorable answer. (18) **regard iniquity,** *i. e.* cherish it deliberately.[h] (19) **hath heard,** therefore it is plain that I have not cherished iniquity. (20) **from me,** *Heb.* from being (as it ever is) with me.

God's doings. — I. What has God done for the soul of every Christian? II. Why does the Christian wish to declare what God has done for his soul? III. Why does he wish to make this declaration to those who only fear God? 1. Because they alone can understand such a declaration. 2. They alone will really believe Him. 3. They only will listen with interest, or join with Him in praising his Benefactor.—*E. Payson.*

Gratitude. — If people are loud in the praise of a physician who has cured them of some deadly malady — recommending others to trust and seek his skill, why should not Christ's people crown Him with equal honors, commend

a "Places our soul in the (the state) of life."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

b Ps. xii. 6; xvii. 3; Is. xlviii. 10; Je. ix. 7; Eze. xxii. 20; Ze. xiii. 9; Mal. iii. 3; 1 Pe. i. 6, 7.

c "Cast down and trampled upon by the horse-hoofs and chariot-wheels of their triumphant and savage enemies."—*Perowne.*

"The Lord is a protection to those that call upon His name. The very calling upon His name is a running under God's wings, that is, putting ourselves 'under His shadow;' but when thou neglectest that, thou dost wander abroad from Him."—*John Preston.*

d "Its use may indicate that the vows were wrung fr. the nation by extraordinary distress."—*Delitzsch.*

e Le. iii. 3; ix. 14.

f "The fact that 'rams' were not used for the offerings of individuals, seem to suggest that the speaker, representing the nation, may be the high priest."

g Mal. iii. 16.

h Pr. xv. 8, 29; xxviii. 9; Is. i 15; Jno. ix. 31.

"Have we no tale to tell? If a thief broke into your house, you would tell everybody about it. If your house was on fire, all the neighborhood would know it. A man who has a tale to tell, tells it; and he is right in doing so. We are not unwilling to speak, but we have no story to relate."—*J. Parker.*

Him to a dying world, and proclaim what He has done for them? Let them say with David, "Come all ye that fear the Lord, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul;" and tread in the steps of the Samaritan who threw away her pitcher, and running to the city brought them all out, crying, "Come, see a man who hath told me all things that I have ever done." It is a bad thing ostentatiously to parade religion; but it is a base thing for a Christian man to be ashamed of it; not to stand by his colors; by his silence, if not his speech, to deny his Master; to sneak away, like a coward, out of the fight. —*Guthrie.*

"Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love
Fit us for perfect rest above;
And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray."
—*Keble.*

PSALM THE SIXTY-SEVENTH.

author and date same as Ps. lxv. and lxvi.

Subject, desire that God should be universally acknowledged, a song of joy at close of harvest.

1, 2. (1) **God be merciful,** better, "gracious." Borrowed from the high priest's blessing. Nu. vi. 24–26. (2) **thy way,** of dealing with Thy people, so that the nations may desire to serve Him. **saving health,** or salvations, deliverances, redeemings. **nations,** or Gentiles.[a]

The calling of the Gentiles prayed for.— The text shows us — I. That there are rich blessings yet in store for the Gentiles. II. What a union there is between piety and philanthropy. III. What encouragement we have for missionary exertions.—*C. Simeon.*

Stability of the Gospel.— Like the treacherous signal-boats that are sometimes stationed by the wreckers off an iron-bound coast, the shifting systems of false religion are continually changing their places. Like them, they attract only to bewilder, and allure only to destroy. The unwary mariner follows them with a trembling uncertainty, and only finds out where he is when he feels his ill-fated vessel crashing into a thousand fragments on the beach. But how different from these floating and delusive systems is that unchanging Gospel of Christ, which stands forth, like the towering light-house of Eddystone, with its beacon-blaze streaming far out over the midnight sea! The angry waves, through many a long year, have rolled in, thundering against that tower's base; the winds of heaven have warred fiercely around its pinnacle; the rains have dashed against its gleaming lantern; but there it stands. It moves not, it trembles not; for it is "founded on a rock." Year after year, the storm-stricken mariner looks out for its star-like light as he sweeps in through the British Channel. It is the first object that meets his eye as he returns on his homeward voyage; it is the last he beholds, long after his native land has sunk beneath the evening wave. So is it with the unchanging Gospel of Christ. While other systems rise and fall, and pass into nothingness, this Gospel (like its immutable Author) is "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." While other false and flashing lights are extinguished, this, the "true light," ever shineth.— *T. L. Cuyler.*

[a] "Three distinct words are here used to designate foreign nations; they are regarded as foreigners, races, and communities." — *Spk. Com.*

"What the Church most pressingly needs for the accomplishment of her great work is not more numerous agencies, not new methods of evangelization, not increase of material wealth, but a deeper and more abiding realization of the presence and blessing of God in her midst." — *Hom. Com.*

3, 4. (3) **people,** *i. e.* peoples, ref. to the inhabitants of the earth. **praise thee,** turning fr. their idols to acknowledge Thee. (4) **be glad,** in realizing the righteous rule of God. This may refer to the setting up of the righteous kingdom of Messiah. **righteously,** *R. V.*, "with equity." **govern,** *marg.* lead, or shepherd. Thou wilt be their guide. "A promise of peculiar graciousness, used elsewhere only of God's faithful and tried servants."—*Spk. Com.*

Praise.— We have comforts increased, the more we praise God for what we have already received. The more vapors go up, the more showers come down; as the rivers receive, so they pour out, and all run into the sea again. There is a constant circular course and recourse to the sea, unto the sea; so there is between God and us; the more we praise Him, the more our blessings come down; and the more His blessings come down, the more we praise Him again; so that we do not so much bless God as bless ourselves. When the springs lie low, we pour a little water into the pump, not to enrich the fountain, but to bring up more for ourselves.— *Thomas Manton.*— *Gladness.* — When men know God's way and see His salvation, it brings to their hearts much happiness. Nothing creates gladness so speedily, surely and abidingly as the salvation of God. Nations never will be glad till they follow the leadership of the great Shepherd; they may shift their modes of government from monarchies to republics, and from republics to communes, but they will retain their wretchedness till they bow before the Lord of all. What a sweet word is that "to sing for joy!" Some sing for form, others for show, some as a duty, others as an amusement, but to sing from the heart, because over-

"Praying frequently helps to praying fervently. Be assured it is better to wander in prayer than to wander from it."—*Bp. Wilson.*

"Prayer is the buckler, prayer is the helmet that keeps thee safe; when a man neglects it, when he ceaseth to go to God by prayer, when he shows himself to be a stranger to the Lord by neglecting this duty, then he is out of the pale of His protection, like the coneys that go out of their burrows: for so is the Lord to those that pray." — *J. Preston.*

"Let our deeds be syllables
Of the prayer our spirit swells.
In us Thy desire fulfil;
By us work Thy gracious will."
—*Lucy Larcom.*

flowing joy must find a vent, this is to sing indeed. Whole nations will do this when Jesus reigns over them in the power of His grace. We have heard hundreds and even thousands sing in chorus, but what will it be to hear whole nations lifting up their voices, as the noise of many waters and like great thunders. When shall the age of song begin? When shall groans and murmurs be exchanged for holy hymns and joyful melodies? —*Spurgeon.*

5—7. (5) **Let,** *etc.*, as *vs.* 3. (6) **Then,** *R. V.*, omits. **shall yield,** *R. V.*, "hath yielded." **increase,** bountiful harvests being the gracious Div. testimony to a faithful and devoted people.[a] **and . . us,** *Polychr.*, "May God, our God bless us;" a prayer rather than a prophecy. (7) **all the ends,** *etc.*, "this psalm is a truly missionary psalm, in its clear anticipation of the universal spread of the knowledge of God, in its firm grasp of the thought that the church has its blessings in order to the evangelization of the world."—*Exp. Bib.* **fear,** reverent, trustful fear.[b]

The power of hope. — Once on a time, certain strong laborers were sent forth by the great king to level a primeval forest, to plough it, to sow it, and to bring to him the harvest. They were stout-hearted and strong and willing enough for labor, and much they needed all their strength and more. One stalwart laborer was named Industry — consecrated work was his. His brother Patience tired not in the longest days under the heaviest labors. To help them they had Zeal, clothed with ardent and indomitable energy. Side by side there stood his kinsman Self-denial, and his friend Importunity. These went forth to their labor, and they took with them, to cheer their toils, their well-beloved sister Hope; and well it was they did, for they needed the music of her consolation ere the work was done, for the forest trees were huge, and demanded many steady blows of the axe ere they would fall prone upon the ground. One by one the giant forest kings were overthrown, but the labor was immense and incessant. At night when they went to their rest, the day's work always seemed so light, for as they crossed the threshold, Patience wiping the sweat from his brow, would be encouraged, and Self-denial would be strengthened by hearing the sweet voice of Hope within singing, "God will bless us, God, even our own God, will bless us." They felled the lofty trees to the music of that strain, they cleared the acres one by one, they tore from their sockets the huge roots, they delved the soil, they sowed the corn, and waited for the harvest, often much discouraged, but still held to their work as by silver chains and golden fetters by the sweet sound of the voice which chanted so constantly, "God, even our own God, will bless us." They could never refrain from service, for Hope could never refrain from song. They were ashamed to be discouraged, they were shocked to be despairing, for still the voice sang clearly out at noon and eventide, "God will bless us, God, even our own God, will bless us." You know the parable, you recognize the voice. May you hear it in your souls to-day. —*Spurgeon.*

a Le. xxvi. 4.

"The blessings of a fruitful harvest are mentioned as types of greater and spiritual blessings, under which all nations shall fear and love God." —*Fausset.*

b Ps. xxii. 27.

"Those trees flourish most, and bear sweetest fruit, which stand most in the sun. The praying Christian stands nigh to God, and hath God nigh to him in all that he calls upon Him for, and therefore you may expect His fruit to be sweet and ripe; when another that stands as it were in the shade, and at a distance from God (through neglect of, or infrequency in, this duty) will have little fruit found on his branches, and that but green and sour." —*Gurnall.*

author, — unknown

Processional hymn to Adonai, the God of victories.

PSALM THE SIXTY-EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) **God arise,** "the chant with which the ark set forward in the wilderness," Nu. x. 35. **before him,** *marg. from His face,* in dread of Him. (2) **As smoke,** *etc.*,[c] *Polychr.*, "As smoke vanishes before the wind;" an apt fig. for total disappearance. **as wax,** "emblem of unresisting impotence." **wicked,** *i. e.* the foreign nations as opposed to Israel, the righteous. Ps. xxii. 14. (3) **exceedingly rejoice,** *Heb. rejoice with gladness: Polychr.*, "shout in their joy."

The Sixty-eighth Psalm. — An old Camisard, as the hunted Protestants of the Cevennes were called, says, "We flew when we heard the sound of the psalms, we flew as if with wings. We felt within us an animating ardor, a transporting desire. The feeling cannot be expressed in words. It is a thing that must have been felt to be known. However weary we might be, we thought no more of our fatigue, and grew light as soon as the psalms reached our ear." This psalm was chanted by Savonarola and his brother Dominicans, A. D. 1497, as they marched to the grand Piazza of Florence to meet the trial of fire to which they had been summoned by their enemies. The corruption of the Church of Rome was never deeper in the lives of pontiff and clergy; and, in the midst of it, rose the wonderful contrast and protest of Fra Angelico who breathed into his paintings the mystic beauty of a seraphic soul, and of

c "These figs. may have been borrowed fr. the pillar of smoke and fire above the ark." —*Hupfeld.*

"The best scholarship place it among the songs of the restoration, and probably as a dedication song for the new temple." —*W. E. Barton.*

"With this ps. on their lips, Cromwell's Ironsides marched to their victories." —*Barton.*

Savonarola, whose outraged conscience broke forth in words of flame. — *Ker. Smoke.* — "Their end was bitter as the smoke," said an aged teacher. "What meanest thou, O Master?" asked his young disciple. "I was thinking of the end of the unrighteous," replied the old man, "and of how too often I, like the Psalmist, have been envious when they were in prosperity. Their lives have seemed so bright and glowing that I have thought they resembled the blaze of a cheerful fire on a winter's night. But, as I have watched them, they have suddenly vanished like the flame that fades into black and bitter smoke; and I have ceased to envy them. Trust not, O my scholar, only to that which appears brilliant; but watch also for its ending, lest thou be deceived." — *Hubert Bower.*

"This Sixty-eighth Psalm was known among the Huguenots as the 'song of battles' and was raised by them in many a bloody and desperate conflict."

4—6. (4) **unto God,** Elohim. **sing praises,** or harp His name **extol . . him,** *R. V.*, "Cast up a highway for him that rideth through the deserts; His name is Jah; and exult ye before him."[a] God's people must prepare a way for Him by the removal of the obstacles of unbelief and faintheartedness and ungodliness which hinder Him from coming to deliver them. **Jah,** shortened form of Jehovah.[b] "God's eternal duration and power are the attributes wh. these names commemorate." (5) **fatherless . . widows,** the types of the utterly lonely and helpless.[c] **holy habitation,** heaven: from whence He regards their cry. (6) **solitary,** or wanderers and desolate ones. Here type is exchanged for allegory. The Psalmist looks back on the two great returns, that from Egypt and that from Babylon. **those . . chains,** *R. V.*, "the prisoners into prosperity." **dry land,** *i. e.* "parched land" is not the desert of Sinai, where so many Israelites perished, but a figurative expression for a land without the spiritual and material blessings showered by Jehovah upon his faithful ones. — *Cheyne.*

The rebellious (*vs.* 6). — I. We are rebels against God. 1. God is our rightful sovereign; 2. We have renounced subjection to His authority; 3. We have leagued ourselves with His enemies; 4. We have refused to be reconciled to Him. II. As rebels against God we are heirs to misery. In our — 1. Temporal circumstances; 2. Spiritual condition; 3. Eternal doom. — *G. Brooks.*

God the Father of all. — The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy. The lowly pine on the mountain top waves its sombre boughs, and cries, "Thou art my sun." And the little meadow violet lifts its cup of blue, and whispers with its perfumed breath, "Thou art my sun." And the grain in a thousand fields rustles in the wind and makes answer, "Thou art my sun." So God sits effulgent in heaven, not for a favored few, but for the universe of life; and there is no creature so poor or so low that he may not look up with childlike confidence and say, "My Father, Thou art mine." — *H. W. Beecher.*

God's care. — One adequate support for the calamities of mortal life exists, one only: — an assured belief that the procession of our fate, however sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being of infinite benevolence and power; whose everlasting purposes embrace all accidents, converting them to good. — *Wordsworth.*

a "The image is presented in the *lit.* rendering of a king traveling through the waste, for whom a way is made."—*Spk. Com.*

Comp. Is. xl. 3; lvii. 14.

b Ex. vi. 3.

c Ps. cxlvi. 9.

Gotthold's prayer.— "Oh God, I have no desire to be anything but what Thou hast made me. I grudge not the great and mighty what Thou givest to them. Nay I know not that I would exchange my poverty for their wealth, my solitude for their lofty rank. One thing, however, I do implore: let me reign over the sin that dwells within me! Teach me to govern myself; and grant that I may one day be permitted humbly to enter that celestial city, welcomed by the holy angels and wearing the crown of life."

7—10. (7) **when** *etc.*, recalling the march out of Egypt. (8) **even Sinai itself,** *R. V.*, "Even yon Sinai trembled," Ex. xix. 16, 18.[d] Earthquake and storm, symbols of the Divine Presence and Power. (9) **rain,** prob. a poetical allusion to the sending of the *manna.* **thine inheritance,** so God's Israel was regarded. (10) **therein,** even in the wilderness, through Thy providings. **prepared,** *i. e.* a table in the waste desert. **poor,** or weary wanderers.

God's love-gifts to His people. — What He did to Israel in the wilderness, He will do to His church to the end of the world. He is the Great Giver of every good and perfect gift, and evermore the thought of His love awakens gratitude and praise. His gifts are characterized by — I. Sweetness. They are sweet in themselves as the "rain," but they are sweeter still as sent from God. They have the impress of His hand. II. Copiousness. Rain may be slight, partial, or temporary. Here it is "plentiful." It is a "rain of gifts" — large, generous, widespread, meeting the needs of all, reaching to the furthest part of the dry and parched land. III. Timeliness. God does nothing in an arbitrary way. It is when His people are "weary" that He visits them with "times of refreshing." They are "weary" from toil, or conflict, or suffering, or long and anxious waiting; and their hearts are like the "parched ground"

d The words of these *vss.* 7, 8, appear to be borrowed fr. the song of Deborah, Ju. v. 4, 5.

"God always goes at the head of His people through the deserts of suffering and need; in the deserts of trouble they find in Him a true leader." — *E. W. Hengstenberg.*

"*vs.* 9 is intelligible either as referring to gifts of refreshment of spirit and courage bestowed on the people, in which case 'rain'

is symbolical; or to actual rainfall during the forty years of desert life, by which sowing and reaping were made possible."—*Exp. B.*

crying for "rain." God hears. IV. Refreshment. "Confirm." This implies renewal of strength, invigoration of faith and hope and love. As the "rain" quickens and calls forth the life in the earth, so that the grass flourisheth and the corn ripens, so it is with God's people when He visits them with the outpouring of the Spirit. It is as if Pentecost were come again.

"As torrents in summer, half dried in their channels,
Suddenly rise though the sky is still cloudless,
For rain has been falling far off at their fountains;
So hearts that are fainting grow full to o'erflowing,
And they that behold it marvel and know not
That God at *their* fountains far off has been raining."
—*Pul. Com.*

[a] Ex. xv. 20; Ju. v.; 1 Sa. xviii. 6.

11—14. (11) **the word,** the fiat for attacking the foes, on taking possession of Canaan. God's word is sovereign. He has only to command and the victory is won. **great,** *etc.*, *Heb.* "The women declaring good tidings were a great company."[a] "The reference is to the female choirs which took a prominent part in the war-songs of ancient days (see Exod. xv. 20, 21; Judg. v. 1; 1 Sa. xviii. 6, 7)." (12) **flee apace,** *Heb. did flee, did flee.* **tarried . . spoil,** even the women sharing the leavings of the battle-field.[b] The expression is simply a fig. for the housewife. (13) **Though,** *etc.*, a very difficult *vs.*[c] The first line clearly alludes to Judg. v. 16 (*cp.* Gen. xlix. 14, *R. V.*), where Deborah upbraids Reuben for cowardice and irresolution, and for preferring the ignoble ease of pastoral life to the glorious dangers of the war of independence:

"Why satest thou among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks?"

The second and third lines describe under the image of a dove basking in the sunshine an idyllic condition of peace and prosperity.

It seems preferable to render thus:

"Though ye may lie among the sheepfolds,
The dove's wings are covered with silver,
And her pinions with yellow gold."

[b] "There is a wonderful irony in this description of the mighty monarchs fleeing and leaving the treasures of the camp to be shared among the women in the tents." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

[c] "When ye return home and lie down among the folds, ye shall be very dove's wings —covered with silver, and with glittering yellow gold."

Though some Israelites may fail in their duty and prefer slothful ease to fighting the battles of Jehovah, yet Israel once more enjoys the blessings of peace and prosperity. In spite of man's backwardness God gives blessing.— *Cam. Bib.* (14.) **in it,** *i. e.* the land. **white . . Salmon,**[d] *R. V.*, "It was as when it snoweth in Zalmon." "By the thought of the victory won for Israel by God the poet is naturally carried back to the battle scene, and desires to emphasize the fact that the Almighty had fought for Israel, sweeping the foe before Him like the snowflakes swept along by the hurricane."

The word.— I. The word given: "The Lord," *etc.* II. The word proclaimed: "Great," *etc.* III. The word obeyed: "King," *etc.* Thus it was in Old Testament times, when to Joshua, to Gideon, to David, *etc.*, the Lord gave the word, and it ran through the hosts, and "kings of armies," *etc.* Thus it was in apostolic times, when the word of reconciliation was given. Thus it is still, and will be more signally than ever hereafter.— *G. Rogers.*

Housetops in Cairo.— A little before sunset, numbers of pigeons suddenly emerge. They dart upwards, and career through the air in large circles, their outspread wings catching the bright glow of the sun's slanting rays, so that they really resemble shining "yellow gold;" then, as they wheel round, and are seen against the light, they appear as if turned into molten silver, most of them being pure white, or else very light colored. This may seem fanciful, but the effect of light in these regions is difficult to describe to those who have not seen it, and evening after evening we watched the circling flight of the doves, and always observed the same appearance.— *Whately.*

[d] A cowhill near Sichem, Ju. ix. 48. *vs.* 14. "Perhaps in allusion to the bones of the slaughtered foe, which were scattered about, and lay bleaching on the summit of Salmon."

"About his chariot numberless were pour'd
Cherub, and seraph, potentates, and thrones,
And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots win
From the armory of God, where stand of old
Myriads."
—*John Milton.*

15—18. (15) **The hill of God,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "A mountain of God is the mountain of Bashan; a high mountain is the mountain of Bashan." After the conquest of the land, God chose for His abode not the stately mountains of Bashan, whose natural pre-eminence might seem to mark them out for that privilege, but the insignificant hill of Zion. (16) **Why leap ye,** *etc.*, "Why look ye askance, ye high mountains, at the mountain which God hath

"The joy of salvation begins in us here, and continues and accompanies us to heaven, and there flows on to an infinite expansion."

desired for His abode." The grander mountains of Bashan are represented as looking enviously upon the insignificant mountain of Zion, which God has chosen for His earthly dwelling-place. Sinai had been his temporary abode (Ex. xxiv. 16); on Zion He will dwell forever. (17) **thousands of angels,** *R. V.*, "thousands upon thousands." God is represented as entering Zion in triumph with a vast retinue of the heavenly host. **the Lord is among,** *etc.*, *Polychr.* "The Lord is come from Sinai in holiness." The glory and majesty wh. were revealed at Sinai, are now transferred to God's new abode. (18) **hast ascended,** into the sanctuary, Mt. Zion; gone up with the ark, when it was transferred thither. **captivity,**[a] *i. e.* a body of captives, the captive enemies of Israel. **gifts for men,** *R. V.*, "among men." The gifts brought to the King for the Temple are regarded as offered to God. **for the rebellious,** better, "among the rebellious." Even the heathen (or perhaps the Jews who rebelled in the wilderness) pay homage to Jehovah and dwell under His protection.

Gifts for the rebellious (*vs.* 18). — Turn your eye to the heavenly world, and you will find millions of just such sinners walking in the light of eternal day. There you will find David, once an adulterer and a murderer; there you will find Paul, once a blasphemer and a persecutor; there you will find Peter, who denied his Master, and perjured himself; there you will find an endless multitude more, whose sins, drawn out in order and displayed in their proper colors, would overwhelm you as well as them with amazement and horror. "But they are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the blood of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." — *Dwight.*

19—21. (19) **daily,** *etc.*, the whole verse might be rendered more exactly and forcibly: "Blessed be the Lord; day by day He beareth our burden: God is our salvation." (20) **He . . salvation,** *R. V.*, "God is unto us a God of deliverance." **issues,** or means of escape. (21) **But,** *surely.* **wound,** *R. V.*, "smite through." **hairy scalp,** sign of youth and strength.[b]

The God of salvation (*vs.* 19). — I. The relation which God sustains. God — 1. Devised the plan of salvation; 2. Accomplished the work; 3. Applied the blessings; 4. And superintends the progress and final results. II. The benefits which God confers. 1. Their nature; 2. Their number; 3. Their frequency. III. The return which God deserves. 1. We should bless Him sincerely; 2. Affectionately; 3. Constantly; 4. Practically. — *Brooks.*

Benefits. — If from what God hath done for us as men, we look to what He hath done for us as Christians; that He hath embraced us with an everlasting love, that He hath molded us anew, enlivened us by His Spirit, fed us by His word and sacrament, clothed us with His merits, bought us with His blood, becoming vile to make us glorious, a curse, to invest us with blessedness; in a word, that He hath given Himself to us, His Son for us; Oh the height, and depth, and breadth of the rich mercies of our God! Oh the boundless, topless, bottomless load of Divine benefits, whose immensity reaches from the centre of this earth, to the unlimited extent of the very empyreal heavens! "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He hath done for the children of men." — *Joseph Hall.—Our load.* — Though some may have more than others, yet every one hath his load, as much as He can carry. Every vessel cannot bear up with the like sail, and therefore God, to keep us from oversetting, puts on so much as will safest bring us to heaven, our desired port. — *Ezekiel Hopkins.*

22, 23. (22) **bring . . Bashan,** not God's people, but their enemies; even though fleeing fr. God they hide in inaccessible Bashan, or in the depths of the sea they shall be brought back to suffer righteous vengeance. "Bashan" may refer to Og: "depths of the sea" to Pharaoh. **my people,** *R. V.*, "them." (23) **tongue . . same,** *Polychr.*, "the tongues of thy dogs shall have their share of the foes."

Salvation is of God. — Observe what happens when the cry rises at sea, "A man overboard!" With others on deck, you rush to the side, and, leaning over the bulwarks, with beating heart you watch the place where the rising air-bells and boiling deep tell that he has gone down. After some moments of breathless anxiety, you see his head emerge from the wave. Now that man, with the first breath he draws, begins to beat the water; with violent efforts he attempts to shake off the grasp of death, and by the play of limbs and arms, to keep his head from sinking. That drowning one makes

"All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all that I have not seen." — *Emerson.*

[a] Eph. iv. 8.

"Montserrat, in Spain, is an instance of a mountain deriving its name from its shape; as it is Mons Serratas, or a mountain whose craggy cliffs have, at a distance, the resemblance of the teeth of a saw. The Sierra Morena, in Spain, is named from its shape and color." — *Burder.*

[b] As Samson and Absalom.

"We all have need of that prayer of the British mariner: 'Save us, O God, Thine ocean is so large, and our little boat so small.'" — *Farrar.*

vs. 21. "This language, in the East, is equivalent to saying, 'I will kill you.' 'The king will soon break the *uche* (the scalp) of that fellow.' 'Tamban's *uche* is broken; he died last week.' 'With those who are *burned*, it remains three days in its place; but when the body is *burned*, it immediately takes its departure, which is a great vantage.'" — *Roberts.*

"As robbers, seeing a man flourishing his sword, will not then set upon him, even so the wicked spirits, seeing us fenced about by prayer, leave us unassaulted." — *Cawdray.*

"Do not measure the efficacy of prayer by its length, but by its spirit and fervor."

"Heaven is never deaf, but when man's heart is dumb." — *Quarles.*

"A poplar leaf hides our view of the sun; the slight substance of an earthly care may hide from us the immense and radiant God."

instinctive and convulsive efforts to save himself. So, when first brought to feel and cry, "I perish!" when the horrible conviction rushes into the soul that we are lost, our first effort is to save ourselves. Like a drowning man, who will clutch at straws and twigs, we seize on anything, however worthless, that promises salvation. Thus, alas! many poor souls toil, and spend weary, unprofitable years in the attempt to establish a righteousness of their own, and find in the deeds of the law protection from its curse. — *Guthrie.*

24—27. (24) **thy goings,** the solemn procession to Mount Zion, wh. God, represented by the ark, is supposed to lead, or a celebration of victory as depicted on the Assyrian monuments. **in,** *R. V.*, unto." (25) **players on instruments,** *R. V.*, "minstrels." **playing,** *etc.*, or beating the tambourine. Ex. xv. 20; Lu. xi. 34. (26) This *vs.* is prob. a part of the processional hymn, *cp.* Judg. v. 2, 9. **from,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "ye that are of;" lineal descendant from Jacob.[a] (27) **There,** *etc.*, four tribes are mentioned as representative of the rest. **with . . ruler,** *R. V.* omits "with," their ruler may refer to Saul's kingship. **and their council,** better "company."

Note on vs. 25. — This, no doubt, is a description of a religious procession in the time of David. In the sacred and domestic processions of the Hindoos they observe the same order, and have the same class of people in attendance. See them taking their god to exhibit to the people, or to remove some calamity; he is put into his car or tabernacle, and the whole is placed on men's shoulders. As they move along, the men and women precede, and sing his praises; then follow the musicians, who play with all their might in honor of the god, and for the enjoyment of the people. — *Roberts.*

"A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,
And touches Him that made it."
— *Tennyson.*

28—31. (28) **thy strength,** *i. e.* thy dominion, or power; better, "O God, command Thy strength," *i. e.* put it forth. **strengthen,** *i. e.* perfect, and establish. *R. V., marg.* "Be strong, O God, thou that hast wrought for us," *i. e.* show Thy power as in time past. (29) **Because of thy temple,** out of respect for. (30) **company of spearmen,** *lit. beasts of the reeds:* poss. the hippopotamus, as representing Egypt; or may be the crocodile.[b] **bulls . . calves,** fig. for rulers and people. **till . . silver,** *R. V.*, "trampling under foot the pieces of silver;" *i. e.* spurning their tribute money. (31) **soon,** *R. V.*, "haste to." **stretch . . hands,** with the offerings of submission.

The prayer of the church against those delighting in war (*vs.* 30).— I. We would first examine the question — Is all war sinful? II. Next we would consider the class undoubtedly sinful, and here denounced, "who delight in war." III. And, in the last place, we would return to the punishment here invoked upon such from God — that they should be dispersed and reduced — "scattered" by the whirlwind they have loved to raise and to ride. — *W. R. Williams.*

Anthony Benezet. — On one occasion, during the annual convention of the Society of Friends, at Philadelphia, when that body was engaged on the subject of slavery, as it related to its own members, some of whom had not wholly relinquished the practice of keeping negroes in bondage, a difference of sentiment was manifested as to the course which ought to be pursued. For a moment it appeared doubtful which opinion would preponderate. At this critical juncture, Benezet, who was a leading member of the society, and felt a deep interest in the subject of emancipation, left his seat, which was in an obscure part of the house, and presented himself, weeping, at an elevated door in the presence of the whole congregation, whom he thus addressed: "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." He said no more. Under the solemn impression which succeeded this emphatic sentence, the proposed measure received the united sanction of the assembly. — *R. T. S.*

"We must ask for the spirit to pray with, and that not once or twice, but constantly, regularly, as for our daily bread; unceasingly, so as to take no denial. If we do this, God will from time to time pour down a fresh supply of that best gift of His, the spirit of grace and supplication."—*A. W. Hare.*

32—35. (32) **Sing,** on account of God's marvelous doings. (33) **heavens of heavens,**[c] or the highest heavens. **of old,** before the creation of our present order of heavens and earth. **doth send out,** *R. V.*, "uttereth." **voice,** often used of God's thunder. (34) **Ascribe,** make hearty acknowledgment. **clouds,** *Heb.* "skies," *i e.* supreme not on earth alone, but throughout the whole vast universe. (35) **out of,** *etc.*, "the awful power of God being regarded as emanating from the sanctuary."[d] **is He that,** *R. V.*, "He giveth."

The character of God (*v.* 35). — I. The description here given us of God — 1. Most glorious; 2. Most endearing. II. The sentiments it should excite within us.— 1. Gratitude: 2. Affiance. Apply — (1) How little ground there

a "The patriarch Israel is the fountain fr. wh. the whole nation has issued as a stream."—*Perowne.*

"Prayer is the key of the day, and the lock of the night. And we should every day begin and end, bid ourselves good-morrow and good-night with prayer. This will make our labor prosperous, and our rest sweet."

Luther says the marrow of the Gospels is in the pronouns "my" and "our."

b "The strongest nations are represented by the strongest beasts."—*Fausset.*

"Past blessings and graces are a sort of guarantee for future ones."—*Faber.*

"God is a great God, therefore He will be sought; He is a good God, therefore He will be found."—*Mason.*

Prayer.—

c De. x. 14; 1 Ki. viii. 27.

d Ps. cx. 2.

is for the excuses of the presumptuous ; (2) How little ground there is for the fears of the desponding. — *C. Simeon.*

The voice of God. — A strong and powerful voice, such as the gospel is, when accompanied with the power and Spirit of God. It is a soul-shaking and awakening voice ; it is a heart-melting and a heart-breaking one ; it is a quickening and an enlightening voice ; it quickens dead sinners, gives life unto them, and the entrance of it gives light to dark minds ; it is a soul-charming and alluring one ; it draws to Christ, engages the affections to Him, and fills with unspeakable delight and pleasure. — *John Gill.*

PSALM THE SIXTY-NINTH.

1—3. (1) **waters,**[a] a familiar *Heb.* fig. for calamities wh. threaten to flood one's life.[b] (2) **deep mire,**[c] *lit. mud of the abyss;* soft, yielding morass. (3) *cf. R. V.*, "with." **crying,** with the cry of one in distress. **dried,** with constant calling. **eyes fail,** *Polychr.*, "are worn out:" De. xxviii. 32. **while I wait,** better, waiting as I do.

Sorrows and sufferings of Christ (*vss.* 1-4). — I. Their overwhelming nature. 1. Those which were previous to His apprehension; 2. Those which He sustained during His trial; 3. Those which were consummated in His death. II. Their vicarious use. 1. It was not for His own sins; 2. It was for the sins of others. We see in this mystery — (1) The proper ground for faith; (2) The strongest motive for love; (3) The safest rule for obedience. — *C. Simeon.*

Waiting. — What becomes of our prayers? Do we look to see whether they strike their mark or any mark? When a merchant counts his assets, he counts not only what he has in his storehouses, but what he has sent across the sea; and when we send forth these barques of prayer, laden with the dearest wishes and the deepest yearnings of our souls, is it nothing to us whether they arrive at their destined haven? "Never was faithful prayer lost at sea. No merchant trades with such certainty as the praying saint." Some one has very pithily said that the man who does not look after the prayers he has put up, is like the ostrich, which lays her eggs and looks not for her young. — *M. R. Vincent.*

4—7. (4) **hate . . cause,** quoted by our Lord, Jno. xv. 25.[d] **hairs,** *etc.*, *comp.* Ps. xl. 12. **destroy,** *lit.*, "cut off." **are mighty,** or *are in great force.* **then . . away,** a proverbial expression for the extreme of injured innocence. "Wrong that I have not done I must even suffer for."[e] 5. **foolishness,** *Polychr.* "strayings." This word is used only twice in the psalter for "sin." such confession is suitable to the Psalmist, though some think he speaks here ironically, or hypothetically, or merely of the consequences and punishments of sin. (6) **ashamed for my sake,** or on account of my sufferings: *lit.* "through me." **confounded . . sake,** *R. V.*, "brought to dishonor through me." (7) **thy sake,** *comp.* Je. xv. 15.

Hiding sin. — I. God's knowledge of sin is an inducement to repent. 1. Because it is foolish to endeavor to hide any sin from Him. 2. Because it is impossible to confess all our sins to Him. II. It is an encouragement to hope for pardon. 1. Because, in the full knowledge of sin, He has declared Himself to be merciful and ready to forgive. 2. Because He has made provision for pardon, not according to our knowledge of sin, but His own. — *G. Rogers.*

Answers to prayer. — A little girl, about four years of age, being asked, "Why do you pray to God?" replied, "Because I know He hears me, and I love to pray to Him." "But how do you know He hears you?" Putting her little hand to her heart she said, "I know He does, because there is something here that tells me so." — *Bishop Atterbury.* — Dr. William King, in the *Anecdotes of His Own Times*, writes: "In 1715, I dined with the Duke of Ormonde, at Richmond. We were fourteen at table. During the dinner there was a jocular dispute — I forget how it was introduced — concerning short prayers. Sir William Wyndham told us that the shortest prayer he had ever heard was the prayer of a common soldier, just before the battle of Blenheim: 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul!' Bp. Atterbury seeming to join in the conversation, and applying himself to Sir William Wyndham, said, 'Your prayer, Sir William, is indeed very short; but I remember another as short, but a much better, offered up likewise by King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, 'O God, if in the day of battle I forget Thee, do Thou not forget me!' This, as Atterbury pronounced it with his usual grace and dignity, was

If you do not get all you ask, it is because the Saviour intends to give you something better. The Christian's motto is, "Upward, onward, heavenward!"

"I desire no other evidence of the truth of Christianity than the Lord's Prayer."— *Mad. de Staël.*

author,— perhaps Jeremiah See Jer. xxxviii. 1-13.

A prayer in affliction.

Shoshannim, see Ps. xlv.

a Ps. xviii. 16; xxxii. 6; lxvi. 12; lxxxviii. 17; cxxiv. 5; Is. xliii. 2; La. iii. 54.

b Jno. ii. 5. "The waters are said to rush in unto the soul when they so press upon the imperiled one that the soul, *i. e.*, the life of the body, more especially the breath, is threatened."—*Delitzsch.*

c Ps. xl. 2.

d "What was true, in some sense, of the suffering Israelite under the law, was still more true of Him in whom was no sin, and whom therefore His enemies did indeed hate without cause."— *Perowne.*

e Je. xv. 10.

"That which I stole not I must then restore." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"The Lord has many treasuries and secrets all shut up from carnal minds with locks which they cannot open ; but he who walks in fellowship with Jesus possesses the master-key which will admit him to all the blessings of the covenant ; yea, to the very heart of God." — *Spurgeon.*

a very gentle and polite reproof, and was immediately felt by the whole company."

8—12. (8) **stranger,** or estranged.[a] **alien,** Ex. xviii. 3.[b] **my mother's children,** *Polychr.*, "to the sons of my mother" expresses a closer degree of relationship than *my brethren*, the children of the same mother being always regarded as bound to one another by a closer tie than those of the same father by different mothers. — *Kirkpatrick.* (9) **zeal,** *etc.*, "jealousy for Thine house hath consumed me."[c] Reference may be to the profaned and neglected condition of the sanctuary, if Jeremiah wrote the psalm. **reproaches,** *etc.*, Ro. xv. 3. **reproached,** *R.V.*, "reproach," by mockery of Thy servant. (10) **When,** *etc.*, Psalmist refers to acts of devotion and religion, wh. his enemies turned to his reproach.[d] **wept,** prob. "humbled myself." (11) **sackcloth,** the Eastern outward symbol of deep sorrow and repentance.[e] **proverb,** or byword. His serious religious acts were made subjects of ridicule. (12) **sit in the gate,** the loungers. He is the talk of the city. **song,** *etc.*, "his oddities and austerities furnish a subject for the latest comic song of the revellers' parties," Job. xxx. 9.

Zeal. — There were many Christian men in Wittemberg who said to Martin Luther, "You don't mean that you are going to hang up those on the church door?" Said Luther: "They are true; they assail damning error; my Fatherland is bowing down to Antichrist." "Pause," said the men who would stand well with everybody. "Is not this zeal without knowledge? Think how you will scandalize the University; how you will drive off men who would follow you in a more discreet course." "Avaunt!" said the Reformer. "The people are perishing in ignorance. The crowds of the common people who come into the city to market will read these words. Yours is not discretion but cowardice." He did the deed; and as the result of that act, Europe received the Protestant Reformation, and the night of the Middle Ages was ended. — *Guest.*

13—15. (13) **acceptable time,** *lit. time of good pleasure*, "when Thou wilt show favor."[f] — *Cheyne.* (14) **mire, the truth,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "with Thy trustworthy help," as *vs.* 2. **waters,** as *vs.* 1. (15) **waterflood,** *vs.* 2. **pit,** or well.[g] Either the grave (iv. 23) or a dungeon may be meant. **shut,** *etc.*, one covered in such a well or pit would be buried alive.

Encouragements to prayer. — I. "Why should I pray?" Not that prayer can save us; only Jesus can do that. Prayer only asks salvation. Let us speak of some of the encouragements to prayer. 1. God commands it. 2. God hears and promises to answer prayer. The promises of God's Word. 3. God delights in His people's prayers. Parents like to hear their children's requests; so does our Father in heaven. He delights even in His little ones. 4. All the good and holy, in all ages, have loved prayer. 5. Past answers to prayer should encourage us. — *J. H. Wilson.*

Deliverance. — A lady had a dream, in which she fancied herself at the bottom of a deep pit. She looked round to see if there were any way of getting out; but in vain. Presently, looking upward, she saw in that part of the heavens immediately above the mouth of the pit a beautiful bright star. Steadily gazing at it, she felt herself to be gradually lifted upward. She looked down to ascertain how it was, and immediately found herself at the bottom of the pit. Again her eye caught sight of the star, and again she felt herself ascending. She had reached a considerable height. Still desirous of an explanation of so strange a phenomenon, she turned her eye downward, and fell to the bottom with fearful violence. On recovering from the effect of the shock, she bethought herself as to the meaning of it all, and once again turned her eye to the star, still shining so brightly above, and yet once again felt herself borne upward. Steadily did she keep her eye upon its light, till, at length, she found herself out of the horrible pit, and her feet firmly planted on the solid ground above. It taught her the lesson that in the hour of danger and trouble, deliverance is to be found, and found only, by looking to Jesus. — *Guthrie.*

16—18. (16) **good,** in the sense of sweet and comforting.[h] (17) **hide not,** Ps. xvii. 8. **servant,** "the Psalmist pleads his calling; surely God cannot withhold His help from one who is bound to His service. The plea would have special force if the Psalmist was a prophet like Jeremiah," (Am. iii. 7).

a Job xix. 13; Ps. xxxi. 11; Is. liii. 3; Jno. i. 11; vii. 5.

b Mat. x. 35, 36.

c Je. xx. 8, 9; Jno. ii. 17.

d "This portion of the Ps. has no direct bearing upon our Lord's life. No such external demonstrations of sorrow, no fasting, no sackcloth, gave occasion to revilings in 'His case; on the contrary, He was reproached for neglecting them." — *Spk. Com.*

e Ps. xxxv. 13.

"I don't know about having too much zeal, but I think it is better the pot should boil over than not boil at all." — *Whitecross.*

f Ps. xxxii. 6; Is. xlix. 8; lv. 6; 2 Cor. vi. 2.

"But I pray to Thee, O Jehovah! A time of favor, O God, through the abundance of Thy mercy." — *Hengstenberg.*

g "A dug pit usually with water in the bottom." — *Stanley.*

"A credible historian informs us that about one hundred and fifty years ago there was an earthquake in Switzerland, which precipitated part of a mountain upon a village that stood beneath it, and crushed every house and inhabitant to atoms, except the corner of one cottage, where the master of the house, with his poor family, were together praying unto God."

h "This appeal to God's tender mercy shows how great was the strait of the holy prophet." — *Calvin.*

speedily, *Heb. make haste to answer me.*[a] (18) **deliver,** *R. V.*, "ransom." **because . . enemies,** *i. e.* lest my enemies should glory in my prolonged distress.[b]

God's nearness to the soul (*vs.* 18).—I. In what relations? 1. As a Father and Friend; 2. As a Guide and Guardian; 3. As a Redeemer and Portion. II. In what circumstances? 1. In reading the Bible: 2. In prayer; 3. In religious ordinances; 4. In affliction and death. III. For what end? 1. To establish communion with the soul; 2. To repel evil from the soul: 3. To prepare the soul for heaven. — *G. Brooks.*

Trouble.—

Heavier the cross, the heartier prayer;
The bruised herbs most fragrant are.
If sky and wind were always fair,
The sailor would not watch the star;
And David's Psalms had ne'er been sung
If grief his heart had never wrung.—*From the German.*

19—21. (19) **Thou hast known,** *R. V.*, "Thou knowest;" "thou" very emphatic. **reproach,** *etc. vss.* 7–12.[c] (20) **broken my heart,** expression of the deepest grief. **full of heaviness,** *Polychr.*, "sore sick," incurable, *comp.* Jer. xv. 18. **take pity,** or sympathize; lament with me.[d] (21) **gall,** *Heb. rosh. Polychr.*, "poison." Some bitter substance; precisely what cannot be ascertained. **vinegar,** sour wine, "wh. had gone bad and become nauseous and unfit to drink." — *Cam. Bib. Comp.* Matt. xxvii. 34, 48.

Vinegar (*vs.* 21). — The refreshing quality of vinegar cannot be doubted; but a royal personage had reason to complain of his treatment in having this only presented to him to quench his thirst, when it was only made use of by the meanest people. Pitts tells us that the food that he and the rest had when first taken by the Algerines was generally only five or six spoonfuls of vinegar, half a spoonful of oil, a few olives, with a small quantity of black biscuit, and a pint of water a day. The juice of lemons is what those of higher life now use, and probably among the higher orders the juice of pomegranates might be used to produce a grateful acidity. — *Harmer.*

22—26. "At the thought of the intolerable inhumanity of his enemies he can no longer restrain himself, and breaks out into fierce imprecation." (22) **table,** their table, with all its sumptuousness and luxury.[e] **and welfare,** *R. V.*, "and when they are in peace." (23) **darkened,** *comp. vs.* 3. **loins . . shake,** expressive of terror, dismay, and feebleness.[f] (24) **wrathful anger,** these combined words indicate the strength of the Psalmist's feeling. (25) **habitation,** *R. V., marg.* "their encampment," the circular enclosure for cattle. It may be used to include their house and possessions. (26) **persecute,** *etc.*, those under the judgment of God may surely expect the pity and sympathy of man.[g] **and . . wounded,** *Cheyne,* "and they add to the pain of thy mortally wounded."

Suffering. — I. God knows what his people suffer; how much, how long, from whom, for what. His people should find consolation in this knowledge. 1. That trial is permitted by Him. 2. That it is apportioned by Him. 3. That it has its design from Him. 4. That when the design is accomplished, it will be removed by Him. — *G. Rogers.*

God a deliverer. — *The miners of Wales.* — There are many coalpits in the principality. There are men down there who hardly have a gleam of sunlight. How are they to get up? There is a string at the bottom; they pull it, a bell up at the top rings; a rope, worked by a steam-engine, is let down, and in this way they ascend to the top. A man gets down into the pit of trouble; he cannot get up himself; he must ring the bell of prayer, and God will hear it, and send down the rope that is to lift him out of it. — *T. Jones.*

27—30. (27) **Add iniquity,**[h] instead of taking away their iniquities by forgiveness, let one iniquity accumulate upon another. **come . . righteousness,** so as to escape the judgment on their sins. (28) **blotted,** *etc.*, a very painful prayer. **book of the living,** fig. from the registers of citizens.[i] *R. V.*, "book of life." "But — and this mitigates what would otherwise be the awful character of the imprecation — 'the book of life,' is not here to be understood in the full N. T. sense as 'the book of eternal life.'" (29) **poor**

a Ps. xl. 17.

b "The honor of the all-holy One cannot suffer the enemies of the righteous to triumph over him." —*Delitzsch.*

"The Psalmist's straits make the black backing which turns his soul into a mirror, reflecting God's promises in its trust."

c "In the certainty that all his sorrows, fears, sickness, reproach, sufferings, are known to God, the Psalmist again finds his consolation."—*Perowne.*

d "The expressions of this and the foll. *vss.* should be compared with the account of our Lord's final suffering. Mat. xxvi., xxvii."

e "And to them when at their ease, [let it become] a trap."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

Ps. xxiii. 5.

f Da. v. 6.

g 2 Chr. xxviii. 9; Job, xix. 21; Is. liii. 4.

"The Eastern table was often a leather flap laid on the ground, which the Psalmist desires may start up as a snare, and close upon the feasters as they sit round it secure."—*Exp. Bib.*

h "There is no stronger malediction to be found in the Old Testament, unless that in Ps. cix. be considered more virulent. Neither can we say anything in palliation of the bitter spirit it reveals." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

i Je. xxii. 30; Ez. xiii. 9.

It is recorded of the Duke of Ormond, in the 17th century, that he never prepared for bed, or went abroad in the morning, till he had withdrawn for an hour into his closet.

"The Romans in a great district were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temple of their gods to fight with them; and so they overcame. This ought to be the course of every true Christian, in times of public distress, to fly to the weapons of the church — prayers and tears. The Spartans' walls were their spears; the Christian's walls are his prayers." — *Spencer.*

and **sorrowful**, *i. e.* afflicted and suffering. **on high**, in a high fortress, 2 Pet. v. 6. (30) **magnify**, *etc.*, Ps. l. 14.

Humiliation and exaltation. — I. The humilation that precedes exaltation. 1. Deep; "I am poor and sorrowful." 2. Confessed: "I am poor," *etc.* II. The exaltation that follows humiliation. 1. Divine: "Thy salvation, O Lord." "Though the Lord be high," *etc.* 2. Complete: God does nothing by halves. 3 Pre-eminent: "Set me up on high." — *G. Rogers.*

Sin its own punishment. — Sin, carried far enough, becomes its own punishment. Let but a voracious glutton be bound to sit at a well-furnished table but two hours after he had filled his stomach, he would account it an intolerable penance. Let but the drunkard be forced to drink on with those that can drink him down, how he is a burden to himself, and a scorn to his fellow drunkards! Let but a lazy sluggard be confined three days to his bed, and how weary will he be of his bed of down! How is the idle person more weary of his idleness than another is of work! — *Samuel Annesley.* — *The dying master and his slave.* — The conscience of the sinner, when aroused, not only accuses himself, but his accomplices also. A rich southern gentleman, careless about his soul, used often to invite his minister, a worldly man and a mere hireling, to hunt, drink wine, play cards, and join parties of pleasure with him. The poor worldling was taken sick, and his case was pronounced dangerous. His mind was terribly agitated; he felt unprepared to die. His physician asked him one day if he would not send for his minister to converse with him, and offer prayer in his behalf. No, he had no confidence in him: he could hardly bear the mention of his name. He had a poor, pious negro servant by the name of Ben. The master had sometimes overheard him at prayer. "Call for Ben," said he. He came. "Ben," said the dying man, "can't you pray for your poor master?" Down he fell on his knees, and pleaded for the salvation of the sinner's soul. — *Cheever.*

a Le. xi. 3.

31—33. (31) **This also**, *R. V.*, "And it." **horns and hoofs**, marking his age, as not under three years, and also as being ceremonially clean.[a] (32) **humble**, *R. V.*, "meek." **heart shall live**, *see* Ps. xxii. 26. *Polychr.*, "who seek after God and their heart will revive." (33) **prisoners**, those who suffer oppression and persecution for His sake.

Cornelius Scipio, the great Roman general, when once he had assumed the toga, never undertook any affair of importance without having passed some time alone in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

Three greatest things. — I. The greatest thing in man. The "heart." It is the heart that marks character (Prov. xxiii. 7); that settles worth (1 Sa. xvi. 7); that determines destiny (Rom. x. 9, 10; Prov. iv. 23). Even among men, the man who has "no heart," whatever else he may have, is despised; whereas he who has a kind heart, though he may have many failings, is beloved (*cf.* Nabal and David). II. The greatest work for man. "Seek God." This implies that, though man is separated from God through sin, there is a possibility of return. God has drawn near to us, and we may draw near to God. Christ is the true mercy-seat. In Him God and man meet and are reconciled. The chief object of life is to seek God (Ps. xxvii. 8; Isa. lv. 6). In His works and in His Word, in the person of His Son, and in doing His will by the Spirit, He is evermore to be found of those who truly seek Him (Isa. xlv. 19; Amos v. 8). III. The greatest blessedness for man. "Live." Life is the greatest boon — but only when it is the life of the heart. It is in Christ that we find our true life and our highest blessedness.

"If you have the sun, you have the rays — if you have the fountain, you have all the living stream. If the Lord is yours, all things are yours." —*Stanford.*

"We live by admiration, faith, and hope,
And ever as these are well and wisely fixed
In dignity of being we ascend." — *Pul. Com.*

34—36. (34) **moveth**, or creepeth. (35) **save Zion**, expression suitable to the time of the exile. **that they may dwell**, better, "and men shall abide there." (36) **seed**, *etc.*, "the young, God-fearing generation, the children of the servants of God among the exiles." — *Delitzsch.* **love his name**, *i. e.* "those who faithfully observe the first and great commandment."

God looks not at the pomp of words and variety of expressions, but at the sincerity and devotion of the heart. The key opens the door not because of its gilt, but because it fits the lock.

The creation praising God (*vs.* 34). — Praise is due to God on account — I. Of what He is in Himself. II. Of what He is in His relations. III. Of what He has accomplished. IV. Of His wonderful gifts. V. Of His grand discoveries. — *J. Evans.*

Nature praising God. —

Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,

Of His unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odors, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
The forms with which He sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with Him! whom what he finds
Of flavor or of scent, in fruit or flower,
Of what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God. — *Cowper.*

"No man can hinder our private addresses to God; every man can build a chapel in his breast, himself the priest, his heart the sacrifice, and the earth he treads on the altar" — *Jeremy Taylor.*

PSALM THE SEVENTIETH.

author,— unknown; see Ps. xl., of which this is a fragment, vss. 13-17.

Prayer of a persecuted saint.

Title, comp. Ps. xxxviii.

1—5. (1) **O God,** *Elohim.* **to help me,** Heb. *to my help.*[a] (2) **my soul,** or life. **desire my hurt,** or delight in my misfortune. (3) **reward of their shame,** *lit. upon the heels of;* on account of. **shame,** disgraceful conduct; or attempts to put me to shame. *Polychr.,* "Let them be appalled when their plans are thwarted." (4) **God,** *Elohim:* term *Jehovah* is used Ps. xl. 16. (5) **But I,** *lit.* "but as for me who am afflicted and needy." **no tarrying,** God never does tarry, but He often seems to His saints so to do.[b]

Urgency in prayer. — It implies — I. A deep sense of present and immediate need. This was awakened in him by — 1. The extremity of the danger to which he was exposed; 2. The limitations of the resources at his command; 3. The conviction that adequate help could be found only in God. II. Apparent delay in answering his prayer. 1. During what may seem delay to us God may be answering our prayer; 2. The seeming delay may be productive of richest blessing. (1) It may teach us the most important lessons; (2) It may develop the noblest attributes of character. It may intensify our desires; may promote patience; may teach and train us to wait calmly and resolutely upon God; may develop trust. III. Strong faith in the entreatableness of God. — *William Jones.*

A beautiful envelope. — A poor servant girl in London, who had attended the ragged schools and received spiritual as well as mental benefit from them, one evening at the close of the school put into the minister's hand, much to his surprise, a note containing a half-sovereign. Her entire wages were only eight pounds a year. She offered this as a thanksgiving tribute to God for the blessings received from the schools, very modestly remarking that it was not much. "But, sir," said she, "I have wrapped it up with an earnest prayer and many tears." Here is, indeed, a most rare and beautiful envelope. Would that our offerings, as we lay them before God's altar, were more generally enclosed in such golden envelopes. "An earnest prayer and many tears." Assuredly she shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. — *Old Jonathan.*

a Ps. lxxi. 12.

b Ps cxli. 1; 2 Co. i. 10.

"Prayer is not a sentiment or a theory; it is a working instrument, which is to do certain things, just as a pen is to write, or a knife to cut."

"The vitality of the church could not continue if the saint of humble and retiring piety, and of fervent prayerfulness were removed, any more than the body can live when there is no heart and no lungs." — *Barnes.*

PSALM THE SEVENTY-FIRST.

author, — poss. Jeremiah

Prayer of a gray-headed servant of God.

The expressions are borrowed largely from other Ps esp. the xxii., xxxi., xxxv., xl.

1—5. (1) **In thee,** *etc.*, *see* Ps. xxxi. 1-3. **put my trust,** have I taken refuge. **confusion,** *i.e.* disgraced. (2) **in thy righteousness,** which ensures faithfulness to gracious promises of defense and help. (3) **strong habitation,** or a rock of habitation, or stronghold on a rock.[c] **resort,** when danger threatens. (4) **unrighteous,** *etc.*, the godlessness of the ways of his enemies seems most to have impressed the Psalmist. *Polychr.* "clutch of outrage and violence." (5) **hope,** source of my confidence, reliance.[d]

From my youth. — The remembering and acknowledging of God in youth will be great satisfaction in old age. O what joy will reflection upon youthful piety yield! Even Seneca, a heathen, could say: "Youth well spent is the greatest comfort of old age." David could confidently plead with God for deliverance out of the hand of the wicked. "For," saith he, "Thou art my hope, O Lord God: Thou art my trust from my youth." "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth." An ingenuous master will not turn off a superannuated servant. When the proconsul bade Polycarp deny Christ and swear by the emperor, he answered: "I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and he hath not once injured me, and shall I now deny him?" Jacob could say: "God hath fed me all my

c De. xxxiii. 27.

d Je. xiv. 8; xvii. 13, 1, 7; 1 Ti. i. 1; Col. i. 27.

"In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart." — *Bunyan.*

life long unto this day; He hath been kind to me all my days, and I trust He will look to me even to the end; and shall I now turn my back on Him?" Whither can I go to mend myself for a master? "Thou only hast the words of eternal life." He that hath been the stay of my youth, will be the staff of my age. I dare venture my soul upon His promise who hath hitherto maintained me by His providence. "In the days of my youth, the secret of God was upon my tabernacle, His candle did shine upon my head, and by His light I walked through darkness;" and, though now "the sun, and the light, and moon and stars be darkened," in this my natural horizon, yet "the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" I have abundant experience of His grace and presence. O the days of mercy I have had many years ago! A good man said: "I got that in my youth, which I would not for all the world have to get now." — *Oliver Heywood.*

"It is a good beginning, and a recommendation to our prayers, when we can declare our faith and trust to be in God alone." — *Edward Walter.*

6—9. (6) **By . . up,** as in a mother's arms.[a] *Cam. Bib.*, "On Thee have I stayed myself from my birth." (7) **wonder,** prob. as suffering so severely under God's chastisements.[b] *Polychr.* "as a monster." *comp.* Is. lxii. 14. **Set my mouth,** *R. V.*, "my mouth shall be," *etc.* (9) **old age,** "this expression, combined with the allusion to old age and gray hairs in *vs.* 18, indicates that the writer was drawing near to the natural term of human life, and already felt the infirmities of old age creeping upon him."

A wonder. — Consider the text with reference to David, to Christ, and to the Christian. I. With reference to David. 1. David was a wonder as a man. 2. As a king, 3. As a servant of God. II. With respect to Christ. 1. Christ was a wonder in His person. 2. In His life. 3. In His miracles. 4. In His teaching. 5. In His sufferings. 6. In His ascension and mediatorial glory. III. With regard to the Christian. 1. The Christian is a wonder to himself. 2. To the world. 3. To wicked spirits. 4. To the angels in heaven. — *John Cawood.*

Praying, waiting, and working. — A working man once said "I have often been without a penny in my pocket, or a crust in my cupboard. What do I do then? I go down on my knees, I put up my prayer to God, and then I go out and look for it." He added, "There is no use in praying if you don't expect an answer to your prayer, and I've never been disappointed. But don't suppose when you have prayed you are to stand idle, and expect the answer to drop down on itself. When you have prayed you must put your own shoulder to the wheel, and then God will give you the blessing."

[a] "God is a Father who bears those who trust Him in His arms, and carries them in His bosom; they are as children, who lean all their weight upon Him, and find their sweetest rest in His supporting Hand. This is the very idea of *faith*, according to its Hebrew signification." — *Perowne.*

[b] So Job was regarded by his friends; Zec. iii. 8; 1 Co. iv. 9.

"The one permanent unchangeable joy is to have Christ Jesus in the heart and to serve Him in the daily life, and to walk in the sunshine of His love." — *T. L. Cuyler.*

10—13. (10) **against me,** so as to depress and crush me; what they say is indicated in *vs.* 11. **counsel together,** Ps. lxxxiii. 3–5. (11) **God hath forsaken,** this was the uttermost of bitterness to the pious trusting soul. **persecute,** *R. V.*, "pursue." (12) **O God,** *etc.*, see Ps. xxii. 11, 19. (13) **Let,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "be ashamed and disgraced;" see Ps. xxv. 4, 26; xl. 14; lxx. 2.

"Peace does not dwell in outward things, but within the soul. It springs from acquiescence even in disagreeable things, not in an exemption from suffering." — *Fénélon.*

Old age. — June 28. This day I enter on my eighty-sixth year. I now find I grow old: (1) My sight is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light. (2) My strength is decayed so that I walk much slower than I did some years since. (3) My memory of names, whether of persons or places, is decayed, till I stop a little to recollect them. What I should be afraid of, is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities; but thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God. — *John Wesley.*

"There is no such thing in the long history of God's kingdom as an unanswered prayer. Every true desire from a child's heart finds some true answer in the heart of God. Jesus Christ did not pray in vain, or to an unknown God, nor has He spoken in ignorance of God or of His brethren, when He says, 'Ask and receive, that your joy may be full."—*Norman Macleod.*

The Divine Helper. —

When on my days of life the night is falling,
And in the winds from unsunned spaces blown
I hear far voices out in the darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown,

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love divine, O Helper ever present,
Be thou my strength and stay! — *Whittier.*

"A child in the dark is comforted by grasping its father's hand."

14—16. (14) **more and more,** to keep on praising while help is indeed the triumph of faith. *Polychr.*, "the longer the more," *i. e.* the

longer he waits the more he praises. (15) **righteousness,** right doings, wh. are therefore *merciful* doings. **know . . numbers,** Ps. cxxxix. 17, 18. (16) **go,** *etc.*, *rend.* "I will come (out of my sick chamber), making the mighty acts of Jehovah the subject of praise."[a]

Praise.— I. The determination avowed. 1. To recount the instances of the Divine faithfulness in his deliverances. 2. To recount them publicly; "My mouth," *etc.* 3. Constantly: "All the day." II. The reason assigned: "For I know not," *etc.* "Eternity's too short to utter all Thy praise." Therefore, I begin it now, and will continue it. — *Spurgeon.*

Mercies. — When David spoke of his enemies, he said they were more in number than the hairs of his head; he had, therefore, some idea of their number, and found a figure suitable to set it out; but, in the case of the Lord's covenant mercies, he declares, "I know not the number," and does not venture upon any sort of comparison. To creatures belong number and limit, to God and His grace there is neither. We may, therefore, continue to tell out His great salvation all day long, for the theme is utterly inexhaustible. — *Spurgeon.*

17—21. (17) **hitherto,** faithfully up to the present. **declared,** *etc.*, habitually and constantly. **wondrous works,** a special term for the singular and conspicuous works of God, both in nature (Job v. 9), and in His dealings with His people (Ex. iii. 20), particularly in the great crises of their history (lxxviii. 4, 11, 32), which declare His power and love, and arouse the admiration of all who behold them. — *Cam. Bib.* (18) **when,** *etc.*, *Heb. unto old age* and gray hairs. **strength,** *etc.*, *lit.* "arm," *R. V.*, "Until I have declared . . . unto the next generation." (19) *Polychr.*, "Up to high heaven, O God, reach the great things thou hast done, *etc.*" "Thy righteousness, also," *Polychr.* adds to *vs.* 18. (20) **me,** (3 times) the best commentators trans. "us." **depths of the earth,** a fig, expression for overwhelming affliction. (21) **comfort me,** *etc.*, by restoring health and mercies, as to Job. *Cheyne,* "and turn to comfort me."

The Christian's old age (*vs.* 18). — I. If this be true, the aged Christian must be happy in the contemplation of his past conduct and influence. II. He is happy in the contemplation of the blessings which have marked his history. III. He is happy in the contemplation of his life's history, because of the lessons which it has served to teach. IV. The aged disciple is happy in the continued possession of his life's chief good. V. The aged disciple is happy in the near prospect of realizing his life's brightest hopes. — *Jesse Guernsey.*

Old age. — Ossian, in his heathenish darkness, looked upon old age as dark and unlovely. Through the light of revelation I behold in it beauty and glory. It is beautiful in its constancy, beautiful in its complacency, beautiful in its contentment. Beautiful, too, in its childlikeness — feeding by the shepherd's tents with the little lambs of the flock. Old age is beautiful in its wise counsels, and in its patient endurance of the thoughtless scorn and neglect of the inexperienced, and in its persevering buoyancy, in spite of frailty. And it is beautiful in its white locks, waving above the river of death. The aged Christian almost grasps his crown which is held awaiting him, and the brightness of it is already lighting up his earthly brow. His citizenship is more in heaven than upon earth. Full of years and of experience, he is like perfected fruit. He is as a shock of corn fully ripe. There is a golden glory about pious old age. It is altogether beautiful.— *S. A. McC.*

22—24. (22) **psaltery,** *lit. with an instrument of a lute.* **Even thy truth,** better, "Even thy faithfulness." **Holy . . Israel,** a name for God only used in the psalms twice.[b] (23) **My lips,** *etc.*, ring out their joy in a shout. *Comp.* Ps. xxxv. 28. **which . . redeemed,** *Polychr.*, "because Thou hast been a redeemer." (24) **are confounded,** he speaks as if he felt that his prayer was already realized; *vs.* 13.

Gratitude.— The Marshal D'Armont having taken Crodon, in Bretagne, during the League, gave orders to put every Spaniard to death who was found in the garrison. Though it was announced to be death to disobey the orders of the general, an English soldier ventured to save a Spaniard. He was arraigned for this offense before a court-martial, when he confessed the fact, and declared himself to be ready to suffer death, provided they would still be willing to save the life of the Spaniard. The marshal being much surprised at such conduct, asked the soldier how he came to be so much interested in

[a] "I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord Jahve, I will praise Thy righteousness, Thee alone." — *Delitzsch.*

"The verb used never means *to go forth*, but always *to go in*, or simply *to come*." — *Perowne.*

"Greatness increasing with comfort, and comfort increasing with greatness; very rarely united." — *George Rogers.*

[b] Is. lii. 40, liii. 1; Eze. iv. 7.

"It is good before you address yourself to the duty of prayer to read a portion of Holy Scripture, which will be of great use to furnish you both with matter and words for prayer, especially David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles. The Holy Spirit hath provided for us a treasury or storehouse of what is suitable for all occasions." — *Philip Henry.*

"Thank God most High for all His unmerited mercies and loving kindness to me, to this day, now closing my seventy-seventh year. Through waves, and clouds, and storms, He has gently cleared my way. Praise to Him that sitteth on the throne, and maketh all things new. Amen, and Amen. O eternity, blissful eternity! Sin, earth and hell I now defy; I lean upon my Saviour's breast; God be thanked! Amen The end shall soon come; joyful news!" — *Gideon Ouseley.*

[b] Ps. lxxviii. 41; lxxxix. 18.

"Love is God's loaf; and this is that feeding for which we are taught to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.'" — *Beecher.*

"If we are instant in prayer, every little circumstance awakens the disposition to pray, and desires and words are always ready." — *Felix Neff.*

the preservation of the life of the Spaniard. "Because, sir," replied he, "in a similar situation he once saved my life." The marshal, greatly pleased with the soldier, granted him pardon, saved the Spaniard's life, and highly commended them both. Oh, that Christians never forgot Him who, while they were yet enemies, died for them, then would they neither at any time deny His name, nor decline sustaining loss in His cause.— *Gray.*

PSALM THE SEVENTY-SECOND.

author,— prob. Dav. in his old age

A prayer, at the coronation of Solomon.

1, 2. (1) **judgments,** such knowledge of Thy will, and such a spirit of judgment, that he may worthily take the place of chief magistrate. Just judgment is the crowning characteristic of the ideal king. Is. xi. 3 *ff.* **righteousness,** or spirit of rightness, to control all his actions.[a] (2) **He shall,** better, *may he.*[b] **judge,** give sentence; *Polychr.*, "govern." **poor,** afflicted ones. *Polychr.*, "pious ones."

St. Patrick's prayer.— St. Patrick's prayer was very striking, as he was going to preach at Tara, expecting persecution. "At Tara, to-day, the strength of God pilot me, the power of God preserve me: may the wisdom of God instruct me, the eye of God watch over me, the ear of God hear me, the Word of God give me sweet talk, the hand of God defend me, the way of God guide me. Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ after me, Christ in me, Christ under me, Christ over me, Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand, Christ on this side, Christ on that side, Christ at my back; Christ in the heart of every one to whom I speak, Christ in the mouth of every person who speaks to me, Christ in the eye of every person who looks upon me, Christ in the ear of every one who hears me at Tara to-day."

The true king.—

He's a king,
A true right king, who dares do aught, save **wrong;**
Fears nothing mortal, but to be unjust;
Who is not blown up with the flatt'ring puffs
Of spongy sycophants; who stands unmoved,
Despite the jostling of opinion;
Who can enjoy himself, mauger the throng
That strive to press the quiet out of him;
Who sits upon Jove's footstool as I do,
Adorning, not affecting, majesty;
Whose brow is wreathed with the silver crown
Of clear content.— *Marston.*

"The people are fashioned," says Claudian, "according to the example of their king; and edicts are of less power than the model which his life exhibits."

3—5. (3) **mountains,** the characteristic feature of a country like Palestine.[c] Mountains and hills are used to represent the whole country. **by righteousness,** by means of; through the righteousness of the rulers.[d] The meaning is: Through the general establishment of "righteousness" shall "peace" overspread the land. (4) **judge,** vindicate the cause. **children . . needy,** those born to poverty.[e] Job xxix. 12–17. (5) **They shall,** better, *so that they.* **fear thee,** *i. e.* God. **sun and moon,**[f] the types of durability, "figs. of eternity as compared with the fleeting generations of men;" *trans.* "while the sun endureth, and as long as the moon doth shine throughout," *etc.*

Judging the needy.— Mr. Sherman had an excellent Christian wife, greatly beloved by all who knew her, and especially so by the poor. A lady overheard some poor women speaking of her. "There she is," said one of them," "the dear creature; she is like Jesus Christ." "How so?" asked another. "I know she is very good; but why is she like Jesus Christ?" "Because," was the reply, "she never despises any one, and has always a smile and a kind word for the poor." — *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

6, 7. (6) **He shall come down,** fig. for "He shall be like rain coming down." **mown grass,**[g] fields recently mown, and looking bare and brown. (7) **the righteous,** better *Polychr.*, "righteousness." **so . . endureth,** *lit. till there be no moon.*[h]

The reign of Christ (*vss.* 6–11). — I. The nature of Christ's reign. 1. It is gentle in its influence; 2. It is progressive in its development; 3. It is mighty in its results. II. The extent of Christ's reign. 1. It shall include the most

a "A term referring to the inner mind and spirit, the wisdom and discernment which should be the reflex of the Divine mind." — *Perowne.*

b Is. xi. 3, 4; xxxii. 1.

c Joel iii. 18.

d Is. xxxii. 17.

e "Those who are born to poverty are more or less regarded, by an unrighteous government, as having no rights." — *Delitzsch.*

f "Lit. *with the sun,* coeval with its existence, and *before,* or *in presence of* the moon while it lasts."— *Fausset.*

g "The mown meadow is particularly mentioned, bec. the roots of the grass would be most exposed to the summer heat, after the crop had been gathered in, and the effect would be most striking in the shooting of the green blade after the shower." — *Perowne.*

h Job xiv. 12.

distant regions; 2. The rudest tribes; 3. The most exalted individuals. — *G. Brooks.*

Righteous — Peace.— Do you ask what he is individually? The answer is, "King of Righteousness;" a being loving righteousness, working righteousness, promoting righteousness, procuring righteousness, imparting righteousness to those whom he saves, perfectly sinless, and the enemy and abolisher of all sin. Do you ask what he is practically, and in relation to the effect of his reign? The answer is, "King of Peace:" a sovereign whose kingdom is a shelter for all who are miserable, a covert for all who are persecuted, a resting-place for all who are weary, a home for the destitute, and a refuge for the lost.— *Charles Sanford.*

8—11. (8) **dominion,** *etc.*, a prayer, "may he have," *etc.* Ex. xxiii. 31. **the river,** *i. e.* the Euphrates.[a] "The sovereignty of Solomon over tributary peoples extended to the Euphrates." (9) **in the wilderness,** the Bedouin tribes of the desert districts S. and E. of Sol.'s kingdom. *Polychr.*, "Before him opposers will bow." **lick the dust,** the bowed attitude of profound submission is indicated. (10) **Tarshish,** farthest point commerce reached in the Mediterranean.[b] "The El Dorado of the Hebrews." **isles,** rather "coast-land" of the Medit. sea. **presents,** in acknowledgment of benefits received. **Seba,** the great South Arabian kingdom. **Seba,** or Saba, Josephus identifies with the island of Meroë.[c] (11) **all kings,** hyperbolical expression. *All,* in the sense of very many.

Eastern prostrations (*vs.* 9).— In Mr. Hugh Boyd's account of his embassy to the king of Candy, in Ceylon, there is a paragraph which signally illustrates this part of the Psalm, and shows the adulation and obsequious reverence with which an Eastern monarch is approached. Describing his introduction to the king, he says, "The removal of the curtain was the signal of our obeisances. Mine, by stipulation, was to be only kneeling. My companions immediately began the performance of theirs, which were in the most perfect degree of Eastern humiliation. They almost literally licked the dust; prostrating themselves with their faces almost close to the stone floor, and throwing out their arms and legs; then rising on their knees, they repeated in a very loud voice a certain form of words of the most extravagant meaning that can be conceived; that the head of the king of kings might reach beyond the sun: that he might live a thousand years," *etc.* "When the king changed his place of residence, or traveled, the elders of his tribe assembled, and carried before him a sceptre, and a lance with a kind of flag upon it to give notice of the king's approach to all who might be traveling on the road, that they might pay him the customary homage, which was by prostrating themselves before him on the ground, wiping off the dust from his feet with the corners of their garments, and kissing them."— *Glasse.*

12—15. (12) **shall deliver,**[d] better "he delivereth," this is the spirit of His rule. "He merits such submission by the exercise of every royal virtue." **poor,** *Polychr.*, "the pious;" *Cam. Bib.*, "the afflicted." **no helper,** such as the friendless orphan. (13) **poor,** or weak. (14) **their soul,** *i. e.* "their lives." **from deceit,** *R. V.*, "oppression," the schemes of deceitful enemies. **precious . . sight,** so He will act as a righteous avenger *Cheyne*, "costly," *i. e.* something to be rescued at all costs. (15) **he shall,** better regarded as the expression of desire and prayer, *may he live, etc.*, or with *Polychr.*, "So that they live, and give him gold of Sheba."[e]

Contrasts.— The Angolani so despised their slaves that they would sometimes give as many as twenty-two for one hunting dog. . . . But Christ prefers the soul of one of His servants to the whole world, since He died that it might be made more capable of entering into eternal felicity. For breaking one goblet the Roman cast his slave into the pond to be devoured by the murænæ. But the Son of God came down from heaven to earth to deliver mankind, His vile, ungrateful, faithless servants, from the pangs of the serpent, like the golden fleece, and save them as Jonah from the whale. Is not their blood precious in His sight? Alexander the Great acknowledged at death that he was a frail and feeble man. "Lo! I," said he, "am dying, whom you falsely called a god." But Christ proved that he was God when, by His own death, he overcame, and, as I may say, slew death.— *Thomas Le Blanc.* — *Praise to Christ* (*vs.* 15) — See yon starry host! see the mighty cohorts of cherubs and seraphs! Let men begone, and they shall praise Him; let the

Comp. for the fig. De. xxxii. 2; Job xxix. 22, 23; Pr. xvi. 15; 2Sa. xxiii. 4.

"The king is the shadow on earth of God's righteousness, and the organ for the manifestation thereof, so as to draw men to true devotion."

a "The Psalmist is here describing the universal monarchy of Christ."— *S. Cyril.*

b "Tartessus, a colony of the Phœnicians, in the S. of Spain. It traded with Tyre in silver, iron, tin, and lead."— *Perowne.*

c "It may be safely concluded that Seba denotes the African tribe inhabiting this very fertile district."— *Jennings and Lowe.* Is. lx. 6, 9.

"The Lord's Prayer, for a succession of solemn thoughts, for fixing the attention upon a few great points, for suitableness to every condition, for sufficiency, for conciseness, without obscurity, for the weight and real importance of its petition, is without an equal or a rival."— *Paley*

d "The connection of thought is observable. The extension of the king's dominion is the result not of military force, but of moral influence; all nations will be won by the righteousness of His sway, more esp. by His care for the poor and afflicted."— *Spk. Com.*

e Some think the reference is to the man whom the king saves; he will bring presents in recognition of the king's kindness, and he will pray for the king's prosperity.

A poor man once went to a pious minister, and

said, "Mr. Carter, what will become of me? I work hard, and fare hard, and yet I cannot thrive." Mr. Carter answered, "Still you want one thing; I will tell you what you shall do. Work hard, and fare hard, and *pray* hard; and I will warrant you shall thrive."

troops of the glorified cease their notes, and let no sweet melodies ever come from the lips of sainted men and women — yet the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even many thousand of angels, who always in their motion chant His praise. There is an orchestra on high, the music of which shall never cease, even were mortals extinct and all the human race swept from existence. Again: if angels were departed, still daily would He be praised; for are there not worlds on worlds, and suns on suns, and systems on systems, that could forever sing His praise? Yes! The ocean — that house of storms — would howl out His glories; the winds would swell the notes of His praise with their ceaseless gales; the thunders would roll like drums in the march of the God of armies; the illimitable void of ether would become vocal with song; and space itself would burst forth into one universal chorus, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah! still the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." And if these were gone, if creatures ceased to exist, He who ever liveth and reigneth, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwells, would still be praised, praised in Himself, and glorious in Himself; for the Father would praise the Son, and the Spirit would praise Him; and mutually blessing one another and rendering each other beatified, still "daily would He be praised."

"This king's treasure is the life of his subjects. Therefore he will put forth his power to preserve them and deliver them."

16, 17. (16) **There shall be,** better through *vss.* 16, 17, may there be . . . may . . . call him happy. **handful,** should be *abundance.* **top of the mountains,** the least fruitful parts of the land. Rich harvests even crowding up to the mountain tops.[a] **fruit thereof,** ripened corn ears. **shake,** the word used denotes movement and sound. **Lebanon,** covered with mighty forest trees.[b] **and . . earth,** *Polychr.*, "Like the herb of the field may inhabitants flourish in cities." (17) **His name shall,** or may his name endure. **continued,** *R. V., marg.* "have issue," be renewed, by his having a long posterity. **blessed in him,** or bless themselves in him: cite his case as an example of blessedness. — *Cam. Bib.* "May all nations bless themselves in him, (and) call him happy."

a "May corn cover even the mountain tops, and wave high and conspicuous as now does the Lebanon forest."— *Jennings and Lowe.*

b "Like Lebanon by soft winds fann'd, rustles the golden harvest far and wide."—*Keble.*

"For my own part, if I had an insupportable burden — if, from any cause, I were bent upon sacrificing every earthly hope as a peace offering towards heaven, I would make the wide world my cell, and good deeds to mankind my prayer. Many penitent men have done this, and found peace in it."—*Hawthorne.*

The greatness of the Redeemer's life (*vss.* 16, 17). — Applying these words to Christ, we observe — I. That the greatness of His life is seen in the magnitude of its influence. 1. It is co-extensive with creation; 2. Abiding; 3. Blissful; 4. Glorious. II. The greatness of His life is developed through means. 1. Truth; 2. Wealth; 3. Prayer. III. The greatness of His life is experienced in the heavenward direction it gives to mankind — He makes men pray to and praise Him. 1. Such persons owe their existence to Christ; 2. They are the finest specimens of human excellence; 3. They alone fully give scope to their faculties to honor him. IV. The greatness of His life is seen in the realization through eternity of His work on earth. He shall live — 1. In all that relates to men on earth — literature, institutions, *etc.*; 2. In the affectionate remembrance of a redeemed people; 3. As the expression of all excellence; 4. As the centre of all attraction to the glorified church. — *J. H. Hill.*

"This Psalm was penned by a king, it is dedicated to a king, and is chiefly intended concerning him who is 'King of kings.'"— *Joseph Caryl.*

Growth of grass in the East (*vs.* 16). — The rapidity with which grass grows in the East is the idea here referred to. "When the ground there hath been destitute of rain nine months together, and looks all of it like the barren sand in the deserts of Arabia, where there is not one spire of green grass to be found, within a few days after those fat enriching showers begin to fall, the face of the earth there (as it were by a new resurrection) is so revived and, as it were, so renewed, as that it is presently covered all over with a pure green mantle."— *Sir T. Roe.*

c "This and foll *vss* are a later doxology, appended here to mark the close of the Second Book of the Psalter."—*Perowne.*

18—20. (18) **Blessed,** *etc.*,[c] Ps. xli. 13. **wondrous things,** Job ix. 8. (19) **his glorious name,** the name of His glory. "A compendious expression for the majesty of His Being, as it is revealed to men." (20) **prayers of David,** on the ground of this expression we must not assert that no Davidic compositions are found in the later books. This *vs.* 20 is a compiler's note, intimating the end of Bk. II.

"The influence of believing prayer has a good analogy in the daguerreotype. When the character of God is, by means of prayer, brought to bear upon the mind of the be-

Note on the 72d Psalm. — If the primary reference of the psalm is to some actual king of Judah, it is plain that it reaches far beyond him. It is a "Messianic" psalm. It presents a picture of the kingdom of God upon earth in its ideal character of perfection and universality. It is thus in its nature not only a prayer and a hope but a prophecy. As each successive king of David's line failed to realize the ideal, it became clearer and clearer that its words pointed forward to One who was to come, to the true "Prince of

Peace." — *Cam. Bib.* — *The power of prayer.* — No human creature can believe how powerful prayer is, and what it is able to effect; none but those who have learnt it by experience. It is a great matter where, in extreme need, one can lay hold on prayer. I know that so often as I have earnestly prayed I have been richly heard, and have obtained more than I have prayed for. Indeed, God sometimes deferred the matter; nevertheless He came. Oh! how great an upright and godly Christian's prayer is! how powerful with God! That a poor human creature should speak with God's high majesty in heaven and not be affrighted, but know, on the contrary, that God smileth friendly upon him for Christ's sake. His dearly beloved Son! — *Luther.*

PSALM THE SEVENTY-THIRD.

author, — unknown

Subject the perplexity of the good at the temporal prosperity of the wicked, and the sorrows of the righteous.

This psalm begins Bk. III. generally designated the Psalms of Asaph. **1—4.** (1) **Truly,** same Heb. word as in *vs.* 13, "verily" and *vs.* 18, "surely," always "surely," in *R. V.* He begins the Ps. by affirming the conclusion to which he has been led.[a] **Israel,** as hinted in the next clause. **clean heart,** *R. V.*, "pure in heart," upon wh. admission to God's presence depends. Matt. v. 8; Ps. xxiv. 4. (2) **for me,** pronoun emphatic, contrasting himself with the Israel to wh. God is good. **gone,** turned aside fr. the right way. **slipped,** *Polychr.*, "There was nothing to keep my feet from slipping." (3) **envious,** indignant, an altogether unworthy disposition for a servant of God.[b] **foolish,** *R. V.*, "the arrogant," noisy blusterers puffed up with self-importance. **prosperity,** merely in temporal things.[c] (4) **bands,** tight cords, or fetters, only used besides in Is. lviii. 6. "They have no torments of pain and disease in their death." **in their death,** some think this should be *up to* their death, until they come to die.[d] **their strength,** *etc. Cam. Bib.*, "sound and stalwart is their body," *i. e.* "they drop into their grave while their strength is still undiminished." — *Pul. Com.* This fact puzzles the Psalmist, who has no vital conception of the future life.

The goodness of God to Israel (*vs.* 1). — I. The description here given of the people of God. 1. They are represented by their name; 2. By their character. II. The considerations by which their interest in the Divine love may be proved. 1. By His Son He saved them from hell; 2. By His Spirit He purifies them from sin; 3. By His providence He guides and guards them on earth; 4. At their death He receives them to Heaven. Apply: — (1) Let Israel love and trust God; (2) Let others seek to be of Israel.

Envy. — Actius Sincerus, a man of rare wit and great reputation, when in the presence of King Frederic, witnessed a discussion among physicians on what would most effectually sharpen the eyesight? The fumes of fennel, said some; the use of a glass, said others, some one thing, some another: but I, said he, replied envy. The doctors were astonished, and much amusement afforded to the audience at their expense. Then I continued: Does not envy make all things seem larger and fuller? And what could be more to your purpose than that the very faculty of seeing should itself be made greater and stronger. — *Thomas Le Blanc.* — *Narrow escapes.* — "The victorious general, in the hour of triumph, has not unfrequently reason to remember how nearly, through oversight or miscalculation, he had lost the day. A little more pressure on this wing or that, a trifling prolongation of the struggle, a few moments' further delay in the arrival of reinforcements, and his proud banner had been dragged in the dust. The pilot, steering his barque safely into port, sometimes knows how, through lack of seamanship, he nearly made shipwreck. And the successful merchant remembers crises in his history when he found himself on the brink of ruin — when the last straw only was wanting to precipitate the catastrophe." And like narrow escapes occur in the spiritual life. — *Pul. Com.*

5—9. (5) **not in trouble,** *lit.* "*in the trouble of man they are not, and with mankind they are not plagued.*"[e] **plagued,** *lit.* "smitten," a term specially used of God's chastisements. (6) **pride . . chain,** "hath encircled their neck."[f] The neck being regarded as the seat of pride: *i. e.* pride and brutality riot in their lives unchecked. **garment,** long, luxurious robes.[g] (7) **with fatness,**[h] according to *A. V.*, the first line describes "the insolent look of these sleek-faced villains." They gloat over their luxuries. But Heb. parallelism is best suited by the *LXX.*, "Their iniquity cometh forth from

a Yes it is so; after all, God is good, notwithstanding all my doubts." — *Perowne.*

b Job xxii. 6; xxi. 7; Ps. xxxvii. 1; Pr. xxiii. 17.

c "The great trial was to see the boastfulness of the wicked apparently justified by their security and success." — *Spk. Com.*

d "They have (suffer) no pangs, vigorous and well nourished is their belly." — *Delitzsch.*

"For they are in no peril of death, but are lusty and strong." — *Luther.*

e "These men seem exempt not only fr. the frailties and infirmities of men, but even fr. the common lot of men." — *Perowne.*

f "The original is far more striking but quite untranslatable. Pride, so to speak, necks them, covers their neck, gives it stiffness, clings to it as a chain of massive gold." — *Spk. Com.*

Pr. i. 9; iii. 22.

g Ps. cix. 18.

h Job xv. 27; Ps. xvii. 10.

liever — that mind being rendered sensitive by the Holy Spirit — it impresses there the Divine image. In this manner the image of Christ is formed in the soul, the existence of which the Scripture represents as inspiring the believer with the hope of glory." — *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation.*

the heart." **they . . wish,** "the imaginations of their hearts leap over all bounds." "The thoughts of their heart break forth into act.—*Wellhausen.* (8) **corrupt,** *lit. they deride,* or speak maliciously and blasphemously. **loftily,** *lit.* "on high," "haughtily," as if they were gods uttering an oracle. (9) **against the heavens,**[a] in boasting and blasphemy, claiming Divine authority. **through the earth,** all wh. they presume to order at their will.

Pride (*vs.* 6).— A young minister, addressing a rather fashionable audience, attacked their pride and extravagance, as seen in their dresses, ribands, ruffles, chains, and jewels. In the afternoon, an old minister preached powerfully on the corruption of human nature, the enmity of the soul towards God, and the necessity for a new heart. In the evening, as they sat together in private, the young minister said, "Father D., why do you not preach against the vanity and pride of the people for dressing so extravagantly?" "Ah, son Timothy," replied the venerable man, "while you are trimming off the top and branches of the tree, I am endeavoring to cut it up by the roots, and then the whole top must die!"—*R. T. S.*

10—12. (10) **his people,**[b] "rather, *therefore he turns his people hitherward; i. e.* by his great pretensions and his audacity, he (the wicked man) turns his followers to his own courses, and induces them to act as he acts."—*Pul. Com.* **waters,** *etc.*, or fullness of water is drained by them, *i. e.* broad and deep are the sinful pleasures they drink.[c] *Polychr.*, "Yet are they sated with bread, and water stands ready for them in abundance." (11) **they say,** these tempted ones, who are led away by the prosperity of the wicked. **And . . High?** *Polychr.* "How could knowledge of this ever reach the Most High?" (12) **Behold . . world,** *lit.* "Such are the wicked!" or "this is it with," *etc.*, this is the fact that appears; it seems to pay better to be wicked.

Contentment.— "You sometimes think your case hard," says a writer in the *New York Christian Advocate*, "but if you want to make yourself contented with your lot and station; if you wish your soul to overflow with gratitude to God for your unspeakable privileges and blessings; if you would shout aloud unto God for redeeming love, for Christianity, for the enjoyment of its blessings, even in the lowest, most degraded station on earth, then read the history of Lord Byron, then look into the miseries of those in high life, who know nothing of this sovereign balm. You will then no longer say with David, that you had 'washed your hands in innocency in vain.' 'When you go into the sanctuary, you will see their end.' Yes, you will see that it is all 'vanity and vexation of spirit.' You will not then be envious at the wicked.'"—*Whitecross.*

13—17. (13) **in vain,** his diligent efforts after a holy life seemed unrecognized. **washed,** *etc.*, Ps. xxvi. 6. (14) **plagued,** *vs.* 5. **chastened,** "My chastisement starts every morning afresh," as compared with the ease and substance of the wicked. (15) **If I say,** "this *vs.* expresses a supposition, and intimates that he had kept his troubles to himself. **offend,** *etc.*, or have betrayed:[d] "dealt unfaithfully with." **generation,** *etc.* In the *O. T.* Israel is called Jehovah's sons. Whatever the motive of his words, they might have shaken some lowly believers. Therefore he resolved on silence. Like all wise and devout men, he swallowed his own smoke, and let the process of doubting go on to its end of certainty, one way or another, before he spoke.— *Exp. Bib.* (16) **to know this,** by meditation to get at the reconcilement of social anomalies with God's moral government. **painful,** grievous. "The brain grew wearier, and the heart heavier." (17) **sanctuary,** as place of devout meditation and prayer, where God's presence and illumination are vouchsafed.[e] "The calmness of the sacred courts." **Then . . end,** *lit.* "And considered their final end;" "marked their final days."

A right act, but a wrong opinion (*vs.* 13).— I. Here is a right act. Implying — 1. The consciousness of personal defilement; 2. The possession of a cleansing element; 3. The effort of personal application. II. Here is a wrong opinion. Three facts show that it was a mistake to think the act in vain. 1. Moral holiness involves its own reward; 2. It is promoted by temporal adversity; 3. It will meet with its perfect recompense hereafter.— *Thomas.*

Their end.— Providence is often mysterious and a source of perplexity to us. Walking in Hyde Park one day, I saw a piece of paper on the grass. I picked it up; it was a part of a letter: the beginning was wanting, the end was not there; I could make nothing of it. Such is providence. You cannot see

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a "In the heavens"—*Revised Eng. Bib.*

"In the Kensington museum there is a picture of Dr. Johnson waiting outside in the anteroom of nobility or royalty to take his turn for an audience. The Lord our God, the King of kings, will give us an audience at any moment of the day, and meeting with us, will bless us there."—*Rev. W. M. Statham.*

b "Therefore fall the people unto them, and thereout suck they no small advantage."—*Pr. Bk. Version*

c "And they (even God's people) will drink waters of surfeiting for themselves fr. the overflowing cup of our prosperity."—*Wordsworth.*

Ps. lxxv. 8; Is. li. 17; Eze. xxiii. 34.

Hengstenberg and *Hupfeld* suppose the reflections of the Psalmist to begin at *vs.* 12.

vss. 11-13. *G. Marriott*, 27.

d "Been guilty of treason to Thee, and to Thy people, if I had said that it is vain to serve God, because the wicked often prosper, and the righteous often suffer in this world."—*Wordsworth.*

e "A light arose upon him when he withdrew fr. the bustle of the world into the quiet of God's dwelling-place, and there devoutly gave his mind to the matter."—*Delitzsch.*

"The Heb. Psalmist, instead of telling his painful misgivings, harbored them in God's presence till he found the solution. The delicacy exhibited in forbearing unnecessarily to shake the faith of others is a measure of the dis-

beginning or end, only a part. When you can see the whole, then the mystery will be unveiled.— *Thomas Jones.*

18—21. (18) **Surely,** *i. e.* after all. **slippery places,** however good to look at, utterly insecure. **thou casteth,** with the idea of suddenness; quite unexpectedly. **destruction,** utter and irremediable ruin. (19) **moment,** the suddenness of their judgment esp. striking the Psalmist's attention.[a] **they . . terrors,** "Gone! Ended by terrors!" (20) **As a dream,** which seems real till we awake. **thou awakest,** *lit.* "arousest thyself," to take notice of the doings of the wicked. **image,** or outward show, phantom. All their brave pomp is a phantom. (21) **Thus,** *R. V.,* "for," explaining the whole of the prev. struggle. **was grieved,** embittered itself.[b] — *Cam. Bib.* When my heart grew sour "I was pricked in my veins." He recognizes now the folly of his former impatience against God's ways. **reins,** kidneys, the seat of the emotions.

Slippery places (*vs.* 18). — I. There are slippery places in life. As — 1. Scenes of animal excitement; 2. Opportunities of selfish gratification; 3. Company of the ungodly; 4. Times when tempted to doubt God's love and mercy. II. Those who walk in slippery places are in danger of falls. 1. Insecurity; 2. Risk of injury; 3. To peace, character, usefulness. III. Slippery places prove fatal to the wicked. 1. Unmask the evil of their character; 2. Reveal the worthlessness of their hopes; 3. Manifest that they are the objects of God's displeasure. — *W. Forsyth.*

Note on Ps. lxxiii. — Psalm seventy-third is Asaph's *miserere,* his confession to all the world of a spiritual decline, and the sad obscuration of faith under which for a time he suffered. Along some line of mistaken reasoning and feeling he had worked himself into a dangerous position — had come to fret on account of inequalities in the Divine distribution of worldly favors. Thus he permits himself to drift into a quarrel with Providence, and lacked but little of losing all evidence that he was a child of God. "My feet were almost gone." He had traveled among rocks and mountain defiles. Any such perilous way may well make one think of verse second. God designs that the mysteries of His providence should be a discipline to faith. He would teach us that danger attends the possession of worldly wealth, luxuries, and comforts; that the abuse of these good things is an unspeakably greater evil than the absence of them. At verses 23–26 the psalm culminates. Here the man of God, who has been down among the mists and mire of a marshy region, regains an elevated plateau, and regales himself in its clear, pure, bracing atmosphere. The remainder of this psalm runs on in the calm, full flow of chastened yet exulting song. Matchless forbearance of God!

22—25. (22) **foolish,** brutish.[c] **before thee,** in relation to thee, *trans.* "I was brutish and ignorant, I became a mere beast with Thee![d] Unbelieving thoughts had fermented in his mind, and a pang of passionate discontent had pierced his inmost being. But the higher self blames the lower for such folly, *Cheyne.* (23) **Nevertheless,** *etc.,* passing doubts had not severed him fr. God's gracious hold.[e] **thou hast holden,** while his feet were slipping, he had thus been kept fr. falling. (24) **shalt guide,** the past and present pledge the future.[f] **glory,** this expression must have reference to the after life,[g] "the poet has that religious intuition which forms the kernel of the hope of immortality." *Kirkpatrick* questions this interpetration as follows: It seems therefore that as the Psalmist anticipates that judgment will overtake the wicked in this world, so he looks for such a deliverance and advancement in this world as will visibly demonstrate that he is the object of God's loving favor, and prove that "there is a reward for the righteous." (25) **beside thee,** to be applied, according to Heb. form, to both clauses of the verse. "Having God, earth has become a heaven."

Need of Divine guidance (*vs.* 24). — A few years ago a most painful sensation was created in the public mind by the intelligence of a distressing and fatal accident which had happened to a distinguished archdeacon of the Established Church. This gentleman, eminent alike for his character and his writings, was spending a short time on the Continent, and having with some friends ascended a mountain, expressed a strong wish to return alone by a new route. His companions remonstrated, pointed out the danger of attempting to follow an unknown path, and urged that at least their friend would accept the services of a guide. Unhappily, he would not be persuaded, and presently com-

interestedness of the doubter." — *Farrar.*

a "This *vs.* almost points to some recent instance of Divine judgment.' *Ewald.*

"That which dispels the Psalmist's doubts and restores his faith is the end of the ungodly in this world —their sudden reverses, their terrible overthrow in the very bosom of their prosperity." —*Perowne.*

b "The word 'was grieved' is very forcible, was in a state of ferment, of diseased excitement and disturbance; 'was pricked,' pierced as with the sharp fang of an adder." —*Spk. Com.*

"The field wherein bees feed is no whit the barer for their biting; when they have taken their full repast on flowers and grass, the ox may feed, the sheep fat, on their reversions. So ejaculations bind not men to any bodily observance, only busy the spiritual half, which maketh them consistent with the prosecution of any other employment."— *Thomas Fuller.*

c Pr. xxx. 2, 3.

d "The poet surely has the water-ox, the hippopotamus, in mind, wh. as a plump colossus of flesh, is at once an emblem of colossal stupidity." — *Delitzsch.*

e 2 Ti. ii. 13.

"Though all else in heaven and earth should fail, the one true everlasting Friend abides."— *Ewald.*

f "With confidence he commits himself to the Divine guidance, though he does not see clearly the mystery of the Divine purpose in that guidance." — *Delitzsch*

g "The glory must be the manifesta-

tion of that abiding Presence, wh. even here sustains, preserves and guides the faithful."—*Spk. Com.*

"Of all Thy gifts Thou art Thyself the crown;
Give what Thou wilt, without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee rich—take what Thou wilt away."

a "Israel is the spouse of God, and idolatry is a breaking of the marriage vow."—*Perowne.*

b "This is my *summum bonum*—not to question His doings, but to cleave closely to Him. 'Nearest to God is best.'"—*Wordsworth.*

"To be absent from God is to perish. Distance from Him is separation from life. Drawing near to Him is the only good; and the Psalmist has deliberately chosen it as *his* good, let worldly prosperity come or go as it list, or, rather, as God shall choose."—*Exp. Bib.*

author,—unknown; one of the school of Asaph; date, after the Bab. destruct. of Jerus., time of the Maccabees

Subject, wailing over the desolation of the sanctuary. Maschil, Ps. xxxii.

c Ps. lxxvii. 20; lxxviii. 52; lxxix 13.

d "A phrase wh in Eastern language still signifies to walk quickly, to reach out, to be in good earnest, not to hesitate."—*Kitto.*

e "Or the tokens of their idolatrous worship."—*Wordsworth.*

menced his perilous descent. The rest of the party reluctantly pursued their course, and waited his arrival at the inn. As time passed on, and the archdeacon did not appear, their fears were reawakened, and search was ordered to be made. Soon they were horrified, but not surprised, to hear that the lifeless body of their friend had been found beneath a precipice, over which he had fallen in his attempt to reach the inn. How striking an illustration does this sad incident afford of the fatal obstinacy of those who persist in relying on their own wisdom and strength of purpose in the journey of life! What can await them but destruction if they refuse to accept guidance? Yet a guide is not enough at all times. Only recently, a party of travelers on Mont Blanc, accompanied by skillful guides, were overtaken by an avalanche; and not only two of their number, but one of the guides also, perished in a moment. We need an unerring guide; and where shall it be found but in Him who is infinite Wisdom as well as infinite Love?

26—28. (26) **faileth,** or may have failed, in this time of struggle. **strength,** *Heb.* rock: the usual fig. for strength. **for ever,** plainly meaning in, and beyond, this present life. The meaning is, "Though my flesh and my heart fail utterly, though my whole corporeal and animal nature fade away and come to nothing, yet something in the nature of a heart—the true 'I,' consciousness, will remain, and will be upheld by God."—*Pul. Com.* (27) **a whoring,** the Scrip. fig. for apostasy fr. God.[a] (Hos. ii.) (28) **draw . . God,**[b] Ja. iv. 8.

The strength of the heart.—Under outward ills a resolute heart may bear up; but when the foundation of courage and cheerfulness itself gives way, when the very fountain of fortitude itself runs dry, what shall be done? Who does not know what sinking of soul means? Is there anything to keep one from utter prostration—from falling irrecoverably into despondency or despair? "God is the strength of my heart," the rock of my heart. I am resting on a firm foundation. I lean upon no arm of flesh. I have not only a strong foundation, but strong consolation. In each of the four thousand hourly strokes of this heart He sustains and quickens. When this frail organ, beating fainter and fainter, ceases at length altogether, when body and soul are rent apart, shall I be confounded? No, indeed. Cecil states that John Newton, about a month before his death, said, "It is a great thing to die, and, when heart and flesh fail, to have God for the strength of our heart, and our portion forever. I know whom I have believed, and He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that great day." "It is come!" said the Rev. J. Sutcliffe; "perhaps a few moments more. Heart and flesh fail! But God—that God is the strength of His people, is a truth that I now see as I never saw it in my life."

PSALM THE SEVENTY-FOURTH.

1—4. (1) **for ever,** so terrible was the desolation the Psalmist fears it may be permanent. **anger . . smoke,** fig. for the signs of the fire of wrath, Ps. xviii. 8. **sheep,** *etc.*, Jer. xxiii. 1.[c] (2) **thy congregation,** Ex. xv. 16. The people of Israel in their religious aspect. **purchased of old,** *i. e.* God Himself initiated the relationship with Israel. **rod,** the people in their national and political aspects, *lit. tribe.* **redeemed,** out of Eg. bondage, *R. V.*, "which Thou hast redeemed to be the tribe of Thine inheritance." **Zion,** regarded as permanent habitation of God. (3) **Lift . . feet,** *i. e.* come quickly,[d] Ge. xxix. 1. **perpetual desolations,** ruins of the sanctuary in such a state of destruction that hope of restoration has failed. **even . . sanctuary,** *Polychr.*, "the foe has dishonored all things in the sanctuary." (4) **roar,** fill the temple with the battle-cry instead of praises to Jehovah. **thy congregations,** thy place of meeting. **ensigns,** Chaldæan military banners.[e] **for signs,** tokens of victory.

The power of prayer.—I. On one side were—1. Desolation: "perpetual," *etc.*; 2. Desecration; 3. Declamation: "enemies roar;" 4. Demonstration: "they set up." II. On the other side is—1. Supplication; 2. This brings God to the rescue effectually and quickly.—*Spurgeon.*

Psalm 74.—A cry of the church, on the brink of despair to God, who seems to stand with face averted and arm inactive; and yet it is certain He wrought wonders of deliverance in the past, and that He is still the living God in His

works around. The appeals to Him are bold beyond measure, yet deep in their humility; agonizing in the feeling of forsaken neglect, yet full of faith; in the spirit of Jacob, "I will not let Thee go," or of Jeremiah, "Why should-est Thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? Yet Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us; leave us not." — *Ker.*

5—9. (5) **famous,** *etc.*,[a] Jer. xlvi. 22. (6) **but now,** better, *and now.* **carved work,** 1. Ki. vi. 29; *vss.* 5 and 6 are very difficult; the prob. sense is conveyed by the *R. V.*, "They seem as men that lift up axes upon a thicket of trees. And now all the carved work thereof together they are battering down with hatchet and hammers." (7) **cast fire,** or "they have hurled Thy sanctuary (as if it were a mere log of wood) into the fire."[b] **defiled,** omit the words *by casting down. Comp.* Ps. lxxxix. 39. (8) **syna-gogues,** *lit.* "meeting places;" "every house of God." (9) **our signs,** the outward and visible symbols of our religion, such as Sabbath and festival, which God "had caused to be forgotten in Zion," *vs.* 4. **how long,** such desolation is to continue.

The constructive and the destructive. — I. The constructive is greater and more difficult than the destructive. An idiot might destroy St. Paul's Cathedral, London; but it needed the genius of Sir C. Wren to design it. A child might destroy a young oak sapling; but the mightiest man cannot create a daisy. A fool might unsettle a man's faith and destroy his character; but the wisest and holiest of men cannot of himself establish a man's faith and build up his character. II. In the kingdom of the truth it is wiser and nobler to aim at building up the true than destroying the false. III. How terrible is it to destroy the true and good. IV. God is the great Constructor of the good. — *Hom. Com.*

Destruction. — It enhances the cruelty of the enemy that the temple which had been built at the cost of so much treasure, adorned with such great elegance and splendor, and finished with untiring industry and consummate skill, was not saved thereby from their barbarous hands, but was utterly overthrown. There is a simile in these verses. The enemies breaking to pieces with great violence and casting down the altars and beams of the temple, are compared to the woodman, who with axe in hand cuts down the strong trees of the wood. Even barbarian invaders are wont to spare the more splendid buildings for art's sake. Demetrius, when he had taken a picture painted by Protogenes in the suburbs of Rhodes, was besought by the Rhodians to be lenient towards art, lest he should destroy the painting. He replied that he would sooner burn the statues of his father than so great a work of art. The ferocity of these enemies, therefore, outdoes the barbarity of others, for they ruthlessly cast down an edifice sculptured and polished with the greatest skill. — *Mollerus.*

10—12. (10) **O God,** *etc.*, see *vss.* 18, 22. The Psalmist feels the dishonor put on God's name more than the desolation afflicting the people.[c] (11) **withdrawest,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "why keepest thou thy hand hidden." **pluck it out,** *lit. out of Thy bosom make an end.* "Put forth Thy right hand and destroy by one blow."[d] (12) **my King,** Ps. xliv. 4.[e] **midst of the earth,** not in Canaan as the center of the earth, but in sight of all the nations.

Bosom and right hand. — The word which we translate bosom does not always, in Eastern language, mean the breast; but often the lap, or that part of the body where the long robe folds round the loins. Thus, in the folds of the garment, in front of the body, the Orientals keep their little valuables, and there, when they are perfectly at ease, they place their hands. To a king, whose enemies have invaded his territories, and are ravaging his kingdom, it will be said, should he not make any exertions to repel them, "Why does your majesty keep your hands in your *maddeyila* (bosom)? Take your sword, your heroism thence." When two men go to a magistrate to complain of each other, perhaps one says, "He has beaten me severely, my lord." Then the other replies, "It is true, I did strike him, but these wounds on my body show he did not keep his hands in his bosom." "Thy right hand," which is the hand of honor. Hence, "the right hand of the Most High." The Hindoos have a right-hand caste, and when they take a solemn oath they lift up that hand to heaven. The whole of the right side of a man is believed to be more honorable than the left, and all its members are said to be larger and stronger." — *Roberts.*

"And yet we are greedy, covetous, avaricious, proud, envious. Man the rich through God; everything comes to you from God." — *Sergieff.*

a "Each man was seen as if plying aloft hatchets in a copse of wood." — *Kay.*

"This *vs.* compares the scene of ruin in the interior of the sanctuary, the destruction of the carved work, *etc.*, to the wide gap made in some stately forest by the blows of the woodman's axe." — *Perowne.*

b "This certainly denotes the burning either of a part of the sanctuary or of consecrated things." — *Spk. Com.*

Heb. moêd, properly *a set time, a stated season*, and so a *festival.*

Constantine the Great was one day looking at some statues of noted persons, who were represented *standing.* "I shall have mine taken *kneeling*," said he, "for that is how I have risen to eminence."

c Comp. **Ex.** xxxii. 12, 13; **Nu** xiv. 13-16; **De.** ix. 28.

d "The expression denotes a state of inactivity, the hand being enveloped in the ample folds of the Eastern robe." — *Perowne.*

e Hab. i. 12.

"It is a fact that God's care is more evident in some instances of it than in others to the dim and often bewildered vision of humanity. Upon such instances men seize and call them providences. It is well that they can, but it would be gloriously better if

they could believe that the whole matter is one grand providence." — *George Mac Donald.*

"Remembrance of past wonders made present misery more bitter, but it also fanned into a flame the spark of confidence that the future would be like the past."

"Wherever there is a man who is conscious that he has done wrong again, and again, and again, and that in his own strength he never can stand, and that he needs help, he has a right to ask for it: 'I am lost in sin; I have no strength to rescue myself; Thou art God; save me!'—that is an argument which knocks louder at the bosom of God than any battle-axe at the gate of any castle on earth." — *Beecher.*

a "Save Thy turtle-dove fr. the talons and beak of the eagle, the emblem of Babylon. Da. vii. 4." — *Wordsworth.*

b Ps. lxxviii. 10; Is. lxiv. 8.

c Ge. iv. 10; xviii. 20; Ex. iii. 7-9.

"When a gentleman, who had been accustomed to give away some thousands, was supposed to be at the point of death, his presumptive heir inquired where his fortune was to be found. To whom he answered, 'that it was in the pockets of the indigent.'" — *Bib. Ill.*

Melancthon, going once upon some great service for the church of Christ, and having many doubts and fears about the success of his business, was greatly relieved by a com-

13—17. (13) **divide the sea,** Ex. xiv. 21. **dragons,** sea-monsters, regarded as emblems of Egypt. (14) **leviathan,** crocodile, Job iii. 8. **meat,** *etc.*, reference is to the dead bodies of the Egyptians cast on the shores of the Red Sea, to be devoured by the wild beasts of the desert. For "people" applied to animals, *cp.* Prov. xxx. 25, 26. (15) **cleave,** *etc.*, Ex. xvii. 6; Nu. xx. 11. **driedst,** *etc.*, "ever flowing," perennial rivers. Jos. iii. 13. (16) **day,** *etc.*, affirmation of God's rights as Creator as well as Redeemer. **light,** *Polychr.*, "starry light." (17) **borders,** *etc.*, divisions of land and sea, also national boundaries. **summer and winter,** Ge. i. 14.

God. — I. The God of grace is the God of nature: "The day is thine," *etc.* II. The God of nature is the God of grace: the wisdom, the power, the faithfulness the same. See Psalm xix. — *G. Rogers.*

Made perfect thro' suffering. — Juliana Horatia Ewing, the favorite writer of children's stories, suffered greatly before her death. She was seldom able in her illness to concentrate her attention on solid works, and for religious exercise chiefly relied on what was stored in her memory. She liked to repeat the alternate verses of the Psalms when the others were read to her. After one night of great suffering, in which she had been repeating George Herbert's poem, "The Pulley," she said that the last verse had helped her to realize what the hidden good might be which underlay her pain: —

> "Let him be rich and weary: that at least
> If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
> May toss him to my breast."

She had each week a calendar written out, with a text chosen by herself at the top, and as each day passed it was struck through by her pencil. One week she had, "In patience possess ye your souls." For the text of another week she had, "Be strong, and of a good courage," as the words had been said to her by a dear friend to cheer her just before undergoing the trial of an operation. Later still, she chose, "The day is Thine, the night also is Thine." — *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

18—23. (18) **foolish people,** better, "reprobate people," denoting moral perversity. **thy name,** wh. as Creator and Redeemer is so great. (19) **thy turtledove,**[a] Song Sol. ii. 14. "The meek and lowly church." **multitude,** *etc.*, *R.V.*, "unto the wild beast." **congregation,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "the race of Thy pious ones." (20) **covenant,**[b] made with Abraham, and renewed with the fathers. **For . . cruelty,** *Polychr.*, "For finished is the darkness of the land, the reign of violence," *i. e.* righteousness reigns and God should renew covenant relation with His people. (21) **return,** *i. e.* turn away from God unanswered and disappointed. (22) **reproacheth,** *vs.* 18. **daily,** *R.V.*, "all the day." (23) **increaseth,** "ascendeth;" goes up to Heaven crying aloud for vengeance.[c]

God's interest in His people (*vs.* 22). — I. God has a cause on earth which He owns. 1. It is the cause of truth; 2. Of holiness; 3. Of happiness. II. The cause of God has enemies who oppose it. 1. By reasoning; 2. By ridicule; 3. By organization; 4. By persecution. III. Prayer should be addressed to God to plead His own cause. 1. Why should prayer be offered for this purpose? 2. How may we expect this prayer to be answered?

Cruelties of the heathen. — When Mr. Medhurst resided in Penang, a Chinese came to him for medicine, who said he had three sons and one daughter, adding, "I had another daughter, but I did not bring her up." "Not bring her up! what, then, did you do with her?" "I smothered her; and this year I heard by letter that another daughter was born; I sent word to have that smothered also, but the mother has preserved it alive." Mr. Medhurst, shocked at this speech, and still more at the horrid indifference with which it was uttered, exclaimed, "What! murder your own children! Do you not shudder at such an act?" "Oh, no," replied the man; "it is a very common thing in China; we put the female children out of the way, to save the trouble of bringing them up; some people have smothered five or six daughters!" — *R. T. S. Infanticide* was fearfully common among the Hawaiian islanders before the introduction of Christianity. We are told of an old woman who was seen on the outskirts of a Sunday-school celebration, beating her breast and wailing. A missionary went to her, and said, "What is the matter that you should weep over such a beautiful sight? You should be happy to see such a sight, for you can remember when things were very different among our

people." And the poor soul cried out in anguish, "Why didn't the missionaries come before? These hands are stained with the blood of my twelve children, and not one of my flesh to rejoice here to-day!" And again she wailed, "Oh, why didn't the missionaries come before?"—*Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

PSALM THE SEVENTY-FIFTH.

1—3. (1) **name is near,** name is put for God Himself, the manifestation of God's attributes. God's providence and care are close to us.[a] **wondrous works declare,** such a personification is without analogy, consequently modern commentators *trans.* with *R. V.*, "men tell of Thy wondrous works." *Polychr.*, "They who invoke Thy Name rehearse Thy wonders." (2) **When,** *etc.*, this appears to be the response of God. *Lit. when I shall take a set time, i. e.* for executing My judgments. (3) **dissolved,** with terror of God's judgments. **bear . . pillars,** or *I have poised them*,[b] *i. e.* though it seems to men by reason of the inexplicableness of temporal affairs as if Chaos reigned, yet I (emphatic) have est. a moral order wh. shall in due time be executed.

Perfection of nature.—I have seen the back of a splendid painting, and there, on the dusty canvas, were blotches and daubs of color—the experiments of the painter's brush. There is nothing answering to that in the works of God! I have seen the end of a piece of costly velvet; and though man had in it fairly imitated the bloom of the fruit and the velvet of the flowers, there was a common, unwrought, worthless selvage—a coarse, unsightly selvage. There is no selvage in the works of God!—*H. Wonnacott.*

4—7. (4) **fools,** "the arrogant," "those who rage," always in Scrip. with added idea of *wicked.* **horn,** *i. e.* overweening self-importance; for the fig. *see* 1 Sam. ii. 1; and also Da. viii. 3. (5) **stiff neck,** the sign of pride "with impudent arrogance." (6) **promotion,** lifting up; take in general sense of success or prosperity. "Israel looks not to any quarter of the compass for human help, but to God alone. The North is not mentioned because the Assyrians were approaching from that quarter." (7) **God,** our God; He alone.

Lifting up the horn.—Mr. Munroe, speaking of the females in a Maronite village in Mount Lebanon, observes: "But the most remarkable peculiarities of their dress are the immense silver ear-rings hanging forward upon the neck, and the *tantoura*, or 'horn,' which supports the veil. This latter ornament varies in form, material, and position, according to the dignity, taste, and circumstances of the wearer. They are of gold, silver-gilt, or silver, and sometimes of wood. The former are either plain or figured in low relief, and occasionally set with jewels; but the length and position of them is that upon which the traveler looks with the greatest interest, as illustrating and explaining a familiar expression of Scripture. The young, the rich, and the vain wear the *tantoura* of great length, standing straight up from the top of the forehead; whereas the humble, the poor, and the aged place it upon the side of the head, much shorter, and spreading at the end like a trumpet. I do not mean to say that these distinctions are universal, but I was told that they are very general, and thus the 'exalted horn' still remains a mark of power and confidence, as it was in the days of Israel's glory."—*Summer Ramble in Syria.*

8—10. (8) **wine is red,** *lit. it foams*[c] *with wine, full of mixture, i. e.* strong spiced wine. **dregs,** at bottom of the cup. (9) **declare,** God's righteousness and rule. *Polychr.*, "glorify and praise with song the God of Jacob." (10) **cut off,** and so utterly humiliate them by the destruction of their power. "If the poet is the speaker, he speaks in the name of Israel, confident that in God's strength they will be able to complete the humiliation of their proud foes. *Cp.* Mic. iv. 13. But the speaker may be God, answering the vow of praise with a fresh promise. *Cp.* xlvi. 10."

Praise.—In some of the old monasteries it was a rule that the chanting of praise should never be interrupted, and that one choir of monks should relieve another in the sacred service. Let us learn a lesson from this. "Let not thy praises be transient—a fit of music, and then the instrument hung by the wall till another gaudy day of some remarkable providence makes thee take it down. God comes not guest-wise to His saints' house, but to dwell with them. David took this up for a life-work: 'As long as I live, I will praise Thee.'"—*Wm. Jones.*

pany of poor women and children, whom he found praying together for the prosperity of the church.

author,—unknown; time of Hezekiah

Proclam. of God's righteous judgment.

Al-taschith, Ps. lvii.

a Ps. ix. 16.

b Is. xl. 12.

"God's servants are tempted to think that He delays too long; His enemies, that He will never break His silence. But the slow hand traverses the dial in time, and at last the hour strikes and the crash comes punctually at the moment."

"A man of lofty bearing is said to carry his horn very high. To him who is proudly interfering with the affairs of another it will be said, 'Why show your *kombu* (horn) here?'"—*Roberts.*

"God's servants are His instruments in carrying out His judgments; and there is a very real sense in which all of them should seek to fight against dominant evil and to cripple the power of tyrannous godlessness."

c "Foameth as it is poured in the cup fr. the wine jar."—*Perowne.*

"Mr Bruce has observed that the Abyssinian kings have a *horn* on their *diadem*; and that the keeping it erect, or in a projecting form, makes them appear as if they had a *stiff neck*; and refers to this passage for the antiquity of the usage, and the *appearance* also."—*Adam Clarke.*

PSALM THE SEVENTY-SIXTH.

author,—unknown; date, as prev. Ps.

Praise for a great deliverance.

Historical connection, prob. 2 Ki. xix. 35; Is. xxxvii.

Neginoth, Ps. iv.

1—3. (1) **known,** by many gracious defendings and deliverings. *Cheyne,* "renowned." **great,** highly esteemed and praised. **Israel,** the covenant name of the Hebrews: not used locally. (2) **Salem,** prob. poetic for Jerusalem.[a] **is his tabernacle,** covert, bower, pavilion. (3) **arrows of the bow,** *lit. the lightnings of the bow.*[b] **battle,** *lit.* "the weapons of war."

Psalm seventy-six. — At this time, (1679) in Scotland, those who met for worship elsewhere than in the churches sanctioned by government were given over to martial law, frequently shot in the fields or on the moors, without trial, and their bodies left where they fell. It was this period which, in the words of Renwick, "flowered the mosses with martyrs." One of their gatherings was held, not long before midsummer, on a Sabbath morning, at Drumclog, where the head-waters of the Avon and Ayr approach each other, and close to the peak of London hill, where gray cairns commemorate battlefields of Wallace and Bruce, who struggled for national freedom, as the Covenanters did for spiritual,—these services for which they "jeoparded their lives in the high places of the field," winning for us our quiet Sabbaths. Claverhouse had heard of the intended meeting, and came with a strong body of his troopers; but the Covenanters, though poorly armed, were skilfully led, and resolute of heart. After a severe action the dragoons were entirely defeated, Claverhouse escaping with difficulty. The psalm sung by the Covenanters, as they descended the hill to the encounter, was the noble burst of triumph which celebrated the overthrow of Sennacherib and his host, and the tune was the plaintive but lofty *Martyrs.* — *Ker.*

4—7. (4) **mountains of prey,**[c] *R. V.*, "Glorious art Thou and excellent from the mountains of prey." So translated, the *vs.* "describes God either as issuing forth from Mount Zion to spoil the foe (lxviii. 35); or better, as a lion returning from the mountains where he has hunted his prey." But *Cheyne* suggests a different meaning, "Terrible art Thou and glorious (in Thy ruling) from the everlasting mountains." (5) **slept their sleep,** of death: as in sudden night destruct. of Sennacherib's army.[d] **found their hands,** *Polychr.*, "could move a hand;" a fine expression of hopeless, helpless bewilderment. (6) **chariot and horse,** poetically united in the sudden destruction. (7) **thou,** repeated to give emphasis and solemnity. God's people should learn humbling lessons from His dealings with their enemies.

Preston's last words. — The more you are acquainted with God while you live, the more willing you will be to die, to go to Him; for death, to a child of God, is nothing else but a resting with God, in whose bosom he hath often been, by holy meditation, when he was alive. Dr. Preston, when he was dying, used these words: "Blessed be God, though I change my place I shall not change my company; for I have walked with God while living, and now I go to rest with God." — *Cheever.*

8—12. (8) **judgment,** *R. V.*, "sentence," the view of God as judge is peculiar to the Psalms ascribed to Asaph. **from heaven,** the true seat of the Divine being. (9) **meek,** the nation Israel, as contrasted with the proud heathen whom He destroys. (10) **the wrath,** all rebellion against God's will must in the end redound to God's glory. **the remainder,**[e] *etc.*, *R. V.*, "The residue of wrath shalt thou gird upon thee." God girds on Himself as an ornament the last futile efforts of human wrath, turning them to His own honor; or girds them on as a sword, making the wrath of His enemies to minister to their final discomfiture. — *Cam. Bib.* (11) **to be feared,** *lit.* the *terrible one.*[f] (12) **cut off,** fig. for complete judgment.[g] **spirit,** *i. e.* pride, fury.

Wrath of man overruled (*vs.* 10).— "Who would have thought," says Saurin, "that King Henry VIII., a cruel and superstitious king, the greatest enemy the Reformation ever had — he who, by the fury of his arms, and by the productions of his pen, opposed this great work, refuting those whom he could not persecute, and persecuting those whom he could not refute — who would have thought that this monarch should first serve the work he intended to subvert, clear the way for reformation, and by shaking off the yoke of the Roman pontiff, execute the plan of Providence, while he seemed to do nothing but satiate his voluptuousness and ambition?"

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a Ge. xiv. 18; He. vii. 1, 2

b "Arrows being so regarded fr. their rapid flight, and their glittering in the air; or poss. with an allusion to the burning arrows employed in ancient warfare." — *Perowne.*

2 Ki. xix. 32.

Man without patience is the lamp without oil; and pride in a rage is a bad counselor.

c Na. ii. 11, 12; iii. 1.

Is. xli. 15; Eze. xxxviii. 11, 12; Zec. iv. 7.

"By the 'mountains of spoil' *Hupfeld* understands Jerusalem as the stronghold where the spoils of the invaders are divided."—*Spk. Com.*

d 2 Ki. xix. 35.

"Charles Kingsley had a special love for the psalm. When sailing up the Rhine, and looking on the ruined strongholds of the old freebooters, he writes, 'How strange that my favorite psalm about the hills of the robbers (hills of prey) should have come in course the very day I went up the Rhine!'"—*Ker.*

e "The residue of wrath Thou girdest on."—*Revised Eng. Bib.*

f Is. viii. 13.

g "Like a vine-dresser, who prunes away the rank boughs, or cuts off the ripe clusters of the vine."—*Perowne*

"Two great streams of spiritual force meet our view, alike in the

— *Whitecross.* — *Uncertain glory.* — How great uncertainty have many great ones, by their miserable experience, found in their outward glory and worldly felicity! What a change hath a little time made in all their honors, riches, and delights. That victorious emperor Henry the Fourth, who had fought two-and-fifty pitched battles, fell to that poverty before he died, that he was forced to petition to be a prebend in the church of Spier, to maintain him in his old age. And Procopius reports of King Gillimer, who was a potent king of the Vandals, who was so low brought as to entreat his friend to send him a sponge, a loaf of bread, and a harp; a sponge to dry his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and a harp to solace himself in his misery. Philip de Comines reports of a duke of Exeter, who though he had married Edward the Fourth's sister, yet he saw him in the Low Countries begging barefoot. Belisarius, the chief man living in his time, having his eyes put out, was led at last in a string, crying, "Give a halfpenny to Belisarius." — *Jeremiah Burroughs.*

Bible and in human life and history, crossing one another every instant, as waves of light and waves of sound, in closest vital relation, yet each holding its course unhindered — the will of man and the will of God. Yet God's will must needs be sovereign, supreme; even as God's conscience must be supreme arbiter of right and wrong."—*Pul. Com.*

PSALM THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH.

author,— unknown:

date the age of Habakkuk

Subject, despondency relieved by remembering God's deliverances.

1—4. (1) **he gave ear,** or may He hearken unto me. *Polychr.*, "I hoped He would hear me." (2) **my sore,** *R. V.*, "my hand was stretched out" in prayer.[a] **ceased not,** to be outstretched. (3) *Trans.*, "I cried unto God, and I wailed, I mused in prayer, my spirit fainted." **overwhelmed,** "wrapped in gloom." (4) **Thou . . waking,** "heldest open the lids of mine eyes;" a feature of his suffering was sleeplessness.

Individualism manifest. — Whenever, and by whomsoever, the psalm may have been written, it clearly is individual, not national. It utterly destroys all the beauty, all the tenderness and depth of feeling in the opening portion, if we suppose that the people are introduced speaking in the first person. The allusions to the national history may indeed show that the season was a season of national distress, and that the sweet singer was himself bowed down by the burden of the time, and oppressed by woes which he had no power to alleviate: but it is his own sorrow, not the sorrow of others under which he sighs, and of which he has left the pathetic record. — *Perowne.*

An aged mariner. — A terrible shipwreck occurred, not many years ago, on the west coast of Scotland. Those who were saved out of a large number that perished owed their lives to one wakeful man. He was no watchman of the coastguard, no pilot on the look-out for homeward-bound ships, but only an old, infirm seaman, who had gone to bed with the rest of the world. He had courted sleep that night, but, for no reason he could fancy, his eyes were kept waking. Weary of turning and tossing on a sleepless bed, he rose and walked the floor. With an old sailor's love of the sea, he drew aside the curtain of his cottage window, to gaze out on the heaving deep, and while the sight of it was waking up the memory of former years, his eye, ere a landsman could have descried it, caught an object coming shoreward through the gloom. Horror seized him. Like a reckless soul, bent on destruction, it was an ill-fated ship rushing on that iron-bound coast, and right into the jaws of death. Many were hurried that night into a watery grave; yet, but for the circumstance that sleep had fled the old man's couch, but for the alarm he gave, but for the boats that were launched to the rescue, many more had been drowned; God held his eye waking; He had His work for that ancient mariner to do. — *Guthrie.*

To *Jeduthun*, or after the manner of Jeduthun.

[a] "The stretched out, weak, and powerless hand, conveys the picture of a relaxation of the whole body." — *Hengstenberg.*

"At the second knock, the door of grace flew open." —*John Collings.*

5—9. (5) **days of old,** past times of prosperity. (6) **I call,** *etc.*, better, "let me call, . . . let me commune." **song in the night,** joy keeping from sleep, as suffering and grief now do. (7) **Will,** *etc.*, this was the kind of despondent questioning with which his soul was burdened. (8) **clean gone,** so that there is no hope of its return. **doth . . evermore,** *Polychr.*, "and His faithfulness — is it clean gone for all time to come?" (9) **forgotten,** *etc.*, *i. e.* deliberately abandoned his graciousness; Is. xl. 27–31.

Remembrance. — A good memory is very helpful and useful. 1. It is a great means of knowledge; for what signifies your reading or hearing, if you remember nothing? 2. It is a means of faith: 1 Cor. xv. 2. 3. It is a means of comfort. If a poor Christian in distress could remember God's promises they would inspire him with new life; but when they are forgotten, his spirits sink. 4. It is a means of thankfulness. 5. It is a means of hope; for "experience worketh hope" (Rom. v. 4), and the memory is the storehouse of

"Wait patiently on God. It is becoming of a dutiful child, when he hath not presently what he writes for to his father to say, 'My father is wiser than I; his own wisdom will tell him what and when to send to me.' O Christian, thy heavenly Father hath gracious reason which holds His hands for the present, or else thou hadst heard from Him ere now."—*Gurnall.*

"Colton declares that in moments of despondency Shakespeare thought himself no poet, and Raphael doubted his right to be called a painter. We call such self-sus-

picions morbid, and ascribe them to a hypochondriacal fit; in what other way can we speak of those doubts as to their saintship, which occasionally afflict the most eminently holy of the Lord's people?"

"Meditation is the life of the soul; action is the soul of meditation; honor is the reward of action."—*Quarles.*

experience. 6. It is a means of repentance; for how can we repent or mourn for what we have forgotten? 7. It is a means of usefulness. When one spark of grace is truly kindled in the heart, it will quickly endeavor to heat others also. — *R. Steele.*

Divine comforts. — How gladly, when the body is sick, would we use, and receive, and drink the medicine which would remove sickness and restore health, how unpleasant and bitter soever it was! But oh, how much more ought we with patience and thanksgiving to receive this medicine of our Father's hand, which, His Holy Spirit so working the same, removes many mortal diseases from our souls, such as pride, contempt of grace, and unthankfulness, which are the very mortal diseases that, by unbelief, slay the soul, and restores unto us lowliness, fear, invocation of God's name, remembrance of our own weakness and of God's infinite benefits, by Christ received, which are very evident signs that Jesus Christ lives in us. — *J. Knox* (1554).

10—12. (10) **infirmity,** *etc.*, it is a chastening from God.[a] *This* apparent desertion of Israel by God *is my suffering*, and I must bear it; but for my consolation I will recall *the years of the right hand of the Most High,* "the years of ages past" (*vs.* 5), in which the sovereign power of the Ruler of the world was put forth on behalf of His people. — *Cam. Bib.* (11) **remember,** or make mention of. **Lord,** Jah, or Jehovah, the covenant God. (12) **talk,** *Polychr.*, "devoutly consider Thy deeds," as in *vs.* 13.

Meditation (*vs.* 12). — I. Motives to meditation. 1. It is the proper occupation of the mind; 2. Our character in the sight of God depends on the character of our thoughts: 3. Meditation is essential to the success of God's Word. II. Subjects for meditation. 1. God's existence and attributes; 2. His works; 3. His claims; 4. Our future. III. Aids to meditation. 1. Be impressed with its value; 2. Remember the influence of habit; 3. Frequently review your thoughts; 4. Determine to communicate good thoughts to others. Apply: — (1) See one reason why the Gospel is not more successful — My people do not consider; (2) Beware of being in the midst of means of grace, and yet without thought; (3) Teach children to think.

Memory. — The hound, when he hath lost his scent, hunts backward, and so recovers it, and pursues his game with louder cry than ever. Thus, Christian, when thy hope is at a loss, and thou questionest thy salvation in another world, then look backward and see what God hath already done for thee. Some promises have their day of payment here, and others we must stay to receive in heaven. Now the payment which God makes of some promises here, is an earnest given to our faith that the others also shall be faithfully discharged when their date expires; as every judgment inflicted here on the wicked is sent as a pledge of that wrath the full sum whereof God will make up in hell. — *William Gurnall.*

"In meditation, those who begin heavenly thoughts and prosecute them not are like those which kindle a fire under green wood, and leave it so soon as it begins to flame." — *Bp. Hall.*

[a] "It is mine appointed lot and trial, that the right hand of the Most High has turned against me."

"Thus was he going on with his dark and dismal apprehensions, when on a sudden he first checked himself with that word, "*Selah*;" stop there; go no further; let us hear no more of these unbelieving surmises; and he then chid himself, "This is mine infirmity." — *Matthew Henry.*

13—15. (13) **in the sanctuary,** or in holiness,[b] in a sphere separate from all sin and imperfection. (14) **the God,** *Heb.* "El," the living Almighty God. **declared,** or displayed Thy strength; with special reference to the Exodus. (15) **sons . . Joseph,** Joseph mentioned here as the progenitor of Ephraim and Manasseh, who rep. the kingdom of Israel: and the full expression gives the recognized *fathers* of both the kingdoms, Judah and Israel.

The God of wonders. — All Israel, the two tribes of Joseph as well as those which sprang from the other sons of Jacob, were brought out of Egypt by a display of Divine power, which is here ascribed not to the hand but to the arm of the Lord, because it was the fullness of His might. Ancient believers were in the constant habit of referring to the wonders of the Red Sea, and we also can unite with them, taking care to add the song of the Lamb to that of Moses, the servant of God. The comfort derivable from such a meditation is obvious and abundant, for He who brought up His people from the house of bondage will continue to redeem and deliver till we come into the promised rest. — *Spurgeon.*

[b] Ex. xv. 11.

"A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things." — *Tennyson.*

"Was it Joseph or was it Jacob that begat the children of Israel? Certainly Jacob begat; but as Joseph nourished them, they are called by his name also." — *Talmud.*

"There shall never be one lost good! What was shall live as before."

"But if we neglect prayer it is difficult for us to pray; for the water in the well gets low." — *Felix Neff.*

16—20. (16) **waters,** of Red Sea. (17) **clouds,** *etc.*, reference is to the accompaniment of the passage of the Red Sea, such a storm as filled the Egyptian hosts with fear. **sent . . sound,** *i. e.* thundered. **arrows,** fig. for lightning. (18) **in the heaven,** *R. V.*, "in the whirlwind." (19) **Thy way,** in delivering Thy people. **is . . are,** *R. V.*, "was . . . were," ref. to the

historical event. **footsteps,** *etc.*, by the sea rolling back the marks of Jehovah's passage over the Red Sea were obliterated. (20) **like a flock,** Eastern flocks being *led* to their pasturage by the shepherds.

The Red Sea.— As soon as ever the whole Egyptian army was within it, the sea flowed to its own place, and came down with a torrent raised by storms of wind and encompassed the Egyptians. Showers of rain also came down from the sky, and dreadful thunders and lightning, with flashes of fire. Thunderbolts also were darted upon them; nor was there anything which used to be sent by God upon men, as indications of His wrath, which did not happen at this time; for a dark and dismal night oppressed them. And thus did all these men perish, so that there was not one man left to be a messenger of this calamity to the rest of the Egyptians.— *Josephus.*

"The constitution of the world, and God's natural government over it, is all mystery as much as the Christian dispensation. Yet, under the first, He has given men all things pertaining to life; and under the other, all things pertaining to godliness." — *Butler.*

PSALM THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH.

author,— unknown; date, late in Jewish history.

Résumé of the national history.

1—4. (1) **law,** or religious teachings. "A law of life to those who hear." (2) **parable,** used generally of any wise, sententious utterances. **dark sayings,** lessons drawn from the history of ancient times, wh. hide some deep truth to be studied and thought out.[a] (3) **have heard,** sayings of old, *see vs.* 2.[b] (4) **not hide,** De. iv. 9; vi. 7; xi. 19. **shewing,** *Cheyne,* "rehearsing it." **praises of the Lord,** *Polychr.*, "the praiseworthy actions," *etc.*

Of old.— I. Truths are none the worse for being old: "sayings of old." "Old wood," says Lord Bacon, "is best to burn; old books are best to read; and old friends are best to trust." II. Truths are none the worse for being concealed under metaphors: "I will open," *etc.*, "in a parable;" "dark sayings." 1. They lead to more research; 2. They become eventually better known. III. Truths are none the worse for being often repeated. 1. They are more tested; 2. They are better testified.— *G. Rogers.*

Note on Ps. lxxviii. — The author speaks of it as a parable: not in the sense, certainly, of a fictitious narration, for it contains an orderly arrangement of facts, but rather with this meaning, that the history of the Jewish nation, like Christ's parables, had hidden lessons and similitudes referring to Gospel times, of which many, or perhaps most, then living understood nothing.

a Pr. i. 6.

b Ps. lxxvii. 5, 11.

"History is a sacred kind of writing, because truth is essential to it, and where truth is, there God Himself is, so far as truth is concerned."— *Cervantes.*

5—8. (5) **testimony,** "the express precept which enjoined upon Israelite parents the duty of teaching their children the great facts of Israel's history, that the remembrance of them might be handed down from generation to generation."[c] (6) **should be born,** better to trans. thus: "That another generation might know, that sons which should be born might arise and tell their sons." *See* Ps. xxii. 31. (7) **set . . God,** as their fathers had done, or should have done. (8) **stubborn,** *etc.*, so the people proved during their long journeyings in the wilderness. **not stedfast,** "was not faithful," but wavering in allegiance.

Teaching children. — The Jewish rabbis speak of a very strict custom and method for the instruction of their children, according to their age and capacity. At five years old they were *filii legis,* sons of the law, to read it. At thirteen they were *filii præcepti,* sons of the precept, to understand the law. At fifteen they were *Talmudistæ,* and went to deeper points of the law, even to Talmudic doubts. — *Swinnock.*

A father's gift. — "The Lord bless you, sir, in your work," said an old sailor, who had just got on board, to see his son. "My poor old father put a Bible into my chest when I first went to sea. I read but little for some time, and practised still less; but that was the book which led me to know myself as a condemned sinner, and Jesus Christ as a suitable Saviour for such a sinner; and I hope, at last, to reach in safety the port of everlasting rest. I have a boy here, and sons in other ships; and I cannot do better, I think, than follow my poor old father's example, by putting into each of my boys' chests a Bible." — *Whitecross.*

c Ps. xix. 7; Ex. x. 2: xii. 26-27.

"As the officer of an army commences his drill by calling for 'Attention,' even so every trained soldier of Christ is called upon to give ear to his words." —*Spurgeon*

"Providence conceals itself in the details of human affairs, but becomes unveiled in the generalities of history."—*Lamartine.*

"Heav'n doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves,
For if our virtues do not go forth of us
'Twere all alike as if we had them not."
—*Shakespeare.*

9—11. (9) **children of Ephraim,** why this tribe is singled out does not appear. We cannot fix the event here recalled.[d] The term Ephraim may be intended to stand for Israel, bec. it was in later ages the leading tribe. (10) **kept,** *etc.*, prob. the defection fr. the worship of God to idolatry began with this tribe. (11) **his works,** esp. the redemption fr. Egypt, wh. was the great witness to His claims on the nation.

d Unless it be Ju. ii. 10, 16, or xx. 39, 41.

"Robert Hall, hearing that some worldly-minded persons objected to family prayer as taking up too much time, said that what might seem a loss will be more than compensated by the spirit of order and regularity which the stated observance of this duty tends to produce. It serves as an edge and border, to preserve the web of life from unraveling."

Ephraim. — For more than four hundred years Ephraim, with its two dependent tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, exercised undisputed pre-eminence. Joshua, the first conqueror; Gideon, the greatest of the judges, whose brothers were "as the children of kings," and whose children all but established hereditary monarchy in their own line; Saul, the first king — belong to one or other of these three tribes. The haughty spirit of the tribe could brook no equal or superior, and chafed against the rise even of the kindred tribe of Manasseh in the persons of Gideon and Jephthah, and yet more against the growing dominion of Judah in David and Solomon, till it threw off the yoke altogether, and established an independent kingdom. — *Stanley.* — *Bravery and cowardice.* — A brave English drummer boy was taken captive in some battle by the French. He was ordered to beat several military signals, and obeyed. But, being commanded to beat a retreat, he pertinaciously refused. He had never beaten a retreat, and he never would do so. Unlike this heroic lad, the Israelites, with the strong and warlike tribe of Ephraim, turned their back to their foes and fled. A picture of what has often been the case in your spiritual history. We have been bold and courageous in speech, we have been supplied with weapons from the Divine armory, yet we have fled before our foes, have weakly yielded to temptations, and dishonored our uniform and our colors. — *W. Jones.*

"The gradations of sin; neglecting, rejecting, forgetting God." — *C. Davies.*

Conscience. —

What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted?
Thrice is he arm'd that hath his quarrel just;
And he but naked, though lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted. — *Shakespeare.*

12—16. (12) **field of Zoan,** Gk. *Tanis*, now *San.*[a] (13) **divided,** *lit.* "clave," *comp. vs.* 15. **as an heap,** Ex. xiv. 22. (14) **cloud,** Ex. xiii. 21, xiv. 24. (15) **clave,** *etc.*, at Rephidim and Kadesh to supply water. **depths,** reservoirs of water hidden in the earth. Ex. xvii. 6; Nu. xx. 11. (16) **rock,** better *cliff.*

Christ our burden-bearer. — Mrs. Pearsall Smith recently stated that she remembered hearing a story of a man who was going through the Western country traveling along the road. He met a man with a heavy burden on his back, and he asked him to get into his wagon to ride along, but when he got in he still kept bowed down with the heavy burden on his shoulders. "Why don't you lay down your burden?" he asked, "Oh, it is a great deal to ask you to carry me," was the reply, "and I should not like to ask you to carry my burden too." That is the way with many Christians. They have given themselves to the Lord, but are carrying their burdens, for they feel as if it would not be quite delicate or proper to ask Him to carry their burdens along with themselves. A missionary in Persia came home from a long, tiring walk, and sat down on the floor — as is the custom of missionaries out there — and she had no support for her back. At length a native women crept up behind her and put her broad shoulder against her to lean on, and whispered, "Lean on me." She leaned a little bit, but felt a delicacy about leaning hard, and presently the woman whispered again, "Do you love me? If you love me, lean hard." The Lord Jesus says, "Commit your care and burden to Me, and rest on Me," and Christians honestly feel a delicacy about leaning too hard, but He is saying all the time, "If you love Me, lean on Me."

[a] The chief residence of the Pharaohs of the 18th and 19th dynasties. S. W. of Port Said, now a village of fishermen.

Vs. 12, "Field here means an open expanse of country. In the territory of Zoan, on an easterly branch of the Nile, was the capital city of the land of Egypt at one time; the princes of Zoan are spoken of, Isa xix. 12, 13. It is said to have been about two miles from Heliopolis." —*Gill and Clarke.*

17—20. (17) **provoking,** *Cheyne*, "defying." *Cam. Bib.*, "rebelling against . . . . in the land of drought." (18) **they tempted God,** demanding, in their unbelief, signs and proofs of His power, instead of simply waiting by faith on Him. **lust,** "hunger," "appetite." (19) **furnish,** or order, set out. **wilderness,** which yielded little or no food for man, though there might be grass for the cattle. (20) **bread . . flesh,** the food that seemed necessary for men. These words are the climax of Israel's unbelief. They seem to question the fact that "they were God's people."

"It is not the quantity of the meat but the cheerfulness of the guests which makes the feast." *Lord Clarendon.*

The evil of unbelief (*vss.* 19–22).— I. The evil of unbelief. It often assumes the garb of humanity; but its evil appears — 1. From the construction which God Himself puts upon it; 2. From the indignation which He manifested on account of it. II. The disposition of mind which God approves — faith. Address — 1. The querulous; 2. The doubting; 3. The true believer. — *Simeon.*

"Prayer, I consider, is like one of those high places to which men climb in order to get a wider view of all that lies below. Whenever I want to see how small my trials are, I climb up that Divine mountain and look down at them. How different they

Unbelief. — After all their experience they doubted the Divine omnipotence, as if it were to be regarded as nothing, when it refused to gratify their lusts. Unbelief is so deeply rooted in the human heart, that when God

performs miracles on earth, unbelief doubts whether He can perform them in *heaven*, and when He does them in *heaven*, whether He can do them on *earth*. — *A. F. Tholuck.* *Ingratitude.*— O how sad is this, that after God hath entertained a soul at His table with choice mercies and deliverances, these should be so ill husbanded, that not a bit of them should be left to give faith a meal, to keep the heart from fainting, when God comes not so fast to deliver as desired. He is the most thankful man that treasures up the mercies of God in his memory, and can feed his faith with what God hath done for him, so as to walk in the strength thereof in present straits. — *William Gurnall.*

seem when seen from that distance! Some have vanished utterly. And there have been times, happy times, when, dwelling there, I, as it were, saw nothing else. All lay below, miles away, and forgotten."— *Kavanagh.*

21—24. (21) **was wroth,** De. iii. 26. **a fire,** symbol of outpouring of Div. judgment. Nu. xi. 1 *ff.* (22) **salvation,** *Polychr.*, "in His help," from all their disabilities and anxieties. (23, 24) **manna,** Ex. xvi. 14.[a]

Evil consequences of unbelief. — I. The sin itself; they doubted the ultimate certainty, completeness, and reality of God's salvation from Egypt. II. The aggravations of it: the object of it was God; they who entertained it were God's people: The aids to faith were overlooked: "though." III. What it led them to; inward sin — *vs.* 13: outward sin — *vs.* 19, *etc.* IV. What it brought upon them; *vs.* 21. Fiery serpents, *etc.* — *C. Davies.*

The finger of Providence. — One of the three letters written by the Duke of Wellington from the field of Waterloo was a brief note which, having enumerated some who had fallen, ended thus: "I have escaped unhurt; the finger of Providence was on me." When the dreadful fight was over, the Duke's feelings, kept so long at the highest tension, gave way; and as he rode among the dying and the wounded, and saw the reeking carnage, and heard the roar of the vanquished and the shouts of the victors, fainter and fainter through the gloom of the night, he wept, and soon after wrote the words which we have quoted from his letter. It is in such trying hours that man feels his frail mortality, instinctively turns to God, and, referring his actions to the will of Him who guides and governs all things, with reverence says, "The finger of Providence was on me." It was in the same hour of triumph that the conqueror uttered these memorable words: "Next to the calamity of losing a battle is that of gaining a victory."

a Jno. vi. 31.

"The ordinary manna gathered for daily use did presently corrupt, but that which was laid up before the Lord did keep without putrefaction. So our life, which we have here in the wilderness of this world, doth presently vanish; but our life which is hid with Christ in God never runs to death."

"Nothing is more provoking to God, than our quarreling with our allotment, and indulging the desires of the flesh." — *Matthew Henry.*

25—29. (25) **angels' food,** *lit. bread of mighty ones*, or the finest, most delicate bread. Some think "food supplied by angel ministrations." (26) **east wind,** not fr. two directions at different times but a S. E. wind fr. the Red Sea. Nu. xi. 31. (27) **feathered fowls,** quails. (28) **let it fall,**[b] indicating that they had no trouble to obtain it, and were easily surfeited with it. (29) **well filled,** spoken in satire. **their own desire,** "that they lusted after."

Human sin and Divine judgment. — I. Human sin. 1. The nature of their sin. 2. The aggravation of their sin. (1) He had hitherto supplied them with food. (2) He had supplied them with choice food. (3) He had supplied them with choice food in abundance. (4) He had supplied them with choice food supernaturally. II. Divine judgment. 1. Reveals God's observation of man's life. 2. Reveals God as affected by man's life. 3. Reveals the punishment as growing out of man's sin. (1) In the granting of their own demand. (2) In their gluttony. 4. Reveals the punishment as being brought about by the forces of nature. — *Hom. Com.*

Our Father's care. — By a merciful provision of Providence, there is one kind of rice, the stalk of which grows at the same rate as the waters rise, so that the ear is always at the surface; and famine is averted even in years when the floods are heaviest in Lower Siam and Cambodia. A pint or two of the seed was carried from Bangkok to Bassein by the Karen preacher who went with Mr. Carpenter to Siam in 1872. It has already increased to a hundred bushels, sufficient to supply a whole district, and will prove a great boon.

b "The word aptly describes the settling of these birds after a long flight, and wearied by their passage across the gulf. Pliny says that quails settle on the sails of ships by night, so as to sink, sometimes, the ships in the neighboring sea." — *Perowne.*

"O my God, deny me my most urgent prayers sooner than answer them in displeasure. Better hunger and thirst after righteousness than to be well filled with sin's dainties." — *Spurgeon.*

30—33. (30) **estranged from,** "cloyed with." **while,** *etc.*, Nu. xi. 33. (31) **fattest,** lustiest. **chosen men,** or young and most vigorous. "God punishes men by answering their prayers." (32) **all this,** teaching of Divine chastisement. (33) **consume,** *etc.*, reference is to the fact that the whole generation died out prematurely.[c] **in trouble,** *Polychr.*, "in a haste that was sudden."

c "Then He made their days vanish in a breath, and their years in sudden haste." — *Delitzsch.*

"A transcendent faith, a cheerful

trust, turns the darkness of night into a pillar of fire, and the clouds by day into a perpetual glory. They who thus march on are refreshed even in the wilderness, and hear streams of gladness trickling among the rocks."—*Chapin.*

"Experience ought to strengthen faith; but there must be present faith to use experience."—*J. N. Darby.*

Obstinacy of sin reproved (*vs.* 32).—In illustration of this I will set before you—I. The state of Israel in the wilderness. 1. They had begun their wickedness early; 2. They continued it with scarcely any intermission; 3. They were utterly irreclaimable by any dispensations, whether of mercy or judgment. II. Yet a parallel may be found in the state of the Christian church at this day. 1. Our guilt resembles theirs: 2. The gradations of our guilt are the same; 3. The aggravations of our guilt are greater far. Personal application:—(1) What is your state at this time? (2) What will your state very shortly be?—*Simeon.*

The white flag.—One evening the wife of the old flagman at a railway station said to her husband, "John, there will be a flag held out to-night—a flag in the hand of Jesus. It will not be a red flag, for there is no danger; and it will not be a green one, for, thank God, there is no doubt; but it will be a pure white flag, for all is perfect safety and peace, and I am very nearly at my journey's end." That night she died.

34—37. (34) **slew them,** their most vigorous and healthy warriors: as *vs.* 31.[a] **enquired early,** or *earnestly*[b] after God. (35) **their rock,** De. xxxii. 4, 15. **high God,** *Heb.* El Elyon, "God Most High." **redeemer,** De. vii. 8; xli. 14; xliv. 6; lxiii. 9.[c] (36) **flatter,**[d] offered the homage of insincerity. They returned to God under pressure of fear. (37) **stedfast,** *vs.* 8.

Man under Divine chastisement.—I. Sorely smitten. II. Remembering God. 1. As their Rock. (1) Security. (2) Stability. (3) Shelter. 2. As their Redeemer. III. Seeking God. IV. Offering to God unreal repentance. Two main features of true repentance were wanting to them. 1. Change of heart. 2. Reformation of life.—*Hom. Com.*

Hypocrisy.—Like whipped curs, they licked their Master's feet. They obeyed only so long as they felt the whip about their loins. Hard are the hearts which only death can move. While thousands died around them, the people of Israel became suddenly religious, and repaired to the tabernacle door, like sheep who run in a mass while the black dog drives them, but scatter and wander when the shepherd whistles him off. They could not be too zealous, they were in hot haste to prove their loyalty to their Divine King. "The devil was sick and the devil a monk would be." Who would not be pious when the plague is abroad? Doors, which were never so sanctified before, put on the white cross then. Even reprobates send for the minister when they lie a-dying. Thus sinners pay involuntary homage to the power of right and the supremacy of God, but their hypocritical homage is of small value in the sight of the Great Judge.—*Spurgeon.*—*Deceit.*—The heart is the metal of the bell, the tongue is but the clapper; when the metal of the bell is right and good (as silver) such will the sound be; if the metal of the bell be cracked, or lead, the sound will soon discover it to a judicious ear. God can see the diseases and spots of the heart upon the tongue. As Jacob said to his mother, "If I dissemble, my father will find me out, and I shall meet with a curse instead of a blessing."—*George Swinnock.*

a Nu. xxi. 7; Is xxvi. 16; Ho. v. 15; vii. 14.

b Ps. lxiii. 1.

c "The Masorites have noted here that this *vs.* ends the first half of the Psalms."—*Wordsworth.*

d "Fr. *flater*, fr Lat. *flare*, to blow. Used of the effect of music on the ear, and formerly employed to denote stroking and caressing."—*Woolrych.*

1 Cor. xv. 58.

"How blunt are all the arrows of thy quiver in comparison with those of guilt!"—*Blair.*

"Adversity borrows its sharpest sting from our impatience."—*Bishop Horne.*

"Good resolutions called at their hearts as men do at inns; they tarried awhile, and then took their leave."

38, 39. (38) **full of compassion,** Ex. xxxiv. 6; Nu. xiv. 18, 20. **turned . . away,** *Polychr.*, "put a check on His anger;" Is. xlviii. 9. (39) **but flesh,** denotes the frailty of human life, Ge. vi. 3.[e] **a wind,** symbol for transitoriness, Job vii. 7. **passeth away,** or *goeth*, Ho. vi. 4; xiii. 3.

Wrath of God.—When His wrath is kindled but a little men are burned up as chaff; but were He to let loose His indignation, the solid earth itself would melt, and hell would engulf every rebel. Who knoweth the power of Thine anger, O Lord? We see the fulness of God's compassion, but we never see all His wrath.—*Spurgeon.*—If He had stirred up all His anger, He had taken away all, and our lives to boot. He rakes up but a few sparks, takes but one firebrand to fling upon men, when He might discharge the whole furnace upon them; He sends but a few drops out of the cloud, which He might make to break in the gross, and fall down upon our heads to overwhelm us; He abates much of what He might do.—*Stephen Charnock.*

e Ps. ciii. 14, 16.

"The gods have overwhelmed with ruin whole multitudes, merely by indulging them with everything for which they prayed."—*Juvenal.*

"God sends His children many a storm to dash them on the Rock, that they may find out its firmness, security and elevation."

40, 44. (40) **provoke,** defy, rebel against, Nu. xiv. 11. "There were ten temptations."[f] **grieve,** "pain," Eph. iv. 30. (41) **they turned back,** *Polychr.*, "time after time they." **limited,**[g] *Heb. tavah*, to note with a sign or mark, "incensed." (42) **not his hand,** poetical for the signs of His working. **delivered them,** fr. the afflictions brought on their enemy. Goshen was free

f Nu. xiv. 22.

g "Pr. Bk. Vers. has, *they moved*, *i. e.* they exasperated. *They marked him with a*

from the great plagues. (43) **field of Zoan,** *vs.* 12. (44) **rivers,** *Cheyne,* "Nile canals." **blood,** into a resemblance of blood, Ex. vii. 20. **floods,** streams of running water.

Wait. — Let us carefully and steadily fasten the mind upon this astounding fact. God made us, yet we disobey Him; God made us, yet we grieve Him; God made us, yet we are not godly. How is that? There is no answer to the question in mere argument. For my part I simply wait. I begin to feel that, without the power of sinning, I could not be a man. As for the rest, I hide myself in Christ. Strange, too, as it may appear, I enjoy the weird charm of life's great mystery as a traveler might enjoy a road full of sudden turnings and possible surprises, preferring such a road to the weary, straight line, miles long, and white with hot dust. I have room enough to pray in. I have room enough to suffer in. By and by I shall have large space, and day without night to work in. We have yet to die; that we have never done. We have to cross the river — the cold, black, sullen river. Wait for that, and let us talk on the other side. Keep many a question standing over for heaven's eternal sunshine. If we would see God's conception of man, we must look upon the face of His Son — Him of whom He said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." That is man; that is the ideal humanity. It is useless to look in any other direction for God's purpose and thought. — *J. Parker.*

45—49. (45) **He sent,** *etc.,*[a] *R. V.,* "swarms of flies;" prob. not a ref. to numbers, but to some venomous kind of fly peculiar to Egypt. *See* Ex. viii. 17, 21, 22, 24. (46) **caterpillar,**[b] poss. the locust in its larva state is referred to. **labour,** *lit.* "the fruit of their toil." (47) **vines,** in Ex. ix. these are not mentioned, and some have asserted that the vine was not cultivated in Egypt.[c] **sycamore,** 1. Ki. x. 27. **frost,** prob. with *Cheyne,* with "stones of ice." (48) **hot thunderbolts,** *comp.* Ex. ix. 23. (49) **evil angels,** "a mission of angels of woe."— *Kay.* Evil is their mission, not their character.

Small things may be a great scourge (*vs.* 45). — The frog — I. This very harmless creature by its great multiplication became a great scourge; so things, words, deeds, in their due measure and season innocuous, become, when unseasonable and often repeated, a source of mischief (a laugh is a good thing, but much laughter, or at the wrong time, is madness; a shower of rain is refreshing, but long continued it may make a flood; a small fire may warm a house, but London was once destroyed by fire). II. Verse forty-five teaches us that instruments by which our good has been effected are not to be forgotten; the Israelites were not suffered to forget the frogs of Egypt. III. Even these creatures thus multiplied did Israel no harm; "nothing shall harm," *etc.* — *Topics for Teachers.* — *Attacked by locusts.* — A detachment of Russian troops, bound for General Lazareff's expedition against the Turcomans, is reported by the *Kavkaz* to have met with a curious misadventure near the Georgian town of Elizavetopol. At a few versts from the town the soldiers encountered the wing of an army of locusts reputed to be twenty miles in length and broad in proportion. The officer in charge did not like to turn back, repelled by mere insects, and, pushing on, soon became surrounded by the locusts. These appear to have mistaken the soldiers for trees, and swarmed by thousands around them, "crawling over their bodies, lodging themselves inside their helmets, penetrating their clothes and their knapsacks, filling the barrels of their rifles, and striving to force themselves into the unfortunate men's ears and noses." The commander gave the order for the troops to push on double quick for Elizavetopol, but the road was so blocked with locusts that the soldiers grew frightened, and, after wavering a few minutes, a regular stampede took place. Led by a non-commissioned officer of keen vision, who had observed a few huts a short distance from the road, the troops dashed across the fields, "slipping about over the crushed and greasy bodies of the locusts as though they had been on ice." The huts were soon reached, and the officers rushed inside, but the refuge proved to be of little value, as the premises were already in the possession of the enemy. The soldiers were detained prisoners by the insects for forty-eight hours, and on their march to Elizavetopol, in the rear of the locust army, they found every blade of grass and green leaf destroyed, and the peasants reduced to beggary.

50—54. (50) **made a way,** *lit. leveled a path:* made a straight path so as to give it free course. **their life,** "though no 'pestilence' is expressly

mark, i. e. they branded or stigmatized him."— *Targum,* and so *Delitzsch.*

"They irritated, *lit.* they pricked with a sharp instrument, like a *stylus,* used for making marks."— *Wordsworth.*

"His confidence in heaven sunk by degrees."— *Claudius.*

"Eaten bread is soon forgotten. Nothing so soon grows stale as a favor."—*John Trapp.*

[a] "He sent gadflies against them, wh. devoured them."—*Delitzsch.*

[b] *Comp.* Joel i. 4.

[c] "Vines were extensively cultivated in Egypt, and there were several different kinds of wine, one of which, the Mareotic, was famous among the Romans."— *R. S. Poole.*

"The mural paintings at Thebes, at Beni-hassan, and in the Pyramids, contain repres. of vineyards. Boys are seen frightening away the birds fr. the ripe clusters, men gather them and deposit them in baskets, and carry them to the wine press, *etc.*"— *Perowne.*

"God is now spoiling us of what would otherwise have spoiled us. When God makes the world too hot for His people to hold, they will let it go." — *Powell.*

"There is a mercy in affliction's smart; it heals those wounds of sin which mock all human art." — *H. Caunter.*

"He is a conqueror worthy of no mean fame who triumphs over adversity."

mentioned in Ex. xii. as having caused the death of the firstborn, yet pestilence may assuredly have been the means employed." (51) **chief . . strength,** "firstlings of manly strength." — *Delitzsch.* **Ham,** land of Ham, so called because peopled by the *Mitsrîm*, the sons of Ham.[a] (52) **guided them,** as with a shepherd's care. (53) **sea overwhelmed,** Ex. xiv. 29. (54) **this mountain,**[b] either Zion is referred to, or the term is used generally for the mountain-country of Palestine.

They feared not. — First, they had no cause for fear, in their departure from Egypt. Though they saw the Egyptians slain, yet against them not even a dog moved its tongue. 2. They were all in sound health. 3. They were enriched with the spoils of the Egyptians. 4. They went forth a great multitude. 5. They supplied themselves with arms. Secondly, they feared not to enter the Red Sea, for the fear started by the approach of Pharaoh was swiftly suppressed. Thirdly, they feared not to wander in the desert for forty years, God going before His pillar. Fourthly, they feared not, though enemies attacked them. — *Thomas Le Blanc.*

Like sheep. — It is not said that they went forth like sheep; but that He made them go forth like sheep. It is not a description of the character of the people, but a commendation of the providence and goodness of God, by which, after the manner of a good shepherd, He led forth from Egypt His own people with all security, like sheep snatched from the midst of wolves. — *Musculus.* — *God in Israel.* — What a grand narrative have we been considering. Well might the mightiest master of sacred song select "Israel in Egypt" as a choice theme for his genius; and well may every believing mind linger over every item of the amazing transaction. The marvel is that the favored nation should live as if unmindful of it all, and yet such is human nature. Alas, poor man! Rather, alas, base heart! — *Spurgeon.*

a Ge. x. 6.

b Ex. xv. 17; Is. xi. 9.

"This famine has a sharp and meagre face; 'tis death in an undress of skin and bone, where age and youth, their landmark taken away, look all one common sorrow."—*Dryden.*

"You have chosen 'the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, other things therefore shall be added unto you;' and if any which you desire should not be added, comfort yourselves with this thought, that you have the good part which can never be taken away." — *Doddridge.*

55—58. (55) **by line,** *Polychr.*, "and divided their land as a heritage," "as an inheritance measured out and partitioned." — *Jennings and Lowe.* (56) **tempted,** *etc.*, *vss.* 17, 18, 41.[c] **provoked . . God,** rebelled against God, the Most High. (57) **unfaithfully,** *R.V.*, "treacherously." **deceitful bow,** on wh. an archer can place no confidence; wh. will not respond to his aim. (58) **high places,** where Israel little by little adopted the culture of the Canaanitish idolatries. **jealousy,** *see* Nu. xxv. 11.[d]

The patience of Divine mercy. — When Alexander encamped before a city, he used to set up a light to give notice to those within that if they came forth to him while that light lasted, they should have quarter; if otherwise, no mercy was to be expected. But such is the mercy and patience of God to sinners, that He sets up light after light, and waits year after year. When they have done their worst against Him, then He comes with His heart full of love, and makes a proclamation of grace, that if now at last they will accept of mercy, they shall have it. — *C. Buck.* — *The world's treatment of the Holy Spirit.* — It is sad, when the physician, having exhausted all the resources of his skill, gives up his patient and retires. It is sad when the parent, having tried severity and kindness, correction and encouragement, in vain, at last, heartbroken and hopeless, desists from his endeavors to reform his wayward child. But it is sadder still when Almighty God foiled, as it were, by human obduracy, in all the manifestations of His grace and mercy, at last gives up His efforts for the salvation of men, and retires exclaiming, "How often would I have gathered you under My wing, and ye would not." — *J. Milne.*

c "The special act of provocation here is the worship of idols in the high places."—*Perowne.*

d De. xxxii. 16, 21.

"The fig. of a 'deceitful bow,' well describes the people as failing to fulfil the purpose of their choice by God. Israel foiled all Divine attempts, and failed to carry God's message to the world, or to fulfil His will in themselves."—*Maclaren.*

"Prayer is to religion what thinking is to philosophy. To pray is to make religion." — *Novalis.*

59—61. (59) **wroth,** *etc.*, passages attributing human feelings to God require to be carefully explained. In God, wrath is righteous altogether, without the passion that mars man's anger. **abhorred Israel,** not the people, but their sinful and defiling ways. (60) **forsook,** 1 Sa. iv. 11.[e] **the tent,** *etc.*, *Cheyne*, "His pavilion where He had dwelt among men." (61) **strength,** the *ark of the covenant*, as Ps. cxxvii. 8. **glory,** 1 Sa. iv. 21.

Majesty of the Divine patience. — Did you ever, in a summer's day, when you had drawn from the bottom of the well the cooling draught to slake your thirst, stand and dream, and gaze at a drop, orbed and hanging from the bucket's edge, reflecting the light of the sun? What the rounded form and size of that drop is in comparison with the whole earth itself, that the round earth itself is in comparison with God's majesty of being, or degree of magnitude! And that such an One living in such a wise — so far above the earth; so far above its inhabitants; so far above the noblest spirit that stands in the

e "The mode of expression is very emphatic; that God was so offended with the sins of His people that He was forced to forsake the one place in the whole world which He had chosen."—*Calvin.*

"Let God abandon a man and all moral and spiritual power are gone. Let Him withdraw from a church and the

unlost purity of heaven — that such an One should deal with His erring creature with a gentleness and patience such as characterize the administration of God towards man, is sublime and wonderful! — *H. W. Beecher.*

62—64. (62) **unto the sword,** as narrated 1 Sa. iv. 10. (63) **fire,** evidently the fire of war is meant. **not given,** *etc.*, *lit.* were not praised in the nuptial song.[a] (64) **priests,** Hophni and Phinehas. **widows,** "the solemn funeral dirge could not take place since the bodies remained on the battle-field;" see case specially referred to, 2 Sa. xi. 26, 27.

Not given in marriage (*vs.* 63). — This is described as one of the effects of God's anger upon Israel. In Hindoo families, sometimes, the marriage of daughters is delayed; this is, however, always considered as a great calamity and disgrace. If a person sees girls more than twelve years of age unmarried in a family, he says, "How is it that that Brahmin can sit at home, and eat his food with comfort, when his daughters, at such an age, remain unmarried?" — *Burder.* — *Absence of mourning* (*vs.* 64). — When the cholera swept off such multitudes, the cries from every house had a fearful effect on the passers by; but after some time, though the scourge remained, the people ceased to lament, asking, "Why should we mourn? the *Amma*, *i. e.* the goddess, "is at her play." Thus, instead of the shrieks and howls, so common on such occasions, scarcely a sigh or whisper was heard from the survivors." — *Roberts.* — *Sorrow, the way to receive it.* — Our instinct, our feelings, our hopes, all claim joy, not sorrow, as our portion. Christ sets His seal to these aspirations. Sorrow is but for a time, joy is forever. He will set the impress of immortal power upon all the innocent and far-reaching wishes of our hearts. This the close of the incident of the raising of Lazarus teaches us, for the broken home is made one again, the gap they mourned over is filled, the joy of the sisters is complete, for Lazarus is there, and Christ is there. And what is all this but a sweet prophecy of the joys that remain for the people of God? Sorrow enters our doors now, but let us remember she is only a guest come to tarry with us for the nighttime of life. Let us treat her with the courtesy due to a guest, though her presence be irksome and her manners rough. Her elder sister Joy, will greet us when the morning breaks over the shore of God's fair land. She will take us by the hand and set us in our Father's home, where the many mansions are, and we shall be glad indeed; for no sorrow shall be there, no sighing, no tears; and our loved ones will be there, and He who loved us and gave Himself for us, who was dead and is now alive, will be there; and from that sunny home we shall go out no more. — *W. B. Carpenter.*

65—69. (65) **awaked,** a strong poetic figure.[b] **by reason of wine,** "whose consciousness of power is heightened by wine." — *Cheyne.* (66) **hinder parts,** better *trans. He smote His adversaries backward;* defeating them utterly. Ref. to victories of Samuel, Saul and David. (67) **refused,** rejected, "despised the house of Joseph."—*Polychr.* **Joseph,** the tribe of Ephraim from this time ceased to provide a center for the national religion. (68) **Judah,** "the sanctuary was really on the borders of Judah and Benjamin." (69) **like,** *etc.*, *i. e.* "exalted as the heights of heaven, stable as the earth with with its undeviating natural laws."

Shiloh and Zion. — The moving of the ark is not the removing of it: Shiloh has lost it, but Israel has not. God will have a church in the world, and a kingdom among men, though this or that place may have its candlestick removed; nay, the rejection of Shiloh is the election of Sion. — *Matthew Henry.*

70—72. (70) **chose David,** 1 Sa. xvi. 11, 12. (71) **ewes,** properly the *milch* ewes, those having their young beside them. **feed Jacob,**[c] "to be the shepherd of Jacob," 2 Sa. vii. 7, 8. (72) **according . . heart,** *Polychr.*, "with an upright heart" **skilfulness,** discernment, prudence.

David. — Under David, the Jewish kingdom first rose to an honorable position among the nations, and exercised an influence over its neighbors. In closing the psalm which has described the varying conditions of the chosen nation, we are glad to end so peacefully; with all noise of tumult or of sinful rites hushed into silence. After a long voyage over a stormy sea, the ark of the Jewish state rested on its Ararat, beneath a wise and gentle reign, to be wafted no more hither and thither by floods and gales. The Psalmist had all along intended to make this his last stanza, and we too may be content to

spiritual life and glory passeth away."— *Wm. Jones.*

a "The utter desolation of the land strikingly pictured by its *silence.* Neither the joyous strains of the marriage song nor the sad wail of the funeral chant fell on the ear. It was a land of silence, a land of the dead." —*Perowne.*

"How poor are they who have not patience! What wound did ever heal but by degrees?" — *Shakespeare.*

"Famine so fierce that what's denied men's use — ev'n deadly plants, and herbs of poisonous juice, wild hunger eat, and to prolong our breath, we greedily devour our certain death; the soldier in the assault of famine falls, and ghosts, not men, are watching on the walls." — *Dryden.*

"Affliction is the good man's shining scene: prosperity conceals his brightest ray; as night to stars, woe lustre gives to man."— *Young.*

b "The Psalmist, in an anthropomorphic figure, depicts the Almighty awaking. 'As one (hitherto) sleeping, as a warrior exulting by reason of wine,' *i. e.* as one who rouses himself from a lethargic slumber, or as one who has renewed his energies, exhausted in battle, by the exhilarating influence of wine." — *Jennings.*

c "There is a play on the verb *rāâh*, fed, inasmuch as it is used primarily of giving food to flocks, but also by a kind of stereotyped metaphor signifies the *tending* of a people by a king, judge, or prophet. He who had hitherto tended a few sheep was called away to tend a

sacred nation."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"The art of feeding cattle, and the art of ruling men are sisters, saith Basil."—*John Trapp.*

author, — unknown; date, that of the Maccabees

Lamentation over the destruction of Jerusalem.

finish all our songs of love with the reign of the Lord's anointed. Only we eagerly enquire, when will it come? When shall we end these desert roamings, these rebellions, and chastisings, and enter into the rest of a settled kingdom, with the Lord Jesus reigning as "the Prince of the house of David?" Thus have we ended this lengthy parable, may we in our life-parable have less of sin and as much of grace as are displayed in Israel's history, and may we close it under the safe guidance of "that great Shepherd of the Sheep." AMEN. —*Spurgeon.*

PSALM THE SEVENTY-NINTH.

1—4. (1) **heathen,** whose presence in Jehovah's temple was regarded as a defilement.[a] **thine inheritance,** *i. e.* the holy land. **on heaps,** *lit. they have made Jerusalem heaps* of ruins.[b] (2) **dead,** *etc.*, the lack of proper tending of the dead was in ancient times regarded as a terrible distress and indignity.[c] (3) **shed,** or poured out. (4) **reproach,**[d] *see* Ps. xliv. 13.

The Jews wailing-place. — Entering the inhabited part of the old city, and winding through some crooked, filthy lanes, I suddenly found myself on turning a sharp corner, in a spot of singular interest; the "Jews' place of wailing." It is a small paved quadrangle; on one side are the backs of low modern houses, without door or window; on the other is the lofty wall of the Haram, of recent date above, but having below five courses of bevelled stones in a perfect state of preservation. Here the Jews are permitted to approach the sacred enclosure, and wail over the fallen temple, whose very dust is dear to them, and in whose stones they still take pleasure (Ps. cii. 14). It was Friday, and a crowd of miserable devotees had assembled — men and women of all ages and all nations dressed in the quaint costumes of every country of Europe and Asia. Old men were there, — pale, haggard, care-worn men, tottering on pilgrim staves; and little girls with white faces, and lustrous black eyes, gazing wistfully now at their parents, now at the old wall. Some were on their knees, chanting mournfully from a book of Hebrew prayers, swaying their bodies to and fro; some were prostrate on the ground, pressing forehead and lips to the earth; some were close to the wall, burying their faces in the rents and crannies of the old stones; some were kissing them, some had their arms spread out as if they would clasp them to their bosoms, some were bathing them with tears, and all the while sobbing as if their hearts would burst. It was a sad and touching spectacle. Eighteen centuries of exile and woe have not dulled their hearts' affections, or deadened their feelings of devotion. Here we see them assembled from the ends of the earth, poor, despised, down-trodden outcasts, — amid the desolations of their fatherland, beside the dishonored ruins of their ancient sanctuary,— chanting, now in accents of deep pathos, and now of wild woe, the prophetic words of their own Psalmist, — "O God, the heathens are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled . . . We are become a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry forever?" — *J. L. Porter.*

5—7. (5) **How long,** Ps. xiii. 1. **jealousy,** God cannot endure a divided allegiance, *see* Ex. xx. 5. **like fire,** De. xxxii. 22. (6) **Pour,** *etc., comp.* Je. x. 25. **have not known,** *Polychr.*, "who do not acknowledge Thee!" (7) **dwelling place,** or *pasture,*[e] referring to the pastoral district. Some, however, prefer to think that by this term the sanctuary is meant.

The anger of God.— I. The cause of the anger: jealousy. II. The moderation of it. If it continued forever, the people would perish, the promises be unfulfilled, the covenant fail, and the Lord's honor be impeached. III. The staying of it. By prayer; by pleading His name, His glory, and the blood of Jesus.— *Spurgeon.*

God worketh slowly (*vs.* 5).—

God worketh slowly; and a thousand years
He takes to lift His hand off. Layer on layer
He made earth, fashioned it and hardened it
Into the great, bright, useful thing it is;
Its seas, life-crowded, and soul-hallowed lands,
He girded with the girdle of the sun,
That set its bosom glowing like Love's own

a "The defilement and desecration of the temple was a special feature of the persecution under the Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes."

b Mic. iii. 12; Jer. xxvi. 18.

c "Sophocles' play of *Antigone* turns upon the natural desire to show respect by covering and burying the dead."

d La. v. 1; Da. ix. 16

"It was not easy to hold fast by the reality of God's special relation to a nation thus apparently deserted, but the Psalmist's faith stood even such a strain, and is not dashed by a trace of doubt. Such times are the test and triumph of trust. If genuine, it will show brightest against the blackest background." —*Exp. Bib.*

e "A favorite image in all this group of Psalms." —*Perowne.*

"The 79th Psalm was one of those which came closely home to the hearts of our countrymen and country women in the days of the Indian Mutiny. Think of it as read amid the horrors of Cawnpore and Lucknow." — *Ker.*

Is. lxiv. 10, 11.

"Patience is the ballast of the soul, that will keep it from rolling and tumbling in the

Breathless embrace, close clinging as for life :
Veined it with gold, and dusted it with gems,
Lined it with fire, and round its heart-fire bowed
Rock-ribs unbreakable ; until at last
Earth took her shining station as a star
In Heaven's dark hall, high up the crowd of worlds.
All this and thus did God ; and yet it ends.
The ball He rolled and rounded melts away
E'en now to its constituent atomies.— *Bailey.*

8—13. (8) **former iniquities,** *R. V.,* "the iniquities of our forefathers."[a] **prevent us,**[b] *lit.* "come to meet us ;" *see* on Job iii. 12. (9) **for . . name,** Ez. xxxvi. 22. **purge away,** *lit. cover over.* (10) **Where . . God?** Ps. xlii. 3. If Israel, sinful though it is, is destroyed, there will be a blot on God's name, and the "heathen" will take it as proof, not that Israel's God was just, but that He was too feeble or too far off to hear prayers or to send succors.— *Exp. Bib.* **revenging,** or avenging, *trans. :* "Let vengeance for Thy servants' blood that is shed be made known among the heathen in our sight," *i. e.* do not delay avenging until some future generation. (11) **appointed to die,** *Heb.* sons of death. Reference is prob. to those who were carried away captive by Antiochus. (12) **our neighbors,** those dwelling round, who scorned God's people while under suffering. (13) **pasture,** *see on vs.* 7.

The prisoner.— I. His condition. 1. Under forced bondage to sin. 2. Under the bondage of conviction. 3. In the dungeon of despair. II. His application for relief. III. The source from which he looked for help.— *P. B. Power.*

The sighing of the prisoner (*vs.* 11).— To illustrate the miserable condition of an Oriental prisoner, Chardin relates a story of a very great Armenian merchant, who for some reason was thrown into prison. So long as he bribed the jailer with large donations, he was treated with the greatest kindness and attention ; but upon the party who sued the Armenian presenting a considerable sum, first to the judge and afterward to the jailor, the prisoner first experienced a change of treatment. His privileges were retrenched ; he was then closely confined ; then treated with such inhumanity as not to be permitted to drink but once in twenty-four hours, and this in the hottest time of the year ; and no person was suffered to see him but the servants of the prison. At length he was thrown into a dungeon, where he was in a quarter of an hour brought to the point which all this severe usage was intended to gain. After such a relation, we cannot be surprised to find the sacred writers placing so strong an emphasis on "the sighing of the prisoner," and speaking of its coming before God, and the necessity of Almighty power being exerted for his deliverance. — *Paxton.*

greatest storms ; and he that will venture out without this to make him sail even and steady will certainly make shipwreck and drown himself, first in the cares and sorrows of this world, and then in perdition." —*Hopkins.*

[a] "The physical and moral consequences of sin pass on from generation to generation, but 'Scripture nowhere teaches that a man is guilty in the sight of God for any sins but his own. Sinning himself, he allows the deeds of his fathers; he is a partaker in their iniquities; but his condemnation, if he be condemned, is for his own transgression, not for those of his fathers."—*Perowne.*

[b] "Never used in the sense of *hinder* in the Bible or books of its age." —*Woolrych.*

"If you take exceptional cases of the men who are, for the sake of integrity and principle, persecuted and cast out, there is more joy in a prison than the palace that is over it."—*Beecher.*

PSALM THE EIGHTIETH.

author, — unknown : date, probably Maccabæan

A prayer in time of national disaster.

Shoshannim-Eduth, see titles of Ps. xlv. lxix.

1—3. (1) **leadest Joseph,** Ge. xlviii. 15. **dwellest,** *etc., better,* "sittest enthroned upon the Cherubim ;" suggests the twofold idea of the King enthroned in heaven, yet manifesting His presence fr. the mercy-seat above the ark. Ps. xcix. 1. (2) **Before,** *etc.,* these three tribes are the children of Rachel,[c] and rep. the northern kingdom ; "only a small portion of Benjamin adhered to Judah at the division of the kingdoms, the greater part attaching itself to the rival power." (3) **Turn us again,** an expression suitable to any recovery from calamity, and not to be strictly applied to return from captivity. **face to shine,** show us thy favor as of old ; Ps. iv. 6 ; lxvii. 1.

The shepherd of Israel. — Yon shepherd is about to lead his flock across the river ; and, as our Lord says of the good shepherd, you observe that he goes before, and the sheep follow. Not all in the same manner, however. Some enter boldly, and come straight across. These are the loved ones of the flock, who keep hard by the footsteps of the shepherd, whether sauntering through green meadows, by the still waters, feeding upon the mountains, or resting at noon beneath the shadow of great rocks. And now others enter, but in doubt and alarm. Far from their guide, they miss the ford, and are carried down the river, some more, some less, and yet, one by one, they all struggle over and make good their landing. Notice those little lambs. They refuse to enter, and must be driven into the stream by the shepherd's dog, mentioned by Job in his "parable." Poor things ! how they leap and plunge, and

[c] "These three tribes are doubtless here associated as having occupied the station nearest to the holy of holies during the march through the wilderness." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"Patience was like a privy coat upon His soul,

that when the devil struck at Him, he was stricken himself; when death came to kill Him, he was killed himself; and all their shot could not hurt Him, because of His preservation which He had about Him, like Samson's hair, which saved him from all his enemies." — *Henry Smith.*

"Tear-bread is even more the fruit of the curse than to eat bread in the sweat of one's face, but it shall by Divine love be turned into a greater blessing by ministering to our spiritual health."

a Comp. Eng. word *fume.*

b "That wh. seems so mysterious, that wh. calls for the expostulation and the entreaty is, that even whilst they pray, *in spite of* that prayer, God's wrath is hot against them."— *Perowne.*

c "Still an Eastern figure for affliction." — *Fausset.*

"Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock art considered by the unbelieving to have no thoughts for our affairs; therefore stretch forth Thine hand for our assistance, that the mouth of them that speak iniquities may be shut. We long for Thy light, we desire more ardently to know Thee, therefore 'shine forth.'" — *Savonarola*

"To be 'saved' means here to be rescued from the assaults of hostile nations. The poet was sure that Israel's sole defense was God, and that one gleam of His face would shrivel up the strongest foes, like unclean, slimy creatures which writhe and die in sunshine." — *Exp. Bib.*

bleat in terror! That weak one yonder will be swept quite away, and perish in the sea. But, no; the shepherd himself leaps into the stream, lifts it into his bosom, and bears it trembling to the shore. All safely over, how happy they appear. The lambs frisk and gambol about in high spirits, while the older ones gather round their faithful guide, and look up to him in subdued but expressive thankfulness. Now can you watch such a scene and not think of that Shepherd who leadeth Joseph like a flock; and of another river, which all His sheep must cross? He, too, goes before, and, as in the case of this flock, they who keep near Him fear no evil. They hear His sweet voice saying, "When thou passeth through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods they shall not overflow thee." With eye fastened on Him, they scarcely see the stream or feel its cold and threatening waves. The great majority, however, "linger shivering on the brink, and fear to launch away." They lag behind, look down upon the dark river, and, like Peter on stormy Gennesaret when faith failed, they begin to sink. Then they cry for help, and not in vain. The Good Shepherd hastens to their rescue, and none of His flock can ever perish. Even the weakest lambkins are carried safely over. I once saw flocks crossing the Jordan "to Canaan's fair and happy land," and there the scene was even more striking and impressive. The river was broader, the current stronger, and the flocks larger, while the shepherds were more picturesque and Biblical. The catastrophe, too, with which many poor sheep were threatened — of being swept down into that mysterious Sea of Death which swallows up the Jordan itself — was more solemn and suggestive. — *Thomson.*

4—7. (4) **Lord God of Hosts,** "this title denotes His universal sovereignty, hence His ability to help Israel; "a form not common in the Psalms, but occuring in Ps. lix. 5; lxxxiv. 8." **angry,** *lit. hast thou smoked.*[a] **against,** *lit with,* in the sense of *notwithstanding,* in spite of.[b] (5) **bread of tears,**[c] as if tears were their food. **great measure,** *lit.* by the tierce, or third part of some larger measure; "copious draught." (6) **strife,** an object which they vied with one another in assailing. **neighbours,** petty states bordering their country. **among themselves,** to their heart's content: "make their game of us." — *Cheyne.* (7) **Turn,** *etc.,* as *vs.* 3.

Anger of God against His praying people (vs. 4). — I. Why God may be angry with His people. 1. For their dullness in attainment of a knowledge of His will; 2. For the weakness of their faith; 3. For the earthliness of their affections; 4. For the evil of their spirits; 5. For their unprofitableness in His service; 6. For their apostasy. II. When God may be angry with the prayers of His people, 1. When they are formal; 2. When they are without charity and love; 3. When they are substituted for obedience; 4. When they are not presented in faith. III. How we should regard the possibility of Divine anger. 1. There should be earnest inquiry; 2. Faithful self-examination; 3. We should seek a spirit of self-devotion; 4. Make a believing appeal to our Divine advocate. — *J. Burns.*

Note on vs. 4. — *Hebrew,* "wilt thou smoke?" *Ainsworth,* "Jehovah, God of hosts, how long wilt Thou smoke against the prayer of Thy people?" Of an angry man it is said, "He is continually smoking." "My friend, why do you smoke so to-day?" "This smoke drives me away; I cannot bear it." "How many days is this smoke to remain in my house?" "What care I for the smoke? It does not hurt me." — *Roberts.* — *Drinking tears (vs.* 5). — When a master or a father is angry, he says to his children or servants, "Yes, in future you shall have rice and the water of your eyes to eat." "You shall have the water of your eyes in abundance to drink." "Alas! alas! I am ever drinking tears." — *Roberts.*

Turn us, and cause Thy face to shine. — To Thyself convert us, from the earthly to the heavenly; convert our rebellious wills to Thee, and when we are converted, show Thy countenance that we may know Thee; show Thy power that we may fear Thee; show Thy wisdom that we may reverence Thee; show Thy goodness that we may love Thee; show them once, show them a second time, show them always, that through tribulation we may pass with a happy face, and be saved. When Thou dost save, we shall be saved; when Thou withdrawest Thy hand, we cannot be saved. — *Savonarola.*

8—13. (8) **a vine,** this fig. is borrowed from Ge. xlix. 22. **cast out,** Ps. xliv. 2. (9) **preparedst room,** by destroying the Canaanites. (10) **hills,**

R. V., "the mountains." **goodly cedars,** *Heb. cedars of God*, the indigenous cedars of Lebanon; with ref. to the N. boundary of Canaan. (11) **sea,** the Mediterranean; the W. boundary. **river,** the Euphrates.[a] (12) **hedges,** *R. V.*, "fences;" vineyards were carefully fenced in. *Comp.* Is. v. 5. (13) **boar . . wild beast,**[b] general description of the invaders.

Wild boar. — No image of a destructive enemy could be more appropriate than that which is used. We have read of the little foxes that spoil the vines, but the wild boar is a much more destructive enemy, breaking its way through fences, rooting up the ground, tearing down the vines themselves, and treading them under its feet. A single party of these animals will sometimes destroy an entire vineyard in a single night. We can well imagine the damage that would be done to a vineyard even by the domesticated swine, but the wild boar is infinitely more destructive. It is of very great size, often resembling a donkey rather than a boar, and is swift and active beyond conception. The wild boar is scarcely recognizable as the very near relation of the domestic species. It runs with such speed that a high-bred horse finds some difficulty in overtaking it, while an indifferent steed would be left hopelessly behind. Even on level ground the hunter has hard work to overtake it; and if it can get upon broken or hilly ground, no horse can catch it. The wild boar can leap to a considerable distance, and can wheel and turn when at full speed, with an agility that makes it a singularly dangerous foe. Indeed, the inhabitants of countries where the wild boar flourishes would as soon face a lion as one of these animals, the stroke of whose razor-like tusks is made with lightning swiftness, and which is sufficient to rip up a horse, and cut a dog nearly asunder. — *J. G. Wood.*

14—16. (14) **Return,** *Polychr.*, "turn Thou again!" *see vs.* 3. (15) **vineyard,** better, *the stock.* This is a difficult *vs. R. V. marg.* suggests, "And protect that which thy right hand hath planted." **branch,** *lit.* "the son," ref. to the nation. *Cheyne trans.*, "and to the leaves of the bough that thou didst choose thee." **madest strong,** didst carefully rear till it reached maturity.[c] (16) **cut down,** *comp.* Jno. xv. 6. The word is used of thorns cut for burning. **They,** Israel.

Visit this vine. — Still it has roots, still some branches are living. In the beginning of the world it began, and never has failed, and never will. For thou hast said, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. It may be diminished, it can never utterly fail. This vine is the vine which thou hast planted. There is one spirit, one faith, one baptism, one God, and Lord of all, who is all in all. Visit, then, this vine, for thy visitation perserves her spirit; visit by thy grace, by thy presence, by thy Holy Spirit. Visit with thy rod, and with thy staff: for thy rod and thy staff comfort her. Visit with thy scourge that she may be chastened and purified, for the time of pruning comes. Cast out the stones, gather up the dry branches, and bind them in bundles for burning. Raise her up, cut off the superfluous shoots, make fast her supports, enrich the soil, build up the fence, and visit this vine, as now thou visitest the earth and waterest it. — *Savonarola.*

17—19. (17) **man of thy right hand,** the people of Israel, "so called as delivered by God's power and strengthened for His special service." — *Spk. Com.* "Israel's sacred calling, its own weakness, and the strength of the God who endows it are all set forth, not now as lessons to it, but as pleas with Him, whose gifts are without repentance, and whose purposes cannot be foiled by man's unworthiness or opposition." — *Exp. Bib.* (18) **quicken us,** with inward life; the secret of all right and good conduct. (19) **Turn,** as *vs.* 3.

The efficacy of prayer (*vss.* 7–19). — I. How to approach God in a season of trouble. 1. We are especially invited to seek God at such times; 2. The Lord Jesus is the appointed Head of the church; 3. Through Him then we must seek for God's effectual help. II. What should we seek for at His hands? 1. The communications of His grace; 2. The manifestations of His favor. III. The fruit and consequences of accepted prayer. 1. Stability in God's ways; 2. The everlasting enjoyment of His favor. Hence — (1) See how little reason there is for any man to despond; (2) How little ground there is for any one to glory. — *C. Simeon.*

The man of Thy right hand (*vs.* 17). — If we would understand the genuine import of this phrase we must attend to a custom which obtained in Judæa and other Eastern countries. At meals the master of the feast placed the

a "The extreme limit eastward of the Israelitish kingdom in its ideal extent, nearly realized under Solomon." —*Spk. Com.*

b Je. v. 6. The only Bib. reference to the *boar.*

"Maundrel, in giving a description of the cedars of Lebanon, says: 'I measured one of the largest, and found it twelve yards six inches in girth, and yet sound, and thirty-seven yards in the spread of its boughs. At about five or six yards from the ground, it was divided into five limbs, each of which was equal to a great tree.'" —*Whitecross.*

c Is xliv. 14.

"There is more mercy in the merciful God than e'er inhabited the pregnant eyes of men, who waste unprofitable tears for all imaginable woes, and leave the poor, uncomforted, to wail their own." — *Coleridge.*

"Great Husbandman, at least note the mischief which the beasts have done, for then it may be thy heart will pity, and thy hand will be outstretched to deliver." — *Spurgeon.*

"The man whom thou art wont to protect with thy right hand." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"How well that we can look to God when our face is set wrong, that he may turn us, and so his face shine on us, as to bring blessing and present deliverance to his people." — *J. N. Darby.*

"During distress God comes; and when he comes it is more distress." — *Gaelic Proverb.*

"Those who hearken to God's voice will have all desires satisfied and needs supplied. They will find furtherance in hindrances, fertility in barrenness; rocks will drop honey and stones will become bread."—*Exp. Bib.*

author,—unknown: date, that of the rebuilt Temple

Psalm for recitation at a festival.

Gittith, see title Ps. viii.

a Le. xxiii. 24; Nu. xxix. 1; Ps. xlvii. 1.

b "These instruments are commonly made of cows' or rams' horns; they differ somewhat in shape, some being much more curved than others, and the tube of some not being round but flattened. Engel mentions one in the great synagogue of London, wh. has this *vs.* of the Ps. inscribed upon it."—*Perowne.*

"We, ignorant of ourselves, beg often our own harms, which the wise powers deny us for our good; so find we profit by losing of our prayers."—*Shakespeare.*

"The religion of Israel allowed and required exuberant joy. It sternly rejected painting and sculpture, but abundantly employed music, the most ethereal of the arts, which stirs emotions and longings too delicate and deep for speech."—*Exp. Bib.*

c Le. xxiii. 24; Nu. x. 10.

d "Once Joseph had gone forthwith the title 'Saviour of the Age' (*Tsophnath-paneah*), over their land to benefit them. Afterwards

person whom he loved best on his right hand, as a token of love and respect; and as they sat on couches, in the intervals between the dishes, when the master leaned upon his left elbow, the man at his right hand, leaning also on his, would naturally repose his head on the master's bosom, while at the same time the master laid his right hand on the favorite's shoulder or side, in testimony of his favorable regard.—*Burder.*—*Presence of God.*—It is God's presence which constitutes the saint's morning. As the stars may impart some light, and yet the brightness of all combined cannot form the light of day, but when the sun appears there is day forthwith; so God may make some comfort arise to a soul from secondary and inferior means; but it is He Himself alone who, by the shining of His face and the smiles of His countenance causes morning.—*Burroughs.*

PSALM THE EIGHTY-FIRST.

1—3. (1) **joyful noise**, a term used of the blare of trumpets.[a] (2) **Take a psalm**, or take *music. Polychr.*, "Let stringed instruments and timbrels sound." **timbrel**, Ex. xv. 20. **harp**, Ge. iv. 21. **psaltery**, 1 Sa. x. 5. (3) **trumpet**, *Heb. shophar.*[b] **new moon**, any new moon festival, or the special festival of the seventh month. **in the time appointed**, *trans. at the full moon*, wh. would denote the Feast of Tabernacles.

Praise.—I. Praise should be sincere. It can come from the people of God only. II. It should be constant: they should praise God at all times. III. It should be special. There should be seasons of special praise. 1. Appointed by God, as Sabbaths and solemn feasts. 2. Demanded by Providence on occasion of special deliverances and special mercies. IV. It should be public: "sing aloud:" "bring hither," *etc.*—*G. Rogers.*

Design of Psalm lxxxi.—"It is well remarked by De Wette that as the Hebrews were required to make known to their children the design of the ordinance of the Passover (*see* Ex. xii. 26,27), nothing would be more natural than that the sacred poets should take occasion from the return of that festival to enforce the truths pertaining to it in songs composed for the celebration. Such seems to have been the design of this psalm,—reminding the people of the goodness of God in the past, and recalling them from their sins by a remembrance of His mercies, and by a view of what would be the consequences of fully obeying His law."—*Barnes.*—*Blow up the trumpet.*—The Jews say this blowing of trumpets was in commemoration of Isaac's deliverance, a ram being sacrificed for him, and therefore they sounded with trumpets made of ram's horns; or in remembrance of the trumpet blown at the giving of the law; though it rather was an emblem of the Gospel and the ministry of it, by which sinners are aroused, awakened and quickened, and souls are charmed and allured, and filled with spiritual joy and gladness.—*John Gill.*—*In the new moon.*—The feast of the new moon was always proclaimed by sound of trumpet. For want of astromical knowledge, the poor Jews were put to sad shifts to know the real time of the new moon. They generally sent persons to the top of some hill or mountain about the time which, according to their supputations, the new moon should appear. The first who saw it was to give immediate notice to the Sanhedrim; they closely examined the reporter as to his credibility, and whether his information agreed with their calculations. If all was found satisfactory, the president proclaimed the new moon by shouting out, *mikkodesh!* "It is consecrated." This word was repeated twice aloud by the people; and was then proclaimed everywhere by blowing of horns, or what is called the sound of trumpets. Among the Hindoos some feasts are announced by the sound of the conch, or sacred shell.—*Adam Clarke.*

4—7. (4) **was**, *R. V.*, "is." **statute**, appointed Mosaic ordinance.[c] (5) **in Joseph**, Joseph seems to stand for "Israel in Egypt." **testimony**, or witness to Himself, and His claim to the obedience of the people. **when he**, *i. e.* God. **through**, more correctly *against.*[d] **heard**, *etc.* Ref. may be to the strange language of the Egypt. taskmasters. But better to trans. as follows: "The speech of one that I knew not did I hear." "The Psalmist speaks in the person of Israel at the time of the Exodus. Israel then *began to hear* Jehovah, whom it had not yet learned to know as the self-revealing God of redemption, speaking to it in the wondrous works of the deliverance from Egypt."—*Cam.*

Bib. (6) **pots,** baskets. (7) **secret . . thunder,** dark thunder-clouds, fr. behind wh. God spoke to the Israelites. **Meribah,** Ex. xvii. 6, 7.

The voice. — The explanation implied by the *A. V.* and *R. V.*, that the collective Israel speaks, and that the reference is, as in Psalm cxiv. 1, to the "strange language" of the Egyptians, is given by most of the older authorities, and by Ewald and Hengstenberg, but has against it the necessity for the supplement "where," and the difficulty of referring the "I" to the nation. The more usual explanation in modern times is that the speaker is the Psalmist, and that the language which he hears is the voice of God, the substance of which follows in the remainder of the psalm. As in Job iv. 16, Eliphaz could not discern the appearance of the mysterious form that stood before his eyes, and thus its supernatural character is suggested, so the Psalmist hears an utterance of a hitherto unknown kind, which he thus implies to have been Divine. God Himself speaks, to impress the lessons of the past, and to excite the thoughts and feelings which would rightly celebrate the feast. The glad noises of song, harp, and trumpet are hushed; the Psalmist is silent, to hear that dread Voice, and then with lowly lips he repeats so much of the majestic syllables as he could translate into words which it was possible for a man to utter. — *Exp. Bib.*

8—12. (8) **wilt hearken,** *comp.* our Lord's expression, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (9) **no strange god,** absolute fidelity to God was the fundamental requirement of Jehovah's covenant.[b] (10) **open,** *etc.*, Ps. xxxvii. 4; Eph. iii. 20. (11) **would,** or *desired.* (12) **gave them up,** Ac. xiv. 16. The greatest and most fearful of God's punishments. **unto . . lust,** *Polychr.*, "to thier stubborn heart."

Divine expostulation (*vss.* 8–10). — We have here — I. A compassionate Father calling to His child, "O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto Me." II. A jealous sovereign laying down the law, "There shall no strange god be in thee." III. An all-sufficient Friend challenging confidence, "I am the Lord thy God; open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." — *R. Cecil.*

Refusing to hearken. — A gentleman called his sons around his dying bed, and gave them the following relation: "When I was a youth the Spirit strove with me and seemed to say, 'Seek religion now;' but Satan suggested the necessity of waiting till I grew up, because it was incompatible with youthful amusement; so I resolved I would wait till I grew up to be a man. I did so, and was then reminded of my promise to seek religion — but Satan again advised me to wait till middle age, for business and a young family demanded all my attention. Yes, I said, I will do so — I will wait till middle age. I did so — my serious impressions left me for some years. They were again renewed, conscience reminded me of my promises; the Spirit said, 'Seek religion now;' but then I had less time than ever; Satan advised my waiting till I was old; then my children would be settled in business, and I should have nothing else to do — I could then give an undivided attention to it. I listened to his suggestion, and the Spirit ceased to strive with me. I have lived to be old, but now I have no desire as formerly to attend to the concerns of my soul — my heart is hardened. I have resisted and quenched the Spirit; now there is no hope; already I feel the beginning of an eternal misery. Take warning! seek religion now — let nothing tempt you to put off this important concern." — *Whitecross.* — *Open wide.* — Let us seek after greater things. God can do more than we can ask. He that craves spiritual good will have it — God will be sure to give it. It is in His way to give great things. We should not ask trifles, nor be satisfied with being little Christians. Then we must attempt great things. William Huntingdon prayed for a pair of leather breeches, and he got them. William Carey prayed for India. The one was a little thing, soon done with; the other is still being answered. — *Wm. Jones.*

13—16. (13) **Oh that,** or, how I wish that. **in my ways,** is in contrast "with their own counsels." (14) **soon,** in a very little while. (15) **submitted,** *marg. yielded feigned obedience. Cam Bib.*, "should come cringing unto Him." (16) **fed,** *etc., comp.* De. xxxii. 13, 14.[c]

God giving up obstinate transgressors (*vs.* 13). — I. The perverseness complained of. 1. Nothing could exceed the kindness of God towards His people of old; 2. But their obstinacy was incorrigible. Should we imitate the perverseness of the Jews, let us tremble for fear of — II. The judgment inflicted

they forgot their benefactor, and oppressed his children; then Joseph's God arose, and *went forth* over the land in righteous judgment, yet still as Saviour of that people, in whom dwelt the germ of blessing for all nations." — *Kay.*

a In wh. Egypt bricklayers bore the clay for bricks." — *Spk. Com.*

b "In this *vs.* the key-note of the revelation of the law fr. Sinai is struck; the fundamental command wh. opens the Decalogue demanded fidelity to Jehovah, and forbade idol-worship as the sin of sins." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"The custom is said still to exist in Persia that when the king wishes to do a visitor, an ambassador for instance, especial honor, he desires him to open his mouth wide; and the king then crams it as full of sweetmeats as it will hold; and sometimes even with jewels. Curious as this custom is, it is doubtless referred to in Psalm lxxxi. 10: '*Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*;' not with baubles of jewels, but with far richer treasure."— *John Gadsby.*

"He who made us cannot be unmoved by the sufferings of His children; and in sincerely asking His compassion, we almost feel that we receive it."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

c Ez. xvi. 19.

"Even bees, the little alms-men of spring bowers, know there is richest juice in poison flowers." — *Keats.*

on account of it. 1. What a loss they sustained; 2. What misery they incurred. Hence it appears—(1) Whose will be the fault if any be lost. (2) Whose will be the glory if any be saved.—*Simeon.*

Bees.—Mr. Tristram states that the hive-bee of Palestine much resembles our own *Apis mellifica*, and still more closely the hive-bee of Italy and Southern Europe, named *Apis ligustica*, but is smaller and of a lighter color. The swarms or colonies are also generally more numerous, and the cells of the combs a little smaller, while the combs are frequently of great size and weight. It is, he adds, the *Apis fasciata* of Latreille, and now, as of old, is quite as abundant in a wild state as reclaimed. The same species of wild bees are far more numerous than their hived relatives, and the greater quantity of the honey sold in the south of Palestine is obtained from wild swarms. The abundance of bees in the olden time is attested by the repeated description of the land of promise as "a land flowing with milk and honey." The observant author quoted says: "Few countries are more admirably adapted for bees than this, with its dry climate and its stunted but varied flora, consisting, in large proportion, of aromatic thymes, mints and other labiate plants, as well as of crocuses in spring; while the dry recesses of the limestone rocks everywhere afford shelter and protection for the combs." Hence the allusion to "honey out of the rock." Wild honey is also found in trees; thus, "when the people were come into the wood, behold the honey dropped" (1 Sa. xiv. 25, 26). Bees are more abundant in the wilderness of Judæa than in any other part of Palestine; hence honey was a principal part of the plain fare of John the Baptist in the desert. In the same region the Bedouins of the present day squeeze the honey from the combs, and store it up in skins and jars. There are various species of humble bee in Palestine; and mason bees are also common.—*Honey out of the rock.*—Most travelers who have visited Palestine in summer have had their attention directed to the abundance of honey, which the bees of the land have stored up in the hollows of trees and in crevices of the rock. In localities where the bare rocks of the desert alone break the sameness of the scene, and all around is suggestive of desolation and death, the traveler has God's care of His chosen people vividly brought to mind as he sees the honey, which the bees had treasured up beyond his reach, trickling in shining drops down the face of the rock.—*John Duns.*

"When the old Romans attacked a city, it was sometimes their custom to set up a white flag at the city gate. If the garrison surrendered while the white flag was up, their lives were spared; after that, the black flag was run up, and every man was put to the sword. Sinner, today the white flag of mercy is out. Surrender to Christ, and live, before the black flag of death and doom takes its place."

"Surely God cannot think anything of this world too good for His people, who hath not thought the next world too good for them; certainly God cannot think any of these outward enjoyments too good for His people, who hath not thought His Son too good for his people."—*Joseph Caryl.*

PSALM THE EIGHTY-SECOND.

author,—unknown; date, the exile

A Psalm of judgment on corrupt magistrates.

Poss. historical connection, 2 Chro. xv. 8-19; xix. 4-11.

1—4. (1) **standeth,** is stationed. **congregation,** *etc., Polychr.*, "In the heavenly assembly," one summoned and presided over by the Almighty Ruler of the universe. **among the gods,** *Elohim*, a term sometimes used for those high in office.[a] (2) **accept the persons,** *R. V.*, "respect the persons," common expression for undue partiality.[b] (3) **Defend,** *Heb. judge;* do justice to; give them their due. (4) **rid,** same idea as *deliver*. "Human authorities are God's representatives to see that the weak and friendless have justice done them."—*Kirkpatrick.* Pr. xxiv. 11, 12.

The importance of mercy.—Mercy is in the air which we breathe, the daily light which shines upon us, the gracious rain of God's inheritance. It is the public spring for all the thirsty, the common hospital for all the needy. All the streets of the church are paved with these stones. What would become of the children if there were not these breasts of consolation? It is mercy that takes us out of the womb, feeds us in the days of our pilgrimage, furnishes us with spiritual provision, closes our eyes in peace, and translates us to a secure resting place. It is the first petitioner's suit, and the first believer's article, the contemplation of Enoch, the confidence of Abraham, the burden of the prophetic songs, and the glory of all the apostles, the plea of the penitent, the ecstasies of the reconciled, the believer's hosanna, the angel's hallelujah. Ordinances, oracles, altars, pulpits, the gates of the grave, and the gates of heaven, do all depend upon mercy. It is the lodestar of the wandering, the ransom of the captive, the antidote of the tempted, the prophet of the living, and the effectual comfort of the dying; there would not be one regenerate saint upon earth, nor one glorified saint in heaven, if it were not for mercy.

Justice.—

In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice;

[a] Ex. xxi. 6; xxii. 8; xxii. 28.

[b] Ex. xxiii. 2; Le. xix. 15; De. i. 17; Ja. ii. 1.

"It seems preferable to regard this passage to *vs.* 6 as a rebuke addressed, in the true prophetic strain, by the poet himself, to those whose iniquity called for the protest."—*Perowne.*

"Rulers must understand that they are not placed over stocks and stones, nor over swine and dogs, but over the congregation of God;

And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In its true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
E'en to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence.— *Shakespeare.*

they must therefore be afraid of acting against God Himself when they act unjustly."— *Martin Luther.*

5—8. (5) **know not,** "moral blindness is the cause of all sin," it is also the effect of sin.[a] **walk . . darkness,** fig. for their complacent self-satisfaction. Pr. ii. 13. **foundations,** *etc., Polychr.,* "are shaking." Ps. xi. 3.[b] (6) **Ye are gods,** Elohim,[c] *i. e.* "in my law I have called you gods"— I have given you this lofty name (*see* Exo. xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 9), since ye judge on my behalf, "as my representatives" (Deut. i. 17; 2 Chron. xix. 6; Rom. xiii. 1, 2). **children of the most High,** not therefore "gods" in the strictest sense, but possessing a derived, and so a qualified, divinity. — *Pul. Com.* (7) **die,** they had no ground for presumption, their high title was no exemption from Divine justice and punishment. **like men,** *lit.* like Adam, "when he violated the conditions on which he held his life." **princes,** poss. a special example is referred to; *see* Ps. lxxxiii. 11. (8) **for . . nations,** *lit.* "Thou hast all the nations as Thine inheritance."[d]

The world wrong in its foundations (*vss.* 5–8). — Referring to kings, *etc.*, the psalm brings under our attention — (1) The lofty position they occupy; 2. The presence of God in their midst; 3. The cardinal rule of their office. I. The radical wrongness of the word. 1. Look at the foundation of man's character individually; 2. Religiously. II. The ephemeral distinctions of the world. 1. The most illustrious must meet with a common event; 2. They must meet this common end in a way peculiar to themselves. III. The true hope of the world. 1. This cry is one of the deepest cries of universal man; 2. It implies the want of confidence in all creature instrumentality; 3. And a confidence in the possibility of securing the Divine interposition. — *D. Thomas.*

Ye are gods. — But while care ought to be taken to guard the divine right of civil government from abuse, the right itself is not to be forgotten. The state is an ordinance of God, having, like the family, its foundation in the very constitution of human nature. The officers of the state, whether supreme or subordinate, have a divine right to administer justice in the community over which Providence has placed them. They who resort to the civil magistrate for judgment, resort to the judgment-seat of God; just as they who resort to the Ministry of the Word resort to the Great Prophet of the Church. Unless the magistrate had received a commission from God, he could not lawfully bear the sword. To take the life of an unarmed fellow-man, without a commission from the Most High warranting the act, would be to commit murder.— *William Binnie.*— *Alike in death.* — Beasts, fat and lean, fed in one pasture, killed in one slaughter. The prince in his lofty palace, the beggar in his lowly cottage, have double difference, local and ceremonial height and lowness: yet meet at the grave, and are mingled in ashes. We walk in this world as a man in a field of snow; all the way appears smooth, yet cannot we be sure of any step. All are like actors on a stage; some have one part and some another, death is still busy amongst us; here drops one of the players, we bury him with sorrow, and to our scene again; then falls another, yea all, one after another, till death be left upon the stage. Death is that damp which puts out all the dim lights of vanity. Yet man is easier to believe that all the world shall die, than to suspect himself. — *Thomas Adams.*

a Ps. xiv. 4. liii. 4.

b "A figurative expression for the disturbance of those fundamental principles on which the administration of justice rests."— *Spk. Com.*

"Upon three things the duration of the world depends—upon truth, and justice, and peace" — *Rabban Simeon.*

c Children of the Most High, Jno. x. 34–36.

d "All nations are Thine inheritance. Thou gavest a special inheritance to Israel; but *all* lands are Thy Canaan, and all will be judged by Thee."— *Wordsworth.*

"Prayer is to the penitent heart a sweet source of consolation, long even before the answer come; because a generous mind rejoices in acknowledging the obligations it desires to receive, or has received, or the faults, errors, and offenses which it has committed. And, also, that the exercise itself is a drawing nigh unto One who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. God has no frowns for the penitent; He hears their cry, and will help them."— *Rev. J. S. Knox.*

PSALM THE EIGHTY-THIRD.

author, — unknown; time of the Maccabees

A Psalm against a confederacy of hostile nations.

1—4. (1) **Keep,** *etc., lit. let there be no rest to Thee;* or, *stillness,* as if indifferent to surrounding conditions. (2) **lifted up the head,**[e] with arrogancy and self-sufficiency. Jer. viii. 28. (3) **crafty,** *lit.* make crafty their plot or secret consultation. **hidden ones,** *Polychr.,* "Thy chosen ones," *i. e.* Israel, whom God conceals in His pavilion in time of trouble as a peculiar treasure.[f] (4) **cut . . nation,** 2 Chr. xx. 11.[g]

God's hidden ones (*vs.* 3). — I. The people of God are hidden in His heart — in the depths of everlasting love. II. In the hollow of His hand — as the objects of His special care. III. In the laboratory of His spirit, where they are created anew in Jesus Christ. IV. They are hidden as leaven — in the character and extent of their influence. — *Waddington.*

e Job v. 12.

f Ps. xxvii. 5; xxxi. 20.

g Is. vii. 8; Je xlviii. 2.

"Like as if one had a great enemy, and the queen, who

Duty to enemies. — A soldier, riding over the scene of a battle-field when the fight was done, came, as he picked his steps among the dead, to a body, which, stirring, showed some signs of life. The bleeding form wore the dress of a foe. Regardless of that, he said to his attendant, "Give him a draught of wine;" and, as the officer stopped down to do so, the wounded soldier, discovering through the mist that was gathering on his dying eye, in this good Samaritan, the general of the troops against whom he had been fighting, raised himself on his elbow, drew a pistol, and, with deadly hate, fired it at his benefactor's head. Happily the bullet missed its mark; and the general, as soon as he recovered from his surprise, with a forgiveness, truly magnanimous, said, "Give it to him all the same!"

5—8. (5) **one consent,** *or heart.*[a] (6) **tabernacles,** *i. e.* tents. **Edom,** Ge. xxv. 30. **Moab,** Ge. xix. 37. **Hagarenes,** dwelling in the land from east of Gilead to the Persian Gulf.[b] (7) **Gebal,** country of Mount Seir, mountainous region S. of the Dead Sea, in the neighborhood of Petra. **Ammon,** Ge. xix. 38. **Amalek,** Ex. xvii. 8. **Philistines.** Ge. x. 14. **Tyre,** Jos. xix. 29. (8) **Assur,** Assyria, Ge. x. 11. **children of Lot,** *i. e.*, Moabites and Ammonites.

Verses 6–8. — An enumeration of the confederate peoples. From the southeast come the Edomites, who inhabited the mountainous region between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba, and the Ishmaelites, who roamed over the deserts from the borders of Egypt to the northwest shore of the Persian Gulf (Ge. xxv. 18), from the east of the Dead Sea come the Moabites, and from the northeast the Hagarenes or Hagrites, who lived in the neighborhood of the Hauran, east of Gilead (1 Chr. v. 10, 19, 20); — they are mentioned in the inscriptions of Sennacherib along with the Nabatheans. Gebal is not the Gebal of Ezekiel xxvii. 9 to the north of Tyre (Byblus), but the northern part of the mountains of Edom, southward of the Dead Sea, a district known to Pliny as Gebalene. The Ammonites, ancient and bitter foes of Israel, come from their homes beyond the Jordan, the Amalekites from the southern deserts between the Arabah and the Mediterranean. The maritime states of the Philistines on the west and Tyre on the north have joined them, and even the remote Assyria sends a contingent to support the confederacy. — *Cam. Bib.*

Gebal. — The Greek name of this place was Byblus. The town is called *Jebeil*, and has a population of about six hundred. It is about seventeen miles north of Beyroot. The ancient ruins are very extensive. Immense numbers of granite columns are strewn about in the village and over the surrounding fields. These columns are mostly small, varying from one foot to two feet in diameter. Some of the stones measure nearly twenty feet in length. The citadel is the most remarkable ruin. The port is nearly choked up with sand and ruins. — *George H. Whitney.*

9—12. (9) **Midianites,** Ge. xxxvii. 28. **Sisera,** Ju. iv. 22. **Jabin,** Ju. iv. 23. **Kison,** Ju. v. 21; 1 Ki. xviii. 40. (10) **En-dor,** Jos. xvii. 11. **dung,** the unburied corpses spoken of contemptuously in the light of fertilization. (11) **Oreb . . Zeeb,** princes of the army, Ju. vii. 25. **Zebah,** *etc.*, these seem to have been the kings, Ju. viii. 5, 6. (12) **Who,** refers to Israel's present enemies. **houses,** *lit.* pastures or homesteads.

Enmity to God in man. — This may be shown — 1. From man's capability of knowing God, and his indifference to possess this knowledge. 2. Wilful ignorance of God. 3. So seldom thinking of God. 4. So little concerned about the favor of God. 5. So little converse and walk with God. 6. The thoughtlessness concerning God which man manifests in all his daily ordinary affairs. 7. The uncomfortable life which he lives by reason of his distance from God and unacquaintedness with Him. 8. His universal disobedience of the Divine laws. — *J. Howe.*

The brook of Kison. — The river Kishon traverses the plain of Esdraelon and terminates in the Bay of Acre or Akka. This is the stream regarding which it is written, after Barak and Deborah had gained their victory over Sisera, "The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength." Although it is now no insignificant stream, yet it needs heavy rains to make it really considerable in magnitude: it is very unequal in size, and seems to be only temporary in its character. At any rate, when Robinson passed its head waters in midsummer,

is but a mortal woman, should promise to protect and defend him, he would not fear; much more we ought not to fear our enemies, seeing that God, who only is almighty, doth say, 'Fear not; for I am thy Protector and thy Defense!'"—*Cawdary.*

[a] "*Heb. lêb*, here referring prob. not to the hearty earnestness, or the unanimity, of the counsel, but to the intelligence and thought with wh. it was devised."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

[b] 1 Chro. v. 10, 18-22.

"I would not enter on my list of friends (though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense, yet wanting sensibility) the man who needlessly sets foot upon a worm. An inadvertent step may crush the snail that crawls at evening in the public path; but he that has humanity, forwarn'd will tread aside and let the reptile live."—*Cowper.*

"Couldst thou not grant the merciful a time for mercy? Time is a man's good angel; to leave no interval between the sentence and the fulfilment of it, doth beseem God only, the Immutable!"—*Coleridge.*

"Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream of glory on the consecrated hour of man, in audience with the Deity; who worships the great God, that instant joins the first in heaven and sets his foot on hell."—*Young.*

"Are we gods, allied to no infirmities? Are our natures more than men's natures? When we slip a little out of the

he found the channels all dry, and they had been so for a whole year. On the other hand, in the winter the waters are often exceedingly abundant; particularly in the northern and southern chief tributaries; so that, in 1799, at the time of the French invasion, many of the vanquished Turks perished in the floods which swept down from Deburieh, and which inundated the plain. It was a scene like that described in Judges v. regarding the fate of Sisera's hosts. — *Carl Ritter.*

13—18. (13) **like a wheel,** *rolling thing*, "whirling dust."[a] — *Cheyne.* As the chaff, dust, sand, anything driven in rolling masses by the wind. **stubble,** Ps. i. 4. (14) **As the fire,** *etc.*, fig. fr. rapid burning of brushwood on a hillside; *comp.* prairie fires. (15) **persecute,** better *visit* them, pursue them, punish them. (16) **seek thy name,** even such judgments being conceived as restorative. "He does not wish Israel's enemies to die before the logic of facts has compelled them to own Jehovah as their God." — *Cheyne.* (17) **for ever,** or thoroughly. (18) **thou,** *etc.*,[b] see the prayer of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chr. xx. 6

A wheel. — What sort of vegetable is this whose stems our muleteers are cutting up and chewing with so much relish? It is a wild artichoke. We can amuse ourselves with it and its behavior for a while, and may possibly extract something more valuable than the insipid juice of which our men are so fond. You observe that in growing, it throws out numerous branches of equal size and length in all directions, forming a sort of sphere or globe a foot or more in diameter. When ripe and dry in autumn, these branches become rigid and light as a feather, the parent stem breaks off at the ground, and the wind carries these vegetable globes whithersoever it pleaseth. At the proper season thousands of them come scudding over the plain rolling, leaping, bounding with vast racket, to the dismay both of the horse and his rider. Once, on the plain north of Hamath, my horse became quite unmanageable among them. They charged down upon us on the wings of the wind, which broke them from their moorings, and sent them careering over the desert in countless numbers. Our excellent native itinerant, A—— F——, had a similar encounter with them on the eastern desert beyond the Hauran, and his horse was so terrified that he was obliged to alight and lead him. I have long suspected that this wild artichoke is the gulgal, which, in Psalm lxxxiii. 13, is rendered "wheel," and in Isaiah xvii. 13, "a rolling thing." Evidently our translators knew not what to call it. Hundreds of these globes, all bounding like gazelles in one direction over the desert, would suddenly wheel short round at the bidding of a counter-blast, and dash away with equal speed on their new course. An Arab proverb addresses this "rolling thing" thus: "Ho! 'akkûb, where do you put up to-night?" to which it answers as it flies, "Where the wind puts up." They also derive one of their many forms of cursing from this plant: "May you be whirled like the 'akkûb, before the wind, until you are caught in the thorns, or plunged into the sea." If this is not the "wheel" of David, and the "rolling thing" of Isaiah, from which they also borrowed their imprecations upon the wicked, I have seen nothing in the country to suggest the comparison. — *W. M. Thomson.*

PSALM THE EIGHTY-FOURTH.

1—4. (1) **amiable,** a singular adj. to apply to *places*, better, *how* lovely. **tabernacles,** the plural form is used prob. in ref. to the various buildings wh. composed the temple. (2) **fainteth,** or is consumed with desire. **crieth out,** "ring out their joy, for the pilgrim can now expect to have his 'thirst for the living God' satisfied." **living God,** Ps. xlii .2. (3) **sparrow,**[c] referred to as familiar to the Psalmist in its association with the sanctuary. **thine altars,** we need not suppose that these birds built their nests actually in the altars; the poet blends himself with his figure of the birds. "Still the swallow seeks the temple inclosure at Jerusalem, and the mosque of Omar, as a secure and and safe nesting-place."— *Tristram.* (4) **dwell,**[d] the officials who are always at the tabernacle. **still,** *Polychr.*, "all the day long."

Desire. — I. The object of Desire: (1) The house of the Lord; (2) The Lord of the house; the life of God in us and our life in Him. II. The Occasion of the Desire. Exclusion from the Sanctuary. David says not, Oh how I long for my palace, my crown, my sceptre, my kingdom; but Oh how I long to return to the house of God! III The Strength of the Desire. (1) It was an

way of virtue, are we lost? Is there no medicine called sweet mercy?" — *Beaumont and Fletcher.*

a Comp. Is. xvii. 13.

b "There cannot possibly be more than *One* whose name is *Jehovah*, and so when His Name is mentioned, of necessity He is mentioned, and therefore 'He is His Name, and His Name is He.'" — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"We would that all sinners were exterminated by their being regenerated into saints." — *Wm. Jones.*

"One of the things for which we ought to be most grateful is, that God will not give us what he knows is not best for us, even if we ask for it over and over again. And one prayer that we can always pray in all sincerity and faith is, that God will refuse to give us what is not good, when we do ask for it." — *S. S. Times.*

"Love and hate are wretched artists — indifference will draw the line true and display the color as it is."

author,— unknown; date, early exile

A Psalm concerning the consolations of Divine worship.

Gittith, see title Ps. viii.

c Tsippor, any small bird. *Derôr*, the swallow, so called from its gyrations.

d Je. xx. 6.

inward longing, "my soul longeth," *etc.*; (2) A painful longing, "yea, fainteth;" (3) A prayerful longing, "my heart crieth out;" (4) An entire longing, "my heart and my flesh," *etc.*; Or, I. The value of God's house is known by attending it. II. It is better known by being afterwards banished from it. III. It is best known by being restored to it. — *Geo. Rogers.*

Sir Thomas More used to attend the parish church at Chelsea, and there, putting on a surplice, he would sing with the choristers at matins and high mass. It happened, one day, that the Duke of Norfolk coming to Chelsea to dine with him, found him at church thus engaged. As they walked home together arm-in-arm, after service, the duke exclaimed, "My Lord Chancellor a parish clerk! A parish clerk! you dishonor the king and his office!" "Nay," he replied, smiling, "your Grace cannot suppose that the king, our master, will be offended with me for serving his Master, or thereby account his office dishonored." — *Spurgeon.*

5—7. (5) **strength,** *etc.*,[a] reference is to those who do love and rejoice in God, though they are not actual officials in His house. **heart . . ways,** *lit.* "ways in their heart." The high roads leading to the city are in their thoughts.[b] *Polychr.*, "To whom a pilgrimage is never out of their mind."— *Cam. Bib.* "In whose hearts are the highways (to Zion)." (6) **Baca,** *R. V.*, "Weeping;" *marg.* "balsam trees," a figurative expression. Prob. no particular valley is referred to. All the ancient versions render Baca by *weeping;* but some take it to be the name of a kind of a mulberry tree wh. drops, as it were, tears of balm.[c] **rain . . pools,** *R. V.*, "the early rain covereth it with blessings." (7) **strength to strength,** ever renewing strength in spite of the toils of the way. **appeareth before God,** "technical term for visiting the sanctuary at the great festivals."

Who is the blessed man? (*vs.* 5). — Consider — I. Who this man is that speaks thus. 1. He is a thinking man; 2. A believing man; 3. An obedient man; 4. A devout man. II. His blessedness — he whose strength is in God; not, then, as Samson — he who has spiritual strength. 1. Let the weak learn where his true strength lies; 2. Let all prize the ordinances where this strength may be found. — *R. Cecil.*

The Valley of Baca. — The pure in heart can find and see God anywhere. He who worships truly carries his Holy of Holies with him. He who takes his own fire need never complain of the cold, and with wood and fire all prepared, he can find or he can build an altar upon any mount. Happy is the soul that has learned to lean upon God, who can say, amid all the distractions and interventions of man, "My soul, wait thou only upon God." To such a one, whose soul is athirst for God, the Valley of Baca becomes a well, while the hot rock pours out its streams of blessing. — *Burton.*

8—12. (8) **hear my prayer,** evidently the prayer he offered was for restoration to the city and worship of God. (9) **our shield,** Ps. iii. 3; xxviii. 7; lix. 11.[d] *R. V.*, *marg.* "Behold our shield, O God;" *i. e.* the king is the shield as God's representative. **thine anointed,** show favor to the king whom Thou didst anoint. (10) **For . . thousand,** *Polychr.*, "Better is a day in Thy courts than elsewhere a thousand." **be a doorkeeper,** *lit.* "lie on the threshold;" occupy the meanest office in God's house.[e] "The poet would rather be the humblest of the guests of Jehovah than dwell at ease among the heathen. He has the spirit of the publican." — *Cheyne.* (11) **Lord God,** Jehovah-Elohim. **sun,** only place in wh. God is so called.[f] **grace and glory,** present grace and future glory comprise God's full salvation. (12) **trusteth in thee,** wherever he may be, in Zion, or on pilgrim's road.

"*Grace*" *and* "*glory.*" — God being such, "grace and glory" will flow from Him to those who seek Him. These two are given simultaneously, not, as sometimes supposed, in succession, as though grace were the sum of gifts for earth, and glory the all-comprehending expression for the higher bestowments of heaven. The Psalmist thinks that both are possessed here. *Grace* is the sum of God's gifts, coming from His loving regard to His sinful and inferior creatures. *Glory* is the reflection of His own lustrous perfection, which irradiates lives that are turned to Him, and makes them shine, as a poor piece of broken pottery will, when the sunlight falls on it. Since God is the sum of all good, to possess Him is to possess it all. The one gift unfolds into all things lovely and needful. It is the raw material, as it were, out of which can be shaped, according to transient and multiform needs, everything that can be desired or can bless a soul. —*Exp. Bib.*

"A custom, existing among several nations of antiquity, is deemed capable of illustrating the present passage. For birds whose nests chanced to be built on the temples, or within the limits of them, were not allowed to be driven away, much less to be killed, and found there a secure and undisturbed abode." — *W. K. Clay.*

a "Who makes Thee his strength, and strongly stays himself upon Thee." — *Mat Henry.*

b "They cherish the remembrance of caravan journeys to the national festivals. Every spot of the familiar road, every station at which they have rested, lives in their heart." — *Perowne.*

"Like some nomads brought into city life, they are always longing to escape. The caged eagle sits on the highest point of his prison, and looks with filmed eye to the free heavens."

c "The meaning is, Blessed are they who can, by faith and endurance, make the dreary spots of life a source of spiritual joy" — *Jennings and Lowe.*

d Comp. Ge. xv. 1.

e The Korahites, to whom the Ps. was addressed, were *doorkeepers* in the temple. 1 Chr. xxvi. 13-19.

f Comp., however, Ps. xxvii. 1; Is. lx. 19; Mal. iv. 2

"This is a Korahite psalm, and the descendants of Korah were, in fact, 'keepers of the gates of the tabernacle, and keepers of the entry,' as well as being permitted to swell the chorus of the inspired singers of Israel." —*Bossuet*

PSALM THE EIGHTY-FIFTH.

1—3. (1) **favourable**, or well-pleased. Thou hast dealt graciously. **thy land**, Canaan being regarded as in a special sense God's. **brought Jacob**, *Polychr.*, "turned the captivity;" this is naturally applied to the return from Babylon, but it suits recovery from any calamity.[a] (2) **iniquity**, Ps. xxxii 1. **covered**, *O. T.* idea of atonement; "as the covering of an offense, wh. would otherwise meet the eye of the judge and call for punishment." (3) **taken away**, *i. e.* withdrawn the wrath wh. was let loose. **wrath**, *comp.* 2 Chr. xii. 7. **turned**, *etc.*, *marg.* "turned thine anger from waxing hot." The captives might well rejoice that the wrath of God had been limited, and so they had not been wholly destroyed.

A grateful recollection.—I. Of national deliverance. II. Of the removal of the Divine anger. III. Of the bestowal of forgiveness.—*Wm. Jones.*

Ps. lxxxv.—This beautiful psalm, like some others, has come down to us without name or date; the production of some unknown poetic genius, touched, purified, and exalted by the fire of celestial inspiration; a precious relic of that golden age when the Hebrew music was instinct with a spirit such as never breathed on Greece or Rome. It is interesting to reflect on the anonymous origin of some of the psalms: to remember how largely the church of God is indebted to some nameless worthies who wrote for us hymns and spiritual songs, full of richer strains than were ever poured forth by the most illustrious of pagan name. These holy men are passed away; they have left no record of their history; but they have bequeathed legacies of rich, varied, and inspired sentiments, which will render the church debtors to them to the end of time.—*John Stoughton.*

4—7. (4) **Turn us**,[b] or restore us, Je. xxxi. 18: Ps. lxxx. 7. (5) **for ever**, continuously. Delivered fr. Bab., the exiles hoped for rest, but instead found increasing distress and anxiety, wh., to them, indicated God's continued anger.[c] **draw out**, prolong it; make it spread over. (6) **revive us**,[d] as a nation, by giving full rest and prosperity; restore the ancient times. (7) **mercy**, the cry for mercy always recognizes that judgment is deserved.

Spiritual revival (*vs.* 6).—In discussing this text establish the following proposition; That a spiritual revival will be the object and prayer of every renewed heart under a sense of spiritual decay. Observe the following points; This prayer will not be understood by the world; it is easy to maintain the form of religion; examine the means by which Christians are revived; note the ground on which this revival is urged.—*R. Cecil.*

Revival.—Many Christians have come to have a distaste for the word "revival" when used with reference to religious work. There has been so much exaggeration, so much fanatical excitement, and so much transient profession, that I cannot wonder at the revulsion which many sober-minded Christians feel when they hear the very word "revival." All "got-up" revivals are bad. You cannot organize a true revival; you cannot treat spiritual influence as fixed quantities. As a matter of fact, there have been extraordinary visitations of Divine influence; there have been seasons when the Holy Ghost has made the earthquake, the fire, the rending wind, and the stormy tempest His ministers, and when men have been shaken with a wholesome fear, not knowing the way, yet feeling the nearness of the Lord. There have been great birthdays in the church, when prodigals have come back to sonship, when shepherds have returned with recovered flocks, and the dead have risen to immortal life. There have, too, been times when the people have realized with special vividness the personality and life-giving power of the Holy Ghost; when they have had the keys of interpretation wherewith to unlock the boundless treasures of the Divine Word; when prayer was as the speech of love that never wearies; when the Sabbath shed its sacred glory over all the days of the week; when God's house shone with heavenly lustre, and all life throbbed in joyful harmony with the purposes of God. Cannot such delights be more permanently secured? At the same time, we are not constituted for constant rapture; we have to contend with the deceitfulness of the flesh; we have to fight and suffer upon the earth. Still there is danger that we may be content with low attainments. There is a steady and penetrating glow of piety, there is a fervor of love, there is an animated intelligence, a zealous affection, a godly yearning for personal progress and social

author,—unknown; date, after the return from captivity

Prayer to realize the full blessings of restoration.

a Comp. Job xlii. 10; Ps. xiv. 7; lxviii. 18

"Mistake is often made by limiting the work of God's ministers to the 'spiritual' and 'personal' part of their work. Every true minister is a leader of his people in recognizing God's work in the nation, and in renewing national thanksgiving and trust."—*R. Tuck.*

b "This portion of the Ps. implies that the people were in a state of great distress and weakness, such as is described in Ezra and Nehemiah."—*Spk. Com.*

c Ezr. ix. 8, 9; Is. lvii. 15.

d Ho. vi. 1, 2; Hab iii. 2.

"Constant revival, no autumn, no winter, but perpetual summer, is that which the church needs, and which must precede the coming millenium."

"As meadows parched, brown groves and withering flowers, imbibe the sparkling dew and genial showers; as chill, dark air inhales the morning beam; as thirsty hearts enjoy the gelid stream;—thus to man's grateful soul from heaven descend, the mercies of his Father, Lord, and Friend!"—*Sir William Jones.*

"We never have been strong and safe except when we leaned on God, and fully opened

our heart and life to Divine guidance."

a Hab. ii. 1.

b "The four virtues mentioned here are the cardinal virtues of Christ's kingdom." —*Calvin.*

"On God's part gracious goodness and faithfulness have combined, then on man's equity and peace." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

"A saint, is one who has listened to God; who has heard the words of peace from His lips; who has been reconciled; and who knows that he is so. Therefore he seeks to be holy. He hates his former folly. He does not make his free pardon a reason for returning to it."—*Wm. Jones.*

c Is. xlv. 8.

d "This *vs.* shows us that the power of fruitfulness was not once for all bestowed on the earth, but that every year it is fertilized by the secret virtue of God, according as He sees fit to testify to us His goodness." —*Calvin.*

e 1 Pe. ii. 21.

"Righteousness goes forth before Him, and makes its footsteps away." —*Hengstenberg.*

"Righteousness shall go before Him, and attend unto the way of His steps." —*Delitzsch.*

"A man may look long and bitterly at his sins and forget that Christ died for him. But if he believes that Christ died for him he cannot help remembering his sins."—*Henry Van Dyke.*

evangelization, which, when found together, make up a life of delight in God, and blessed service for men. —*J Parker.*

8–10. (8) **will hear,** wait and listen with expectancy; watching unto prayer.[a] **for . . saints,** Ps. lxxxix. 15–17. **to folly,** *Polychr.*, "Lest, at last, they sink into folly!" Best applied to the *idolatry* which had brought such national calamities. (9) **nigh,** so ready to be granted as soon as there is readiness to receive. **glory,** *i. e.* "the manifest presence of God, as in the Shechinah — to tabernacle in the land. The condition of God's dwelling with men is their acceptance of His salvation. That purifies hearts to be temples." —*Exp. Bib.* **dwell,** is the word specially used of the abiding of God among His people, from which later *Heb.* derived the term *Shechinah* for the Presence of God in the Tabernacle and Temple. —*Cam. Bib.* (10) **Mercy,** *etc.*,[b] restored Israel will reveal the attributes of God to wh. it owes its existence, by reflecting them in social and civic life.

The words of the Lord (*vs.* 8) — I. The listener. Man's duty and privilege to be a listener to God. II. The speaker. God — He speaks powerfully, decisively, attractively, *etc.* III. The message. Peace — might have been wrath. IV. The confidence. When God speaks we know what to expect. V. The issue. Not to return again to folly, but to lead a holy life."—*H. Bonar.* — *Note on vs.* 10. — Dr. Boothroyd, "Righteousness and peace have embraced." In the Hindoo book, called *Iraku-Vangesham*, it is said the "lotus flowers were kissing each other." When the branches of two separate trees meet, in consequence of strong winds, it is said, "they kiss each other." When a young palmirah tree which grows near the parent stock begins to move (by the wind), the people say, "Ah! the mother is kissing the daughter." A woman says of the ornaments around her neck, "Yes, these embrace my neck." Has a female put on the nose-ring, it is, it is said, kissing her. The idea, therefore, is truly Oriental, and shows the intimate union of righteousness and peace. — *Roberts.*

11–13. (11) **Truth,** responsive to God's great mercy there shall be man's fruits of good works. **from heaven,** like some approving angel.[c] (12) **yield her increase,** as of old, covenant faithfulness being sealed of God by temporal prosperities.[d] (13) **set . . steps,** *lit.* "shall make His steps a way" for us to walk in.[e] Ps. lxxxix. 14.

In His steps. — We are apt to provide for the expansion of our plans, but not for shrinkage; and he is the wise man who humbly follows God's leading; who, though his road seems to lie straight and broad before him, out into wide domains of usefulness, happiness, and power, yet when God suddenly turns down some by-path, full of windings, leading he does not dream whither, obediently and cheerfully follows, content to go in dark and crooked ways with God, rather than on the widest path without Him. I remember once, in Italy, climbing a mountain up which a broad, fine carriage road led almost to the summit; but there the road suddenly ceased, and nothing appeared but a narrow foot-path leading round the shoulder of the mountain, and that soon dwindled into a sheep-track; and the sun beat down with terrible power, and the way was rough, and more than once I was tempted to go back; but never shall I forget the vision which burst upon me as at last I reached the end of the narrow way; it repaid all the toil. So, I say, do not be afraid of the narrow way if God turns you into it. The great thing is that He lead you; and if He lead, even though His footsteps are not known, you know that His way is in holiness, and ends at last in eternal good. —*M. R. Vincent.*

Milton must have had this passage in his mind in the *Ode on the Nativity:*

> Yea, truth and justice then
> Will down return to men,
> Orb'd in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
> Mercy will sit between,
> Throned in celestial sheen,
> With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
> And heaven, as at some festival,
> Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

PSALM THE EIGHTY-SIXTH.

author, — unknown; time, early exile

"This psalm is a mosaic of fragments from other psalms and scriptures. Pss. xxv., xxvi., xxvii., xl., liv. are quoted almost verbatim." **1—5.** (1) **Bow down,** Ps. xvii. 6; incline Thine ear. **hear,** *R. V.*, "answer." **poor and needy,** "afflicted and poor," Ps. xl. 17.[a] (2) **am holy,** "the object of the loving-kindness," he claims the covenant relationship.[b] (3) **merciful,** or favorable. **daily,** *lit.* "all day long." (4) **lift . . soul,** Ps. xxv. 1. (5) **ready to forgive,** Joel. ii. 13.[c] "It is on the broad ground of God's mercy, and of that mercy as freely bestowed on *all* who seek it, that he rests."

Prayer of a persecuted saint.

Ready to forgive. — I. We have not to persuade or argue Him into the mind to forgive; He is ready through what Christ has done. II. He is ready to forgive all sins. III. He is ready to forgive all sinners. IV. He is ready to forgive freely. V. He is ready to forgive now. — *J. Bate.*

Ready to forgive (*vs.* 5). — An old author mentions a story of Satan's appearing to a dying man, and showing him a large parchment roll, wherein were written on each side the numberless sins of the sick man. There were written his idle words, which made up three-quarters of all he had ever spoken, together with the false words, the unchaste words, the angry words; afterwards came in order his vain and ungodly words; and, lastly, his actions, according to the commandments: whereupon Satan said, "See here thy virtues; see here what thy examination must be." The man answered, "It is true, Satan: but thou hast not set down all; for thou shouldest have added and set down here below, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;' and this also ought not to have been forgotten, 'That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;'" whereupon the devil vanished.

6—10. (6) **supplications,** the *Heb.* form is a peculiar one, prob. meaning "importunate supplications." — *Delitzsch.* (7) **In . . thee,** Ps. xx. 1; l. 15; lxxvii. 2. (8) **Among the gods,** "the imaginary gods of the heathen — not, perhaps, known to the Psalmist to be wholly imaginary — are probably meant." Ex. xv. 11.[d] **neither . . works,** *comp.* De. iii. 24. The mere gods have nothing to show that will bear comparison with Thy works. (9) **All nations,** *etc.*, an anticipation of the conversion of the heathen.[e]

The day of trouble. — I. A period with which all men are acquainted. 1. The individual character of trouble; 2. The limited duration of trouble. II. A resolve which all men should make. III. A result which all men may anticipate. "Thou wilt answer me." 1. Because Thou hast promised to do so; 2. Because Thou hast done so; 3. Because of what Thou art. — *Wm. Jones.*

The word of God has been the comfort of very many in the prospect of sufferings and death. We are told of the brothers De Witt, the renowned Dutch statesmen, that when their assassins found them, the brothers heard them approach without alarm. Cornelius De Witt, broken down by the agonies of torture, was lying on his bed, and John was seated before a table reading the Bible to his brother, to strengthen him against the fear of death and the anguish of the last hour of life. — *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

11—13. (11) **Teach,** *etc.*, Ps. xxvii. 11. **unite my heart,** *Polychr.*, "Direct my heart solely," *etc.* He desires singleness and simplicity of aim to the glory of God.[f] (12) **praise,** in order that he may give worthy thanks the Psalmist desires the whole or united heart. (13) **lowest hell,** *R. V., marg.* "from sheol beneath:" poetical for exceeding depth of affliction.[g]

Consecration. —

O Infinite of goodness and of glory!
The knee that Thou hast shaped shall bend to Thee;
The tongue which Thou hast tuned shall chant Thy praise,
And Thine own image, the immortal soul,
Shall consecrate herself to Thee forever.

14—17. (14) **proud,** *etc.*, "the insolent." **assemblies,** *i. e.* the "crew," or "rabble." Ps. liv. 3. **set thee,** do not act, as I ever would, with an earnest desire to Thy glory. (15) **compassion,** *etc.* the char of God gives the

a "This is not the highest ground that can be taken in pressing for an answer to our prayer, but it is a ground which God suffers us to take." —*Perowne.*

Ps. xxxv. 10; xxxvii. 14; lxxiv. 21.

b "The Psalmist merely declares that he is one whose habit of life is piety, and as such claims God's protection." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

c *Comp.* Ex. xx. 6; xxiv. 6, 9; Nu. xiv. 18, 19.

d Ps. lxxi. 19; lxxvii. 13; lxxxix. 6; xcv. 3.

e "The pious Jews believed that God's common relation to all would be ultimately acknowledged by all men. (Ps. xlv. 12–16; xlvii. 9)." —*Fausset.*

"Sincerity brings a man's will into subjection to the will of God. This is that holy oil which makes the wheels of the soul run nimbly, even in the difficult paths of obedience." —*John Flavel.*

f "That all the various desires, interests, passions, that agitate the human heart, may have no hold upon him, compared with the one thing needful — 'to fear God's name.'" —*Perowne.*

Je. xxxii. 39.

g "The deep abyss, or the undermost Hades, is the place wherein the departed await the final judgment." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

Psalmist courage to offer a prayer for help. Ex. xxxiv. 6. **longsuffering,** *R. V.*, "slow to anger." (16) **son . . handmaid,** Ps. cxvi. 16. He pleads that he is a servant of Jehovah from his very birth. (17) **token,** some sign of evident good-will. **holpen,** an older form for helped, wh. has passed out of use.

Tokens for good (*vs.* 17). — I. The thing prayed for, a token for good. This may be — 1. Inward, as peace, joy, calmness in the midst of danger and perplexity; 2. Outward, as prosperity, silence of animosity. II. The purpose for which it was asked — 1. That His enemies might see how God helped the man whom men despised; 2. That men might learn how God comforts His servants.

"Is it not the fact that the more we recognize in every daily occurrence God's secret inspiration guiding and controlling us, the more will all which to others wears a common every-day aspect, to us prove a sign and a wondrous work?" — *Tholuck.*

PSALM THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH.

author,— unknown; date, prob. that of the rebuilding of the Temple

Subj., the flowing of all nations unto Zion.

1—3. (1) **His foundation,** *i. e.* the city and temple wh. He has founded. We may render as if the Psalmist pointed to yonder city, saying, "'Tis His foundation on the holy hills." The *Polychr.* supplies the line: "How fair is the city of God which He has founded," *etc.* **mountains,** this the character of the district around Zion.[a] (2) **gates,** put for the whole of Zion,[b] "specially appropriate with ref. to the thought of the crowd of pilgrims entering it from all nations."— *Cam. Bib.* **dwellings,** *i. e.* better than any other city or town in Israel. (3) **Glorious things,** by prophets, and by this poet, such as are given in the succeeding verses.

Mountains. — The situation of Jerusalem is in several respects singular amongst the cities of Palestine. Its elevation is remarkable, occasioned, not from its being on the summit of one of the numerous hills of Judæa, like most of the towns and villages, but because it is on the edge of one of the highest table-lands of the country. Hebron, indeed, is higher still, by some hundred feet; and from the south, accordingly, the approach to Jerusalem is by a slight descent. But from every other side the ascent is perpetual; and, to the traveler approaching Jerusalem from the west or east, it must always have presented the appearance, beyond any other capital of the then known world — we may add, beyond any important city that has ever existed on the earth — of a mountain city; breathing, as compared with the sultry plains of the Jordan or of the coast, a mountain air; enthroned, as compared with Jericho or Damascus, Gaza or Tyre, on a mountain fastness. In this respect it concentrated in itself the character of the whole country of which it was to be the capital — the "mountain throne," the "mountain sanctuary," of God. "The 'mount' of God is as the 'mount' of Bashan; a high mount as the mount of Bashan. Why leap ye so, ye high 'mountains'? this is the 'mountain' which God desireth to dwell in." It was emphatically the lair of the lion of Judah, of "Ariel," the Lion of God. "In Judah is God known; His name is great in Israel. In Salem is His 'leafy covert,' and His 'rocky den' in Zion. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the 'mountains of the robbers.'" And this wild and fastness-like character of Jerusalem was concentrated yet again in the fortress, the "stronghold" of Zion. That point, the highest in the city, the height which most readily catches the eye from every quarter, is emphatically the "hill fort," the "rocky hold" of Jerusalem — the refuge where first the Jebusite, and then the Lion of God, stood at bay against the hunters. — *Stanley.*

"Zion is founded by God Himself. The mountains on which it stands are made holy by the Divine dwelling. On their head shines a glory before which the light that lies on the rock crowned by the Parthenon or on the seven hills of Rome pales."—*Exp. Bib.*

b Comp. Ps. cxxii. 2; and for prophecy, Is. lx. 11.

4—7. (4) **I will,** *i. e.* the Almighty; these words are the words of God. **Rahab,**[c] *haughtiness* or *pride;* so a name poetically given to *Egypt.* **Babylon,** known in David's time as the stronghold of idolatry. **to them,** better, "as among them." **this man,** better, *this one:* this nation; so also in *vss.* 5 and 6; each one of these nations shall come to claim rights of adopted citizenship in Zion.[d] "It is God's purpose to reconcile all nations to Himself. All shall be incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel." (5) **of Zion,** concerning *Zion.*[e] **establish,** protect, strengthen. (6) **count,** or number. **writeth up,** "maketh a census of the Gentile world." (7) **singers,** *etc.*, this represents the Gentiles coming in a procession, with singing and choral dances, to Zion, and saying, "All my fresh springs, *i. e.* sources of life and joy, are in Thee."

Birthplaces. — When events shall be traced to their principles at the last day, many a scene will come forth into prominence, which now is of little regard. Humble churches will then prove to have been the birthplace, and stately palaces the graves of many an immortal soul, while every saved soul

a "Jerus. was on the ridge, the broadest and most strongly marked ridge of the backbone of the complicated hills which extend through the whole country fr. the desert to the plain of Esdraelon." — *Stanley*

"Zion is founded by God Himself. The mountains on which it stands are made holy by the Divine dwelling. On their head shines a glory before which the light that lies on the rock crowned by the Parthenon or on the seven hills of Rome pales."—*Exp. Bib.*

c Ps. lxxxix. 10; Is. li. 9.

d "A stranger who becomes a proselyte is like a little child that is born." — *Hebrew Saying.*

e "The Ps. represents the Almighty as presenting every convert to the Holy City, and saying, 'This and this, one and all, belong to thee: every one is thy own child.'"—*Spk. Com.*

will ascribe its springs of glory to its Redeemer, through the instrumentality of that church, which He has ordained. — *Edward Garrard Marsh.* — *The sources of holy joy* (*vs.* 7). — "I have read," says Brooks, "of a company of poor Christians who were banished into some remote part; and one standing by, seeing them pass along, said that it was a very sad condition those people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men and made companions with the beasts of the field. 'True,' said another, 'it were a sad condition indeed if they were carried to a place where they should not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, God goes along with them, and will exhibit the comforts of His presence whithersoever they go. God's presence with His people is a spring that never fails.'" *Psalm* 87.— It is God's purpose to reconcile all nations to Himself. Egypt, the world-power of the South, the ancient and hereditary enemy of God's people; Babylon, the world-power of the North, the cruel oppressor of later times; warlike Philistia, by which Israel had so often been harassed; proud Tyre, the haughty representative of commerce and wealth; distant Ethiopia, famous for its stalwart warriors (Is. xviii. 7);—all will be brought to recognize Jehovah as their God; all shall be incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel (Eph. ii. 12). The thought is the same as that of Is. xix. 24, 25, though it is expressed in different language. — *Cam. Bib.*

"The Hebrews seem to have surpassed all nations in the skill of poetry and music; and every citizen could sing and dance. This preeminence the Psalmist seems to hint at."— *Alexander Geddes.*

"Let us make our crown nobler with brighter jewels, as we work now in this majestic parenthesis of history between the birth of Christ and his glorious coming in the future."— *R. S. Storrs.*

PSALM THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH.

author,— unknown: date, early exile.

1—5. (1) **of my salvation,** the expression of trust, wh. scarcely recurs again in this sad and cheerless Ps. **cried day and night,** *lit.* "day I have cried, night (my plaint is) before Thee." [a] "Like Job he must appeal to God even when God seems wholly alienated from him." (2) **cry,** here cry of mourning; the term is generally used for a shout of exultation. (3) **full of troubles,** "satiated with evils." [b] **grave,** *sheol,* Ps. xvi. 10. (4) **no strength,** *R. V.,* "that hath no help;" utterly prostrate.[c] (5) **Free,** castaway; left alone, with none to care for me, as if I were dead. **the slain,** *etc., i. e.* the corpse flung without care into a nameless grave. **rememberest,** sheol is the "land of oblivion," where men neither remember God (vi. 5; xxx. 9) nor are remembered by Him.— *Cam. Bib.* **cut . . hand,** Job xii. 10; no longer sustained and guided by the Divine hand.

The God of salvation (*vs.* 1). — I. Of His many titles this is one of the most endearing. II. If God is the source of my salvation, who shall hinder? III. If He saves me, let me serve Him. IV. If He saves me, who need despair? V. As the God of my salvation, He has the same purpose of mercy and the same plan for all who come to Him that they may be saved.

Psalm 88. — This is the saddest psalm in the whole Psalter. It is a pathetic cry of hopeless despair in the midst of unrelieved suffering. In other psalms the light breaks through the clouds at last; here the gloom is deepest at the close. It is characteristic that the last word is *darkness.* It seems best to regard it as springing out of the personal experience of some heavily afflicted saint. He had been, it would seem, a victim of the painful and loathsome disease of leprosy from his childhood. Life had been for him a living death. He stood on the brink of the grave: nay, though still alive on earth, he seemed to have been plunged into the darkness of sheol. Banished from society, he could have no part in the joys of life; excluded from the temple, he could have no share in the worship which was the outward and visible sign of God's covenant with His people. The wrath of God seemed to be resting upon him. Nor could he look forward to a life through death in which his soul "delivered from the burden of the flesh" would be "in joy and felicity." Death, as it then seemed, must sever the covenant relation between God and His people. Sheol was the land of oblivion, where neither He remembered them nor they remembered Him. Still less could he console himself with the hope of a joyful resurrection. Such a psalm brings home to us, as no other does, a sense of the shadow which rested upon the life of ancient Israel, and of the preciousness of the revelation of eternal life in Jesus Christ (Heb. ii. 14, 15). It is moreover a noble example of a faith which trusts God utterly in spite of all discouragement, and cleaves to God most passionately when God seems to have withdrawn Himself most completely. — *Cam. Bib.*

a "Expressive of the Psalmist's trouble, gasping, so to speak, for utterance."—*Kay.*

b Job x. 15; Ps. cxxiii. 4; La. iii. 15, 30.

c "The Heb. word implies utter failure of bodily power. The man is become a mere shadow." — *Spk. Com.*

"There is no immunity so long as we are in the flesh; there is no truce, but constant unrest distracts us. Liberty, therefore, is given to us after death, because we rest from our labors."— *Franciscus Vatablus.*

"Men of tender heart and loving sympathy and gentle touch are wanted to give comfort to the world's sorrow, to help other tempted men in their battles, to rescue the perishing out of their bondage."— *J. R. Miller.*

"Here the term simply expresses the Psalmist's conviction that He is one of God's people, a child of grace." — *Spk Com.*

6—9. (6) **deeps,** used fig. for the depths of misery, Ps. lxix. 15. (7) **Thy wrath,** affliction being regarded as Div. chastisement. **all thy waves,** Ps. xlii. 7.[a] (8) **put away,** *comp.* Job's case.[b] **acquaintance,** better, "familiar friends.' **an abomination,** as a leper would become; *see* case of King Uzziah.[c] **shut up,** either as leper, or by reason of the weakness indicated in *vs.* 4. (9) **eye mourneth,** *R. V.*, "wasteth away;" Ps. vi. 7; tears being conceived to injure the eye.

Waves of sorrow (*vs.* 7). — I. They are many, of various sizes, and succeed each other. II. They often bear others whom we love away from us. III. They carry us away from our creature confidences. IV. They show us what perfect weakness we are. V. But they are God's waves. He made the sea, can bid it arise, and be still if He will, there may be a storm in the calm of life, or a calm in the tempest. VI. Presently there will be no more sea, and His people will be brought to their desired haven, and land safely like the companions of St. Paul.

Thy waves. — The ocean was a fearful mystery, and neither science nor experience mitigated its terrors. You never find in Old Testament poetry any of those musings upon the beauty of the sea, any of those expressions of restfulness and delight in its contemplation, which so abound in the writings of modern poets. David's ideal of happy repose is not a seaside retreat, but a walk by still waters. It is when he wishes to picture trouble, grief, sore extremity, frightful rage, that he brings in the sea. The very extreme of disaster from which God is confidently appealed to as a refuge, is the carrying of the mountains into the midst of the sea. God is our refuge even then; "though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." — *W. R. Vincent.*

10—13. (10) **shew . . dead?** This expresses the Psalmist's feeling of the improbability that he could ever be restored fr. such extreme sickness, which was like a living death: "the consideration urged in other psalms as a reason for Divine intervention (vi. 5; xxx. 9, *etc.*) is that His power had no field for its manifestation in the grave, and that He could draw no revenue of praise from the pale lips that lay silent there."— *Exp. Bib.* (11) **destruction,** *Abaddon*, a proper name for sheol as a place of ruin.[d] (12) **land of forgetfulness,** "where the dead have no remembrance, and where they are wholly forgotten." — *Spk. Com.* (13) **have I cried,** even in my uttermost troubles.[e] **prevent thee,** *Polychr.*, "goes to meet Thee," as if ready before God awaked.

The great wonder worker (*vss.* 10–12). — Does God show His wonders to the dead? Yes, for they shall not all sleep, but behold the King in His beauty; yes, for the silent lips shall praise Him; yes, for the grave shall hear His voice; yes, for God's faithfulness shall be at last seen notwithstanding the destruction of our dearest hopes; yes, for in the darkness of our sorrow His mercy shall appear.

14—18. (14) **why,** *etc.*, the questioning of all great sufferers, Ps. xlii. 9. **hidest,** *etc.*, Job xiii. 24. (15) **from my youth,** poss. as afflicted with a life-long malady.[f] **distracted,** "the grammatical form of the word indicates a giving way of the will."— *Spk. Com. Polychr.*, "The dread of Thee weighs on me heavily; I faint." (16) **terrors,** term used in Job.[g] **cut me off,** "stricken me dumb." (17) **daily,** all the day. (18) **lover,** *etc.*, *see vs.* 8. **darkness,**[h] *Cheyne*, "My familiar friends are darkness [and the grave]!"

The hiding of God's face. — Numerous are the complaints of good men under this dark cloud; and to a child of light it is indeed a darkness that may be felt; it beclouds and bewilders the mind; the brightest evidences are in a great measure hid; the Bible itself is sealed and fast closed; we see not our signs, nor our tokens for good; ever good thing is at a distance from us, behind the cloud, and we cannot get at it; there is a dismal gloom upon our path; we know not where we are, where to step, nor which way to steer; which way God is gone we know not, but He knoweth the way that we take; and such a prayer as this suits us well — Seek Thy servants, for we are lost.— *William Huntington.*

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a "Now seeing so horrible a flood prevented not the prophet from lifting up his heart and prayers to God, we may learn by his example to cast the anchor of faith and prayer into heaven in all our shipwrecks." *Calvin.*

b Job xix. 13, 14.

c Job xxx. 10.

"Masters and kings in the East show their dignity by *speaking* as little as possible. They convey their wishes and express their feelings by their looks, or by simple movements of their hands." — *Pul. Com.*

d Job xxvi. 6; Re. ix. 11.

e "This unwearied 'continuing instant in prayer' is the victory of faith in the midst of trials which, but for this, would end in despair" — *Perowne.*

"God always intends His people more comfort from every mercy He gives them than the mercy itself, abstractedly considered, would amount to." — *Gurnall.*

f "The meaning prob. is that the unhappy sufferer has a constitutional tendency to diseases such as that with wh. he is now so severely afflicted." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

g Job vi. 4; ix. 34; xiii. 21, *etc.*

h "The Ps. ends with an energetic expression of its main thought — the immediate vicinity of death. The darkness is thickest at the end, just as it is in the morning before the rising of the sun." — *Hengstenberg.*

PSALM THE EIGHTY-NINTH.

author,— unknown; date, the early exile

1, 2. (1) **mercies,** "loving kindness," "gracious acts," "sure mercies of David," Is. lv. 3. (2) **built up,** like some stately palace. "He is persuaded that one stone after another will continue to be laid in the building of God's loving kindness till it reaches to heaven itself, even though it may now seem to be a deserted ruin." **very heavens,** *i. e.* conspicuous as sun and moon;[a] *lit.* "as for the heavens Thou wilt establish Thy faithfulness in them."

The believer's song (*vs.* 1). — I. Its subject — Thy mercies, many, great, varied, repeated — Providence, creation, grace. II. Its length — forever, for His mercies are new every morning, and the year is crowned with them. III. Its purpose — To make known, *etc.*, sing them in private, in the family, in the congregation; sing them with the heart, mouth, life. Happy if with my latest breath, *etc.*

"*I will sing.*"— It is to be observed that he does not say, I will speak of the goodness of the Lord; but, I will sing. The celebration of the Divine goodness has joined with itself the joy and exultation of a pious mind, which cannot be poured forth better than in song. That pleasantness and exuberance of a happy spirit, which by singing is instilled into the ears of the listeners, has a certain wonderful power of moving the affections; so that not in vain were pious minds taught by the Holy Spirit to inculcate the wonderful work of God in songs composed for this purpose, to commit them to memory and to appoint them to be sung. — *Musculus.*

3—5. (3) **covenant,** the sum of the promise to David, *vss.* 14, 19 *ff.*, *cf.* 2 Sa. vii. 5-16. **chosen,** so Dav. is spoken of, 1 Ki. viii. 16. (4) **Thy seed,** fulfilled in Messiah and His spiritual kingdom. **build up,** establish and confirm. (5) **congregation,** *etc.*, prob. with reference to the dwellers in heaven, *i. e.* the angels. **saints,** *R. V.*, "holy ones."

Covenant. — I. The covenant made. 1. With whom? — with David and in him with David's Lord and Son. The true David — the chosen one — the servant of the Father in redemption. 2. For what? — (1) For his seed. He should have a seed and that seed should be established. (2) For himself, "his throne," *etc.* II. The covenant confirmed. 1. By decree. "I have made," *etc.* 2. By promise. "I will establish." 3. By oath. "I have sworn." — *Spurgeon.*

6—8. (6) **compared,** *etc.*, God's nature is unique, incomparable. **sons of the mighty,** *Polychr.*, "the Sons of God?" Ps. xxix. 1; the angels are clearly meant. (7) **assembly of saints,** *R. V.*, "council of the holy ones;" still the angels, those with Him in the glory of heaven, who comprise the council of the great King. (8) **faithfulness,** "wh. ever encircles Him, and is as the rainbow, Re. iv. 3, a pledge and token for good unto His faithful ones. — *Jennings and Lowe.*

Worshiping God with fear (*vs.* 7). — All who take part in the worship of God should do so with reverential and filial fear. I. Those who officiate. 1. Preachers, as they who must give account; 2. Singers, lest they offer solemn praise upon a thoughtless tongue. II. The congregation, lest they offer the sacrifice of fools. III. All, because God is present to search the heart, and to save the soul. IV. Let us fear lest we miss the good that we may now find. God is here to bless and to save each one.

9—13. (9) **raging,** *etc.*, "proud swelling," "insolence," "the arrogant sea," fig. for invading hosts.[b] (10) **Rahab,** Ps. lxxxvii. 4.[c] (11) **earth,** all the earth, not merely the land of Israel. (12) **Tabor and Hermon,**[d] "these mts. are named because they are the grandest and most conspicuous natural features of Palestine."—*Cam. Bib.* (13) **mighty arm,** whose power Thou canst display on occasion.

Life compared to the sea.—

"'Tis not in man
To look unmoved upon that heaving waste which, from horizon to horizon spread,
Meets the o'erarching heavens on every side, blending their hues in distant faintness there.

[a] "The heavens are the type of unchangeableness and perpetuity, as compared with the restless vicissitudes, the ever-shifting shows of earth."— *Perowne.*

"The author has heard continual praises from a tongue half eaten away with cancer. What use, beloved reader, are you making of your tongue?"— *Philip Bennett Power.*

"In the midst of the angels of heaven, in that Church of the Firstborn, God's faithfulness is the theme of their song. Compare the songs of the redeemed as given in the Apocalypse."

"In prayer we are occupied with our needs; in thanksgiving we are occupied with our blessings; in worship we are occupied with God himself."

"All powerful souls have kindred with each other." — *Coleridge.*

Vs. 6. —"The reply of a French Huguenot to a courtier who was urging Henry IV. to choose the strongest side."— *Ker.*

[b] Job xxvi. 12; xxxviii. 10, 11; Ps. xlvi 3; lxv. 7.

[c] "God's power in ruling the sea would naturally be connected in the Psalmist's mind with the great manifestation of His power in the deliverance fr. Egypt."—*Perowne.*

[d] "When we enter the plain of

Esdraelon from Samaria, Hermon appears in all its majesty, shooting up on the distant horizon, behind the gracefully rounded top of Tabor."—*Porter.*

"History records that in the days of Tiberius it was thought a crime to carry a ring stamped with the image of Augustus into any mean or sordid place, where it might be polluted. How much may those who profess to be a holy people learn even from a heathen!"—*Bowes.*

'Tis wonderful! And yet, my boy, just such is life. Life is a sea as fathomless,
As wide, as terrible, and yet sometimes as calm and beautiful. The light of heaven,
Smiles on it, and 'tis decked with every hue of glory and of joy. Anon dark clouds
Arise, contending winds of fate go forth, and Hope sits weeping o'er a general wreck.
And thou must sail upon this sea a long, eventful voyage. The wise *may* suffer wreck,
The foolish *must*. Oh, then, be early wise! Learn from the mariner his skillful art—
To ride upon the waves and catch the breeze and dare the threatening storm and trace a path,
'Mid countless dangers, to the destined port, unerringly secure. Oh, learn from him
To station quick-eyed prudence at the helm, to guard from passion's sudden blasts,
And make religion thy magnetic guide, which, though it trembles as it lowly lies,
Points to the light that changes not,— in heaven."—*Anon.*

14—16. (14) **habitation,** or foundation;[a] basis: pillars. **go . . face,** standing ever in Jehovah's presence. (15) **joyful sound,** "the festival shout," blowing of trumpets at the worship of Jehovah.[b] **walk,** *etc.*, omit "shalt." See the priestly blessing.[c] (16) **thy name,** wh. is subject to their praise; or "in the possession or faithful guarding of Thy revelation of Thyself," *vs.* in present tense.

Walking in light.— A Christian lady was visiting among the poor one day. She called, among others, on a little sick girl. Her home was a dreary-looking one. The room she occupied was on the north side of the house. There was nothing bright or pleasant about it. Everything looked dark and cheerless. "I am sorry you have no sun on this side of the house," said the lady. "Not a ray of sunshine gets in here. This is a misfortune, for sunshine is everything." "Oh, ma'am! you are mistaken," said the sick girl, as a sweet smile lighted up her pale face. "My sun pours in at every window, and through all the cracks." "But how can the sun get round on this side of the house?" asked the visitor. "It is Jesus, 'the Sun of Righteousness' that shines in here," was the reply, "and He makes the best sunshine."—*J. Newton.*

17, 18. (17) **Strength,** *Polychr.*, "their proud adornment," with prob. reference to the *ark.*[d] **our horn,** *i. e.* "they walk with faces uplifted," 1 Sa. ii. 1. (18) **defence,** or shield.[e] Read "our shield belongeth to Jehovah, and our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Exalted.— Consider, I. What the believer is exalted above or from, by God's righteousness. 1. It exalts him above the law; 2. Above the world; 3. Above the power and malice of Satan; 4. Above death; 5. Above all accusations (Rom. viii. 33, 34). II. To what happiness or dignity the believer is exalted by virtue of that righteousness. 1. To a state of peace and reconciliation with God; 2. To sonship; 3. To fellowship and familiarity with God, and access to Him; 4. And finally, to a state of endless glory.— *E. Erskine.*

19—21. (19) **in vision,** *see* 1 Chr. xvii. 3-15. **thy holy one,** the traditional text, supported apparently by all the Ancient Versions, reads the plural, to Thy saints, or rather to Thy beloved; *i. e.* The people of Israel, for whom the promise made through David to Nathan was intended. The word rendered thy beloved denotes Israel as the object of that loving-kindness which the Psalmist is celebrating.— *Cam. Bib.* **laid help,** endowed him with power to help.[f] **mighty,** term used for Dav. 2 Sa. xvii. 10. **chosen,** 1 Ki. xi. 34. (20) **anointed him,** 1 Sa. xvi. 12, 13. (21) **my hand,**[g] or my protection and blessing. *Cheyne,* "By whose side shall be my hand unmovably."

Anointing.— As the literal David was thrice anointed king, once by Samuel in Jesse's house at Bethlehem; once at Hebron after the death of Saul, as king over Judah; and again at seven years' end, as ruler over all Israel: so also "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power" in

a Ps. xcvii. 2.

"An equal adminis. of justice, reward to the righteous, and punishment to the wicked, is the basis of God's throne."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

b Le. xxiii. 24; Nu. x. 1–10; xxiii. 21.

c Nu. vi. 24–26.

d "With reference prob. to His presence over the ark, with wh. the word strength is specially connected."—*Spk. Com.*

Ps. xcvi. 6.

e "For comparison of princes to shields, *see* Ho iv. 18.

f Ps. xxi. 5.

g Ps. lxxx. 17.

"The good of others, the people at large, is the motive of God's exaltations; other ends may be proposed and secured, but this is assuredly the chief. The possession of power is, therefore, a tremendous responsibility, and

His nativity at Bethlehem; a second time over His Church at His resurrection, when the tyrant who sought His life was overcome, and then only over the small "confederation" (which *Hebron* means) of his Jewish disciples; but a third time in His ascension to the heavenly Jerusalem, the Vision of Peace, where He, now crowned as King of Glory, was anointed over all heaven and earth, supreme over all the princes of God. He was thrice anointed in another sense also, once as Prophet, once as Priest, and once as King.—*Neale and Littledale.*

22—25. (22) **exact,** as a severe creditor does.[a] **son of wickedness,** *Heb.* for the wicked man. (23) **beat,** *etc. comp.* 2 Sa. vii. 9. **plague,** "smite." (24) **his horn,** 1 Sa. ii. 1. (25) **sea,** the Mediterranean. **rivers,**[b] the Euphrates. These represent the ideal limits of David's kingdom.

Note on (*vs.* 25).—The meaning is: he shall reign from the Mediterranean sea to the Euphrates. This is figuratively expressed thus: his right hand shall extend to the sea, or his left to the Euphrates. A similar expression was used, according to Curtius, by the Scythian ambassadors to Alexander. "If," said they, "the gods had given thee a body as great as thy mind, the whole world would not be able to contain thee; thou wouldst reach with one hand to the east, and with the other to the west."—*Rosenmüller.*

26—29. (26) **my father,** *comp.* 2 Sa. vii. 14.[c] (27) **firstborn,** and therefore the *heir.* **higher,** *etc., Polychr.*, "the highest of kings," *etc.*, De. xxviii. 1. (28) **for evermore,** but this, as all God's promises, was conditional. (29) **days of heaven,** conceived as never ending. All these are to be treated as strong poetical expressions, and they should be regarded as indicating the Div. purpose, wh. may, however, be hindered by human wilfulness and sin.

Our father.—Luther was one day catechizing some country people in a village in Saxony. When one of the men had repeated these words, "I believe in God the Father Almighty," Luther asked him what was the meaning of "Almighty." The countryman honestly replied, "I do not know." "Nor do I know," said the catechist; "nor do all the learned men in the world know. However, you may safely believe that God is your Father, and that He is both able and willing to save and protect yourself and all your neighbors. Almighty God is the lovely Father of mankind."—*Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

30—33. (30) **If,** *etc.*, here are introduced the *conditions* on wh. God's gracious promises rest. (31) **break,** *Heb.* more forcibly, *profane.* (32) **rod,** of chastisement, 2 Sa. vii. 14. (33) **not utterly take,** "will I not break off."—*Cam. Bib.* The retention of God's loving-kindness insures that affliction shall not lose its character of chastisement.[d] **to fail,** *Heb. to lie,* "neither be false to my faithfulness."—*Cam. Bib.*

God's displeasure at His people's sins (*vs.* 30–33).—I. The conduct described is—1. Far from being uncommon; 2. Exceedingly heinous; 3. Very ungrateful; 4 Highly inconsistent; 5. Truly lamentable. II. The punishment threatened. 1. It will be most righteous; 2. Absolutely certain; 3. Characterized by great diversity. III. Thy mercy proclaimed. 1. This, for two reasons. (1) His regard for the Son of His love; (2) And for the word of His truth.

Trials.—Different men are tried in different ways, but the object of the trial is the same. Your business perplexities are sent to prove your honesty; your bodily afflictions are imposed to test your courage and trust; your family difficulties are allowed to continue that the life of the household may be strengthened and refined; your bitterest rival is permitted to run his course side by side with you that your temper may be sweetened, your charity enlarged, and your whole tone of mind elevated. Thus we are brought to consider the religious uses of opposition and hardships, and to identify their very presence with the distinct purpose of God.—*J. Parker.*

34—37. (34) **break,** profane, as *vs.* 31.[e] (35) **Once,** in the sense of *once for all.* **by my holiness,** "inviolably;" *comp.* Ps. lx. 6. **that I will not,** better, surely I will not. (36) **forever,** God's covenant promises are without limitation;[f] they would go on blessing forever but for the limitations put on them by man's wilfulness and sin. **the sun,** *comp.* Ps. lxxii. 5, 7, 17. (37) **faithful witness,** some refer this to the moon.[g] Luther and others have

happy are the peoples whose rulers ever remember and practically recognize this."—*Pul. Com.*

a "May this refer to claims asserted by Shishak, founded on Solomon's obligations to his predecessors? *See e. g.* 1 Ki. ix. 16."—*Spk. Com*

b "The plural 'rivers' is in accordance with poetic usage, and need not be explained of the Euphrates and its separate channels, or the Euphrates and Tigris."—*Perowne.*

c He. i. 5.

An Indian, when asked what the Lord had done for him, gathered some dry leaves into a circle, and placing a worm in the centre, set them on fire. As the flames drew nearer on every side, and were about to consume the worm, he lifted it out, and placing it safely on a rock, looked up and said, "This is what Jesus did for me."

d He. xii. 5–8.

"In the Hebrew idiom all kings were *the sons of God:* but David is the chief of these, God's *firstborn.* The Greeks had a similar mode of expressing themselves. Kings were the nurslings of Jupiter."—*Alexander Geddes.*

If you are not in a state of salvation now, I do not see on what ground you can expect it hereafter.

Delitzsch. trans. "And the witness in the sky is faithful." And *comp.* Job xvi. 19.

e Mal. iii. 6; Ja. i. 17

f Je. xxxiii. 20, 21.

g "The moon is more for certain seasons than any other orb. In all countries she has

been the arbiter of festivals." — *Perowne.*

"Christ left His mother with John, but His saints with His Spirit, to tutor and keep them, that they should not lose themselves in their journey to heaven."—*A Divine of the 17th Century.*

a To make void a law is to check its operation. See La. ii. 7.

b "His crown was profaned when he was reduced to vassalage. See 2 Chron. xii. 8."—*Spk. Com.*

"Our soul is in our body, as the bird is in the shell, which soon breaks, and the bird flies out: the shell of the body breaking, the soul flies into eternity."—*T. Watson.*

c "The express. is peculiar; it implies that the king had contracted defilement, been subjected to treatment which degraded him, an account true of Jeconiah, but not less so of Rehoboam."—*Spk. Com.*

"They fail, and they alone, who have not striven."—*T. B. Aldrich.*

"Talk about the questions of the day. There is but one question, and that is the Gospel. It can and will correct everything needing correction."—*W. E. Gladstone.*

d "Render, 'Remember what a mere fleeting life I am,' for 'What a mere nothing hast Thou created all the sons of men.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"There is no armor against fate,
Death lays his icy hand on kings."

"The boldest thoughts about the apparent contradiction of God's words and deeds supposed the rainbow to be meant. But prob. Jehovah Himself, who dwelleth in heaven, is meant.

The victory of Christ.— Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, as He discovers, reproves, condemns, and destroys sin, so He is called Judgment, and thus is judgment to be understood in the Gospel sense, and not terribly, as in the sense of the law. And this judgment shall at last "break forth unto victory;" that is, though Christ in us hath to do with many strong corruptions and lusts in the soul, yet at last He prevails against them all, and judgment "breaks forth unto victory," because Christ, the Judgment of God in the soul, must needs, in the end, prevail against every sin in man.—*J. Dell.*

38—41. (38) **thou,** even Thou the faithful God. The seeming audacity of this expostulation is the boldness of faith rather than irreverence. **cast off,** *etc.*, the promises and the actual condition of the nation were in striking contrast. **anointed,** here is not David, but the people of Israel. (39) **made void,**[a] "abhorred," rendered the promises of the covenant inoperative: acted as if there were no covenant terms. **his crown,** *Polychr.*, "Thou hast profaned his diadem in the dust;" there is evidently intended a personal reference to some king.[b] (40) **broken,** *etc.*, "broken through all his walls," as Ps. lxxx. 12. **strongholds,** *etc.*, *comp.* case of Shishak, 2 Chron. xii. 3, 4. (41) **All . . spoil,** Ps. lxxx. 12.

Divine anger.— The Lord had promised not to cast off the seed of David, and yet it looked as if He had done so, and that too in the most angry manner, as if He loathed the person of the king. God's actions may appear to us to be the reverse of His promises, and then our best course is to come before Him in prayer and put the matter before Him just as it strikes our apprehension. We are allowed to do this, for this holy and inspired man did so unrebuked, but we must do it humbly and in faith.—*Spurgeon.*

42—45. (42) **set . . hand,** one chief cause of distress was that God was actually strengthening Israel's enemies to overcome him. This expression means, "Thou hast confirmed the work of his adversaries." (43) **turned the edge,** not in our sense of blunting it; *R. V.*, "turned back," defeated his attack, as expressed in the second clause. (44) **his glory,** *R. V.*, "his brightness," or splendor.[c] (45) **youth,** youthful strength. "This does not seem to mean an actual cutting short by death, but rather a cutting short of youthful energy and vigor, a premature senescence, such as may well have fallen upon Jehoiachin or Zedekiah."—*Pul. Com.* **covered him,** Ps. lxxi. 13, cix. 29.

Broken arms.— The arms and military prowess of Thy people are no longer of any use to them; Thou art against them, and therefore they are fallen. In what a perilous and hopeless situation must that soldier be who, defending his life against his mortal foe, has his sword broken, or its edge turned; or, in modern warfare, whose gun misses fire! The Gauls, when invaded by the Romans, had no method of hardening iron; at every blow their swords bended, so that they were obliged, before they could strike again, to put them under their foot or over their knee, to straighten them; and in most cases, before this could be done, their better armed foe had taken away their life. The edge of their sword was turned, so that they could not stand in battle; and hence the Gauls were conquered by the Romans.—*Adam Clarke.*

46—48. (46) **how long,** Ps. lxxiv. 10; lxxix. 5. (47) **my time,**[d] *comp.* Job vii. 6; xiv. 1: Ps. xxxix. 5. **wherefore,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "For what vanity hast Thou created all the children of men?" *i. e.* must life end in unsatisfied longing? (48) **What man,** howsoever strong. The shortness and uncertainty of life are pleaded as a ground for the speedy restoration of God's favor. The Psalmist desires to see the solution of the riddle with his own eyes, and doubtless he gives utterance to the feelings of many pious souls in the Exile, whose faith was tried by the thought that they would not live to see the fulfilment of the prophecies of restoration.—*Cam. Bib.*

True cheer.— In one of Matthew Arnold's most beautiful poems he pictures a pale weaver working disconsolately at his task in a squalid street. Soon after meeting him, he comes upon a Christian preacher, cheery and hopeful in the same disheartening surroundings, with sickness and overwork pulling him down. "How fare you in this scene?" asks the poet. "Bravely!" is the reply, "for I have been much cheered with thoughts of Christ, the living Bread." And the poet's conclusion is the sum and substance of all:

"O human soul! so long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light
Above the howling sense's ebb and flow
To cheer thee and to right thee if thou roam,
Not with lost toil thou laborest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home."

49—52. (49) **former loving-kindness,** shown in the reigns of David and Solomon. **truth,** *i. e.* "faithfulness." (50) **reproach,** *etc.*, under the taunts of Israel's enemies. **bear . . bosom,** the expression of intense sympathy with the afflicted nation. (51) **reproached the footsteps,** or every step he takes.[a] (52) **Blessed,** *etc.*, *comp.* endings of Pss. xli., lxxii, cvi., each of which closes, as this does, a book of Psalms.[b]

Blessed. — I. God is blessed in Himself. II. God is blessed by His creatures. 1. God is praised by His works; 2. God is praised by His people upon earth. (1) For what He is in Himself; (2) For what He has done, and is ever doing for them; 3. God is praised by redeemed men and angels in heaven; 4. God is praised by all His creatures everywhere. III. God is blessed forever. — *Hom. Com.*

The word of God a shield. — Samuel Proctor enlisted as a soldier in the First regiment of Foot Guards, and was made a grenadier. There were a few in the regiment who met for pious and devotional exercises; he cast in his lot among them, and always carried a small pocket Bible in one pocket, and his hymn book in the other. He took part in the struggle on the plains of Waterloo, in 1815. While thus engaged, he was thrown a distance of four or five yards by a force on his hip, for which he could not account at the time; but when he came to examine his Bible he saw with overwhelming gratitude to the Preserver of his life, what it was that had thus driven him. A musket-ball had struck his hip where his Bible rested in his pocket, and penetrated nearly half through that sacred book. All who saw the ball said that it would undoubtedly have killed him had it not been for the Bible, which served as a shield. "That Bible," said Proctor, "has twice saved me instrumentally — first from death in battle, and second from death eternal.' — *R. T. S.*

PSALM THE NINETIETH.

1—4. (1) **dwelling place,** place of refuge, or a home.[c] The Ps. may have been written when Israel only knew temporary resting-places in their journey. **in all generations,** *lit.* "in generation and generation."[d] (2) **formed,** *R. V.*, "gavest birth to;" by a bold metaphor the Divine act of creation is compared to childbirth.[e] "Before the earth and the world were born."[f] **the world,** a poetic term, usually indicating the *fruitful* earth. **thou . . God,** *Heb.* "El," the strong one. "Israel is the 'everlasting people' only because Jehovah is an 'everlasting God.'" — *Cheyne.* (3) **to destruction,** to dust and corruption.[g] "This is the condition of renovation; this alternation of processes makes history." **Return,** "As men perish by the breath of God, so by His word He calls others into being." — *Perowne.* (4) **when it is past,** There is a climax: the past day, short as it seems in retrospect, is capable of measurement. But a watch in the night[h] is for us as though it were not; we sleep it away. So with God the Eternal Now, time is neither short nor long.

The home of the soul. — I. The soul of man needs a home. I argue this from — 1. Our sense of weariness and longing for rest; 2. Our sense of peril and longing for protection; 3. Our shrinking from death and longing for immortality. II. The soul of man may find a home in God. 1. In Him alone can the soul find the rest it craves; 2. In Him alone can the soul find the security it craves; 3. In Him alone can the soul find the permanence it craves. — *Hom. Com.*

Everlasting. — Try and form some idea of everlasting life, that you may be the better able to realize how little you can merit it. It stands contrasted with all forms of life in this transient world. We read of some who seem to have lived to an extraordinary age in primitive times. Yet each record ends with the words, "And he died." Even Methuselah had to come to this at last. I have seen trees in England that possibly may have been growing in the time of Cæsar, and there are trees in America that may have been young in the days of Moses, but even these have to die at last. Let your mind wander not too bold, if spoken straight to Him, and not muttered against Him, and if they lead the speaker to prayer for the removal of the anomaly." — *Exp. Bib.*

a "The Targum interprets this as a reproach, because of the tarrying of the footsteps of the Messiah." — *Perowne*

b "The Ps. is not directly Messianic. The whole tone of expostulation and prayer belongs to local and temporary circumstances; but the anticipations are grounded on promises which have their true fulfilment in Christ.' — *Spk. Com.*

An aged woman lay on her death bed. She had been a disciple of Christ for fifty years. She said, "Tell all the children that an old woman, who is near to death, is very much grieved that she did not begin to love the Saviour when she was a little child. Tell them, 'Youth is the time to serve the Lord.'"

author, — Moses

Subj., the brevity of life and unchangeableness of God.

c De. xxxiii. 27; Ps lxxi. 3; xci 9

d De. xxxii. 7, *marg.*

e De. xxxii. 18; Pr. xxvi 10.

f Ge. ii. 4.

g Ge. iii 19.

h The night was anciently divided into three watches, later into four.

"God's ways are dark, but soon or late,
They touch the shining hills of day;
The evil cannot brook delay;
The good can well afford to wait."

der backwards until you reach the time when man first appeared, and back further through the long ages in which animal life assumed a thousand forms of wonder and beauty, while type after type appears only to pass away. Go back further still through those past ages whose history is written only in "scarpèd cliff and quarried stone," until you reach the period inconceivably remote, when the earliest forms of life began to exist. Look back beyond that to the time when the world was desolate and lifeless, and back beyond that to the time when it was but a stormy aggregation of gases and vapors, and back beyond that to a time when the planet had no separate existence; and as you contemplate these vast geological periods, which have to be measured by millions of years, reflect that all these are but as a watch in the night as compared with everlasting life, and then tell me who can merit such a destiny as that. — *W. Hay Aitkin.* — *The first hymn.* — Although some difficulties have been started, there seems no reason to doubt that this psalm is the composition of Moses. From the remotest period his name has been attached to it, and almost every Biblical scholar, from Jerome down to Hengstenberg, has agreed to accept it as a prayer of that "man of God" whose name it has always carried. If so, it is one of the oldest poems in the world. Compared with it Homer and Pindar are (so to speak) modern, and even King David is of recent date. That is to say, compared with this ancient hymn the other psalms are as much more modern as Tennyson and Longfellow are more modern than Chaucer. In either case there are nearly five centuries between. — *James Hamilton.*

"Be thine own home, and in thyself dwell; inn anywhere; and seeing the snail, which everywhere doth roam, carrying his own home still, still is at home, follow (for he is easy paced) this snail; be thine own palace, or the world's thy jail." —*Donne.*

"You cannot attend better to your sanctification than by reflecting how you may immerse yourselves ever deeper into the love of God, and bathe more continually in the waves of His graces." — *Krummacher.*

5—7. (5) **with a flood,** a familiar image in the wilderness, where the dry wadies suddenly fill with tempestuous rains, and carry everything away in their flood.[a] **a sleep,** "fantastic, vague, forgotten as soon as it is over." **morning,** after night of rain.[b] "One generation is swept away in the night season, and in the morning another flourishes. But it also shares the same fate." — *Delitzsch.* (6) **cut down,** *lit.* "one cuts him off."[c] (7) **consumed,** *etc.*, the Ps. was written when the connection of human transitoriness and human sin had been most impressively illustrated.[d] "The consciousness of sin and the implied view of death in *vs.* 7–9 are peculiarly Jewish."— *Cheyne.* **troubled,** "have we been terrified."

The lessons of the meadows. — I. Grass growing the emblem of youth. II. Grass flowering — or man in his prime. III. The scythe. IV. Grass mown — or man at death. — *Spurgeon.*

Man a bubble.— "A man is a bubble," said the Greek proverb, which Lucian represents to this purpose, saying, "All the world is a storm, and men rise up in their several generations like bubbles. Some of these instantly sink into the deluge of their first parent, and are hidden in a sheet of water, having no other business in the world but to be born, that they might be able to die; others float up and down two or three turns, and suddenly disappear, and give their place to others; and they that live longest upon the face of the waters are in perpetual motion, restless and uneasy, and being crushed in by a great drop from a cloud, sink into flatness and a froth, the change not being great; it being hardly possible that a bubble should be more a nothing than it was before." — *Jeremy Taylor.*

"So passeth, in the passing of an hour,
Of mortal life, the leaf, the bud, the flower."

7—10. (8) **set . . before thee,** so as distinctly to notice and consider them. **our secret,** either *sin*, or *heart*,[e] may be added: which we would gladly conceal from ourselves. **light,** revealing light; wh. shines into the dark recesses of the inner being, bringing its secret sins into painful relief. (9) **wrath,** "is never predicated of Jehovah in the prose writings of the O. T." **as a tale,** or as a *thought* that passes and is forgotten: as a *sigh*, or *groan* wh. has gone forth, leaving no trace behind it.[f] (10) **days,** *etc.*, Ge. xlvii. 9. Seventy years was prob. the average, though Moses, Aaron, and Miriam lived longer. **if . . strength,** if there be fulness of strength, unusual bodily vigor. **their strength,** *R. V.*, "*pride*," all in which men boast, as health, strength, honor, riches, *etc.*

Our sins. — I. The notice which God takes of sin. 1. Individual. "Our iniquities." 2. Universal notice — "iniquities" — not one only, but all. 3. Minute, even the most secret sins. 4. Constant: "Set them before" him — "in the light," *etc.* II. The notice which we should take of them on that account. 1. In our thoughts. Set them before us. 2. In our consciences. Condemn ourselves on account of them. 3. In our wills. Turn from them by repentance — turn to a pardoning God by faith. — *G. Rogers.*

[a] 1 Ki. xviii. 44, 45.

[b] "In the East, one night's rain works a change as if by magic. The field at evening was brown, parched, arid as a desert; in the morning it is green with the blades of grass. The scorching hot wind blows upon it, and again before evening it is withered." — *Perowne.*

[c] Ja. i. 11.

[d] Nu. xiv.

[e] "The whole inner being, the pollution and sinfulness of wh. is hidden from the man himself, till it is set in the light of God's countenance." — *Perowne.*

[f] "The complaint is of the shortness and misery of life through God's wrath; a complaint wh. has a singular propriety if uttered by Moses, who saw a generation of men perish before their time in a few years, and multi-

Man's life. — At the Witan or council assembled by Edwin of Northumbria at Godmundingham (modern name Godmanham), to debate on the mission of Paulinus, the king was thus addressed by a heathen thane, one of his chief men: "The present life of man, O king, may be likened to what often happens when thou art sitting at supper with thy thanes and nobles in winter-time. A fire blazes on the hearth, and warms the chamber; outside rages a storm of wind and snow; a sparrow flies in at one door of thy hall, and quickly passes out at the other. For a moment and while it is within, it is unharmed by the wintry blast, but this brief season of happiness over, it returns to that wintry blast whence it came, and vanishes from thy sight. Such is the brief life of man; we know not what went before it, and we are utterly ignorant as to what shall follow it. If, therefore, this new doctrine contain anything more certain, it justly deserves to be followed." — *Bede's Chronicle.*

tudes perish in a moment, by special interposition of God."—*Spk. Com.*

"Life is to be measured by action, not by time; a man may die old at thirty, and young at eighty; nay, the one lives after death, and the other perished before he died." — *T. Fuller.*

Death. —

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour —
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

"God needs no other light to discern our sins by but the light of His own face." — *Wm. Bradshaw.*

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansions call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull, cold ear of Death?
— *Thomas Gray.*

"There are tales told that are poor, mean, hurtful, not worth the telling. And so it is with men's lives."

11—13. (11) **even . . wrath,** *R.V.*, "and Thy wrath according to the fear that is due unto Thee;" *i.e.* who worthily connects this brevity of life with the Divine recognition of sin? "Who understands, practically for life's guidance, what Thine anger is?" (12) **So,** with such a godly fear.[a] **hearts,** *R.V.*, "may get us an heart of wisdom." — *Polychr.* "Enter the gateway of wisdom." (13) **Return,** better, *turn,* from Thy fierce anger. **how long?** Ps. vi. 3. **repent thee,** *i. e.* show compassion towards Thy servants, Ex. xxxii. 12.

Spiritual arithmetic. — I. Add, each day, to the number of your graces. II. Subtract, each day, from your sinful habits. III. Multiply, each day, your endeavors after salvation. IV. Divide each day into its appropriate occupations. V. Proportion, each day, your thankfulness to your mercies. — *W. W. Whythe.*

Preparation for death necessary. — I have read of a gentleman who died very suddenly, and his jester ran to the other servants, and having told them that their master was dead, he, with much gravity, said, "And where is he gone?" The servants replied, "Why, to heaven, to be sure!" "No," said the jester, "he is not gone to heaven, I am certain." The servants with much warmth asked him how he knew that his master was not gone to heaven? The jester then replied, "Because heaven is a great way off, and I never knew my master take a long journey in his life but he always talked of it some time beforehand, and also made preparations for it; but I never heard him talk about heaven, nor ever saw him making preparations for death, and therefore I am sure he is not gone to heaven." — *H. G. Salter.*

[a] "Even he that is best in arithmetic, and can most precisely and accurately understand and investigate millions of millions, is nevertheless to seek how to count fourscore years in his own life. Surely it is a monstrous thing that men should measure all distances without themselves, know how many feet the moon is distant from the centre of the earth, how much space is between planet and planet, and finally to comprehend all the dimensions both of heaven and earth, and yet cannot number threescore and ten years in their own case." — *Calvin.*

So teach us to number our days. —

Oh, to be ready when death shall come!
Oh, to be ready to hasten home!
No earthward clinging, no lingering gaze,
No strife at parting, no sore amaze,
No chains to sever that earth hath twined,
No spells to loosen that love would bind.

"Improve Time in time, while the Time doth last, For all Time is no time, when the Time is past."
—*Richard Pigot.*

No flitting shadow to dim the light
Of angel pinions winged for flight;
No phantom clouds to fling a gloom
'Twixt heaven's bright portal and earth's dark tomb,
But sweetly, gently, to pass away
From earth's dim twilight into day —

"God is the agent in bringing man to death and the grave. All the natural causes of death are only the modes and means of its accomplishment by the hand of God." — *Dwight.*

To list to the music of angel lyres,
To catch the rapture of seraph fires,
To lean in trust on the risen One
Till borne away to a fadeless throne.
Oh, to be ready when death shall come!
Oh, to be ready to hasten home!

"It is faith's work to claim and challenge loving-kindness out of all the mightiest strokes of God."—*S. Rutherford*

14—17. (14) **early,** in the morning, when the night of sorrow has passed;[a] the poetic figure for speedily, and thoroughly. (15) **according,** *etc.*, *i. e.* for a time bearing some proportion to the time of humiliation. God's chastisements are only for a season,[b] and open out into long days of rejoicing. **afflicted,** or humbled, De. viii. 2. (16) **thy work,**[c] or working: the signs of Thy power. With special reference to bringing Israel into the promised inheritance. (17) **beauty,** or graciousness:[d] or the glory of the manifest and gracious Divine presence with them. **work,** *etc.*, the effort to exhibit righteousness in daily life.

Satisfy. — I. The deepest yearning of man is for satisfaction. II. Satisfaction can only be found in the realization of Divine Mercy. — *C. M. Merry.*

Establish. — They were content to live and to die as pilgrims, provided only they could feel that in His sterner dealings with them, God was, however slowly, preparing the way for that display of glorious blessedness which should be the lot of their descendants. In a similar spirit they ask God to establish the work of their hands, though they reckoned not that they should behold its results. Their comfort in sowing was the belief that their children would reap.— *Joseph Francis Thrupp.— Potters.* — Many have reached perfection in this field, and have ennobled clay as if by miracle. Their masterpieces have an incorruptible beauty; no liquid can stain them, no fire can blacken them, no knife can stretch them. Yet they are as smooth to the touch as an infant's flesh. Place a candle behind them and they resemble a fine face lighted up with the best emotions. If potters have done so much for clay, shall they not condemn us if we do not earnestly seek to have the beauty of the Lord our God upon us?— *J. Wells.*

a La. iii. 32, 33.

b Ps. xxx. 5; Is. xii. 1; xl. 1, 2; lxi. 2, 3.

c Hab. iii. 2.

d Gracious favor, propitiousness.

"The order deserves notice. God's work is first to appear, His majesty to be revealed; then *man's* work, wh. is God's work carried out by human instruments, may look for His blessing." — *Perowne.*

"There is something in this Ps. that is wonderfully striking and solemn, acquainting us with the profoundest depths of the Divine Nature. . . . The author, whoever he may be, is plainly a man grown gray with a vast experience, here taking his stand at the end of his earthly course." — *Ewald.*

PSALM THE NINETY-FIRST.

author,— unknown; time, the exile

Subj., the safety of the man who trusts in God. It is called in the Talmud, "a song of accidents," i. e. a protective or talismanic song in times of danger. Comp. with it Job v. 17-23.

1—4. (1) **secret place,** or covert.[e] **most High,** far above the rage and malice of enemies. **abide,** *lit.* pass the night. **Almighty,** so that none can withstand His power. (2) **I will say,** this is prob. the response of a second voice. **the Lord,** *i. e.* Jehovah. the covenant God of His believing people. **fortress,** 2 Sa. xxii. 2. (3) **snare,** *etc.*, aptly figures the unexpectedness of death. *Comp.* Ps. cxxiv. 7.[f] **noisome pestilence,** *lit.* pestilence of malignity; or plagues of mischiefs. The pestilence is thought of as a destroying angel." — *Delitzsch.* (4) **cover . . trust,** *R. V.*, "take refuge;" a figure prob. taken from De. xxxii. 11. **buckler,** *Heb. socherah*, prob. coat of mail as worn by Assyrian warriors. — *Wordsworth.*

The secret place. — I. The secret dwelling-place. There is the dweller in the dark world, in the favored land, in the holy city, in the outer court; but the holy of holies is the "secret place" — communion, acceptance, *etc.* II. The protecting shadow — security, peace, *etc.*; like hamlets of olden time clustered beneath castle walls. — *Charles A. Davis.*

Safety. — We read of a stag that roamed about in the greatest security, by reason of its having a label on its neck, "*Touch me not, I belong to Cæsar*;" thus the true servants of God are always safe, even among lions, bears, serpents, fire, water, thunder, and tempest: for all creatures know and reverence the shadow of God. — *Bellarmine.— A good hiding-place.* — One morning a teacher found many empty seats in her schoolroom. The little scholars lay dead at their homes, and others were sick. The few children present gathered around her, and said, "Oh! what shall we do? Do you think we shall be sick, and die too?" The teacher gently touched the bell, and said, "Children, you are all afraid of this disease. You grieve for the death of your little friends, and you fear that you also may be taken. I only know of one thing for us to do, and that is to hide. Listen while I read to you about a hiding-place. Then she read the 91st Psalm. They were all hushed by the sweet words, and then the morning lesson went on as usual. At recess, a dear little girl came up to the desk, and said, "Teacher, aren't you

e "It is prob., fr. *vs.* 4, that the allusion in *vss.* 1, 2, is to the overshadowing wings of the cherubim in the most holy place, rather than to the shelter fr. heat and storm afforded to the traveler by the rock-hewn caves of Palestine." — *Spk. Com.*

f Ps. xviii. 5; Ho. ix. 8; 2 Ti. ii. 26. See also Eccl. ix. 12.

"The meaning of the *vs.* is, 'Loving faith on man's

afraid of the diphtheria?" "No, my child," she answered. "Well, wouldn't you be if you thought you would be sick, and die?" "No, dear, I trust not." The child gazed wonderingly at her for a moment; and then her face lighted up as she said, "Oh! I know! You are hidden under God's wings. What a nice safe place that is to hide in!" — *R. Newton.*

5—8. (5) **terror,** by night, when alarms are peculiarly affecting.[a] **arrow.**[b] "used figuratively of the evil plots and slanders of the wicked, as in Ps. lvii. 4; lviii. 7; lxiv. 3." — *Jennings and Lowe.* (6) **walketh,** with allusion to the destroying angel, Ex. xi. 4, or "the plague-god is personified and represented as stalking through the land in the hours of darkness." — *Pul. Com.* **destruction that wasted,** *Polychr.* "sudden death which surprises." (7) **side,** or left hand.[c] **it . . thee,** "the singular is used as referring to any and every one of the evils mentioned in *vss.* 5, 6. (8) **with thine eyes,** so thou shalt be an observer only, and not a sufferer.[d]

The terror by night (*vs.* 5). — I. What is this terror by night? It may be the cry of fire, or the noise of thieves, or fancied appearances, or the shriek of sudden sickness or death. II. Why we should not fear. God our Father is here, and will be here through all the lonely hours. He is an Almighty watcher, a sleepless guardian, a faithful friend. III. It may be night in the soul, but there need be no terror, for the love of God changes not. — *Spurgeon.*

Security. — Stier states that some years ago a distinguished physician in St. Petersburg recommended this psalm as the best defense against the cholera. And Tholuck admirably says — "As the general who carries within him the conviction that he is called to a great work, whilst the bullets fall thick as hail about him, stands with calm eye and firm foot, and says: I know that the bullet is not yet cast which can strike me, so stands the man of prophetic faith in the hour of danger, with the conviction that the thunderbolt will turn aside from his head, and the torrent dry up at his feet, and the arrows fall blunted from his breast, because the Lord wills it." — *Hom. Com.* — *A little child's confidence.* — A little boy of four years old was sleeping one night in a low bed, in the same room with his mother. He was a lovely and thoughtful child, and though so young had already received fully into his mind the idea of the great God who made him and rules over all. He was happy in having been taught to pray to this great God, and was daily in the habit of asking what he most wanted of his Heavenly Father without fear and without doubt. But this night of which I speak he awoke out of sleep with a loud cry, as if he had been disturbed by a frightful dream. When his mother tenderly inquired what was the matter, he told her that he was afraid, and begged to know if God would indeed take care of him. When his mother assured him that God would take care of him in the darkness as well as in the light, he sank back upon his pillow and sighed out, "How good it is that we have a God!" He then fell asleep peacefully, as if he felt the everlasting arms around him.

9—12. (9) **Because,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "For thou, O Lord, art my refuge! Thou hast made the Most High thy habitation;" *i. e.* "the promise of God uttered to and appropriated by the soul." **habitation,** as Ps. xc. 1. (10) **evil,** any kind of external calamity. **plague,** a term generally used of special Divine visitations. **dwelling,** *R. V.*, "tent."[e] (11) **angels charge,** God's ministers in the government of this world, Ps. xxxiv. 7. **over thee,** for thy benefit.[f] **all thy ways,** *i. e.* in the appointed path of duty.[g] (12) **in their hands,**[h] or *upon*, "the angels, as flying ones, lift the righteous upon their pinions." **dash,** *etc.*, a fig. suitable to a journeying psalm.

The power of trust. — In the year 1854, when I had scarcely been in London twelve months, the neighborhood in which I labored was visited by Asiatic cholera, and my congregation suffered from its inroads. Family after family summoned me to the bedside of the smitten, and almost every day I was called to visit the grave. I gave myself up with youthful ardor to the visitation of the sick, and was sent for from all corners of the district by persons of all ranks and religions. I became weary in body and sick at heart. My friends seemed falling one by one, and I felt or fancied that I was sickening like those around me. A little more work and weeping would have laid me low among the rest; I felt that my burden was heavier than I could bear, and I was ready to sink under it. As God would have it, I was returning mournfully home from a funeral, when my curiosity led me to read a paper which was wafered up in a shoemaker's window in the Dover Road. It did not look

part shall be met by faithful love on God's part.'" *Kay.*

a Song Sol. iii. 8; Pr. iii. 23–26.

b "In allusion, prob. to night attacks like those of Gideon, a favorite artifice of Oriental warfare, or perhaps to a destruction like that of Sennacherib." — *Perowne.*

b "The arrow may be God's arrow, as *e. g.* the pestilence, or any noxious influence, such as the simoom, or sirocco, wh. is said to prevail most commonly in the daytime." — *Spk. Com.*

c *Comp.* De. xxxii. 30.

d "Only a spectator shalt thou be, being thyself inaccessible and left to survive, conscious that thou thyself art a living one in contrast with those who are dying." — *Delitzsch.*

Ex. xiv. 30.

"All before lies the way,
Give the past unto the wind;
All before us is the day,
Night and darkness are behind."
— *Emerson.*

e "An instance of the way in wh. the patriarchal life became stereotyped, so to speak, in the language" — *Perowne.*

Possible allusion to Ex. xii. 23.

f He. i. 14.

g "Satan omitted these words when he tempted Jesus to go *his* way, and to cast himself down fr. the pinnacle of the temple, Mat. iv. 6; Lu. iv. 10, 11." — *Wordsworth.*

h Ex. xix. 4; De. i. 31; Ps xxxvii. 24; Is. lxiii. 9.

like a trade announcement, nor was it, for it bore in a good, bold handwriting these words: "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." The effect upon my heart was immediate. Faith appropriated the passage as her own. I felt secure, refreshed, girt with immortality. I went on with my visitation of the dying in a calm and peaceful spirit; I felt no fear of evil, and I suffered no harm. The providence which moved the tradesman to place those verses in his window I gratefully acknowledge, and in the remembrance of its marvelous power I adore the Lord my God. — *Spurgeon.*— *God's providence house.*— The city of Chester is remarkable for its quaint old buildings, its curious "rows" and ancient remains; but in nothing, perhaps, is it more so than in the illustration furnished by an incident which took place within its walls, as memorialized by an inscription on the front of one of its houses. It is related that at one time when the plague was raging, and like a destroying angel was entering house after house, until the terrified inhabitants were fleeing for their lives from what appeared to be a doomed city, one man with his family determined to remain, placing themselves under the fatherly protection and good providence of God. In every street and almost every house were the sick and dying or dead. Grass grew in the streets for very want of traffic therein. Nearer and still nearer to the good man's dwelling did the fearful scourge come, until both the houses on either side were attacked; still none within its doors were injured. Gradually the plague was stayed, until it altogether ceased. The people who had fled by degrees took courage and returned. There they found the trusting Christian with his family, all safe amidst surrounding death. To testify his gratitude he had this remarkable inscription carved on the beam in front of the house, "God's providence is mine inheritance." And there it still remains, a silent yet eloquent memorial of God's gracious protection of His trusting servant, and of the Christian's prayerful dependence upon his Father's watchful care.

Ministering angels.—

And is there care in heaven, and is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is, else much more wretched were the race
Of men than beasts. But oh, the exceeding grace
Of highest God, that loves His creatures so,
And all His works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels He sends to and fro,
To serve us wicked men, to serve His wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succor us that succor want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love and nothing for reward.
Oh, why should heavenly God to man have such regard! — *Spenser.*

13—16. (13) **tread,** trample under foot.[a] **lion,** *etc.*, all the enemies, natural and spiritual, of mankind.[b] **young lion,** regarded as especially fierce. **dragon,** here, one of the serpent tribe. (14) **set his love,** Jehovah now speaks; *comp.* De. vii. 7; x. 15. **set him on high,** as *vs.* 12. **known my name,** my covenant name, *Jehovah.* (15) **with . . trouble,** Ps. xlvi. 1. **honor him,** *Polychr.*, "and bring him to honor;" 1 Sa. ii. 30. (16) **long life,** the special promise of the O. T. dispensation.[c] **show . . salvation,** *Polychr.*, "give him joy with the sight of my help," *i. e.* "make him experience what salvation is."

God's presence. — Again God speaks and acts like a tender-hearted mother towards a sickly child. When the child is in perfect health she can leave it in the hands of the nurse; but when it is sick she will attend it herself; she will say to the nurse, "You may attend a while to some other business, I will watch over the child myself." She hears the slightest moan; she flies to the

"God preserveth us, not as we do fruits that are to last but for a year, in sugar, but as flesh for a long voyage, in salt; we must expect in this life much brine and pickle, because our Heavenly Father preserveth us as those whom He resolveth to keep forever, in and by dangers themselves."—*John Arrowsmith.*

"God doth not say no afflictions shall befall us, but no *evil.*"—*Thomas Watson.*

"There is much beauty and significance in that contrast of the godly man housing in a transitory abode, which to-morrow may be moved to another camping-place in the desert; but abiding, in so far as his true being is concerned, in God, the permanent dwelling-place through all generations."—*Exp Bib.*

"The regenerate soul hath three principal faculties, as the natural body hath three principal members: the eye, hand, and foot. In the soul the eye is knowledge, the hand is faith, the foot is obedience. The soul without knowledge is like Bartimeus, blind; without faith, like the man with the withered hand; without obedience, like Mephibosheth, lame."—*T. Adams.*

a "In the narrow mountain passes of the East obstacles can often be overcome in no other manner than by walking over them."—*Spk. Com.* Lu. x. 19; Mk xvi 18.

b "They are called lions and fierce lions fr. the side of their open power, which threatens destruction, and adders and dragons fr. the side of their venomous secret malice."—*Delitzsch.*

c De. xxxii. 46, 47.

cradle; she takes it in her arms; she kisses its lips, and drops a tear upon its face, and asks, "What can I do for thee, my child? How can I relieve thy pain and soften thy sufferings? Don't weep and break my heart; it is thy mother's arms that are around thee; it is thy mother's lap on which thou art laid; it is thy mother's voice that speaks to thee; it is thy mother that is with thee; fear not." So the Lord speaks to his afflicted children. — *William Dawson.*

"A dying saint asked that his name should be put upon his tombstone, with the dates of his birth and death, and the one word, '*Kept.*'" — *Spurgeon.*

Long life. —

He liveth long who liveth well!
All other life is short and vain;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for heavenly gain.

He liveth long who liveth well!
All else is being flung away;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of true things truly done each day. — *Bonar.*

"God, saith Chrysostom, hath given a man two eyes; if he lose one he hath another; but he hath but one soul; if he lose that it is irrecoverable, it can never be made up again." — *T. Watson.*

PSALM THE NINETY-SECOND.

author,— unknown

time, soon after the return from exile

A Sabbath-day Psalm. Subj., prosperity the reward of righteousness.

1–4. (1) **good thing,** not merely right, but delightful. **sing praises,** the word denotes sing with musical accompaniment, as in the sanctuary. **name,** *i. e.* concerning the attributes, character of God. (2) **every night,** or in the nights: with reference to the time of evening sacrifice. "Morning and evening still remain, by common acknowledgment, the most appropriate time for worship." — *Pul. Com.* (3) **upon,** *etc.*,[a] better, "Upon the lute with ten strings; with a solemn sound upon the harp." **with,** to the accompaniment of. **solemn sound,** *Polychr.*, "with resounding chords." (4) **work,** should be *works*, providential dispensations.

[a] "In skillful playing with the cithern." — *Delitzsch.*

To sing praises. — 1. Singing is the music of nature. The Scriptures tell us, the mountains sing; the valleys sing; the trees of the wood sing. Nay, the air is the birds' music-room, where they chant their musical notes; 2. Singing is the music of ordinances. Augustine reports of himself, that when he came to Milan and heard the people sing, he wept for joy in the church to hear that pleasing melody. And Beza confesses that at his first entrance into the congregation, and hearing them sing Ps. xci., he felt himself exceedingly comforted, and did retain the sound of it afterwards upon his heart. The Rabbis tell us, that the Jews, after the Feast of the Passover was celebrated, sang Psalm cxi., and the five following psalms; and our Saviour and His apostles "sang an hymn" immediately after the blessed supper; 3. Singing is the music of saints. (1). They have performed this duty in their greatest numbers; (2). In their greatest straits; (3). In their greatest flight; (4). In their greatest deliverances; (5). In their greatest plenties. In all these changes singing hath been their stated duty and delight. And indeed it is meet that the saints and servants of God should sing forth their joys and praises to the Lord Almighty; every attribute of Him can set both their song and their tune; 4. Singing is the music of angels. Job tells us, "The morning stars sang together," Job xxxviii. 7. Now these morning stars, as Pineda tells us, are the angels; to which the Chaldee paraphrase accords, naming these morning stars, *aciem angelorum*, "a host of angels." Nay, when this heavenly host was sent to proclaim the birth of our dearest Jesus, they delivered their message in this raised way of duty. They were **αἰνούντων,** delivering their messages in a "laudatory singing," the whole company of angels making a musical choir. Nay, in heaven, there is the angels' joyous music, they there sing hallelujahs to the Most High, and to the Lamb who sits upon the throne; 5. Singing is the music of heaven. The glorious saints and angels accent their praises this way, and make one harmony in their state of blessedness; and this is the music of the bride-chamber. The saints who were tuning here their psalms, are now singing hallelujahs in a louder strain, and articulating their joys, which here they could not express to their perfect satisfaction. Here they labored with drowsy hearts, and faltering tongues; but in glory these impediments are removed, and nothing is left to jar their joyous celebrations. — *John Wells.*

"The heavens are a point from the pen of His perfection; the world is a rosebud from the bower of His beauty; the sun is a spark from the light of His wisdom; and the sky a bubble on the sea of His power." — *Sir W. Jones.*

"The great Sovereign sends ten thousand worlds to tell us He resides above them all, in glory's unapproachable recess."—*Young.*

"The stars hang bright above, silent, as if they watch'd the sleeping earth." — *Coleridge.*

5—8. (5) **how great,** the language of adoring faith. **thy thoughts,** fr. Heb. verb meaning *to weave.*[a] *Cheyne,* "thy designs," for training thy people. **very deep,** Ps. xl. 5. (6) **brutish,** "man in his rude, uncultivated state, as by nature."[b] **fool,** Ps. xiv. 1. (7) **it is . . for ever,** *lit.* "for, or with reference to, their being destroyed." From time to time God does interpose to put down the wicked and exalt the righteous. (8) **most high,** or throned on high,[c] and consequently secure from the attacks of the ungodly.

The thoughts of God (*vs.* 5). — I. They are original. II. They are comprehensive. III. They are searching. IV. They are mysterious. — *J. Lee.*

Delight in the works of creation. —

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before.
Thine eye shall be instructed; and thy heart,
Made pure, shall relish with Divine delight,
Till then unfelt, what hands Divine have wrought.
The soul that sees Him, or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she owned before,
Discerns in all things what with stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then she overlooked, —
A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms
Terrestrial in the vast and the minute;
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds. — *Cowper.*

9—11. (9) **be scattered,** melt away, dispersed as if without any external agency. (10) **unicorn,** *R. V.*, "wild-ox," Nu. xxiii. 22.[d] For the figure of of speech see Ps. lxxxix. 17. **anointed,** *etc.*, Ps. xxiii. 5. The expression, "I am anointed with *fresh* oil," denotes ease, refreshment, and health. "Israel is imagined as an old man whose strength is restored through the use of oil." — *Cheyne.* (11) **shall see,** *R. V.*, "hath seen . . . have heard," *etc.*, or look on, with the calm disdain of perfect security.[e] **enemies,** *lit.* those who lie in wait for me. **my desire,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "with joy the downfall of," *etc.*

The subject of David's confidence was — I. Very comprehensive, including renewed strength, fresh tokens of favor, confirmation in office, qualification for it, and new joys. II. Well grounded, since it rested in God, and his promises. III. Calming all fears. IV. Exciting hopes. V. Causing pity for those who have no such confidence. — *Spurgeon.*

Destruction of the wicked. — The wicked may unite and confederate together, but the bands of their society are feeble. It is seldom that they long agree together; at least as to the particular object of their pursuit. Though they certainly harmonize in the general one, that of working iniquity. But God will soon by His power, and in His wrath, confound and scatter them even to destruction. — *Samuel Burder.*

12—15. (12) **palm . . cedar,** "selected as the loveliest images of verdure, fruitfulness, undecaying vigor, and perpetuity." — *Perowne.* **in Lebanon,** where only a few of the ancient cedars now remain. (13) **planted,** *etc.*, this does not refer to the "trees" of the preceding verse, but to the "righteous," who are viewed as passing their days almost continually in the temple courts, and so as (in a certain ense) "planted" there. — *Pul. Com.* (14) **in old age,**[f] the proof of surprising vitality. **fat,** *i. e.* full of sap. **flourishing,** rich in verdure. (15) **To shew,** to manifest and vindicate the righteousness of God's government. **rock,** De. xxxii. 4.

The godly like a palm tree. — 1. Flourishes in the desert. II. Has his principle of life from within. III. Reveals the hidden springs whence he derives his support. IV. Is exceedingly useful. V. Yields his richest fruit in his maturity. — *J. Muncaster.—The prosperity of the righteous* (*vs.* 12). — I. Who shall flourish? II. How shall they flourish? III. Where shall they flourish? IV. When shall they flourish? V. Why shall they flourish? VI. Who can bear testimony to this? — *W. Fay.*

The palm and the cedar. — The palm is indigenous to tropical and other warm climates. It grows to a considerable height and size, and presents a

a "The word gives a good idea of the wonderful intricacy and contrivance with wh. the Div. Mind designs and executes His plans, till at length the result is seen in a beautifully woven tissue of many delicately mingled and colored threads" — *Wordsworth.*

b Ps. lxxiii. 22.

c "Therefore that we may behold the judgments of God, that are not seen in the world, the prophet gives us to understand by the word *high* that God dealeth not after our pleasure, but as comports with His eternity." — *Calvin.*

"Suggested trans., 'My old age is green with vigor.'" — *Jennings and Lowe.*

d Job xxxix. 9.

e Ps. xxxvii. 34.

"Little do they think that they are suffered to prosper that like *beasts* they may be fitter for slaughter." *Zachary Bogan.*

"Christian illumination, consecration, gladness, graces, are all of them the anointing of the Spirit." — *William Garreth Lewis.*

"God is the secret of stability, because he is both in the *circumstances* and in *us*. They who upset your good, must shift God's relations to it, before they can reach you."

f Ps. xci. 16.

"Throughout the year, the winter's cold as in the summer's heat, the palm continues green; not by years but by centuries is the cedar's age reckoned." — *Tholuck.*

Refs. to the palm, Song Sol. vii. 7; Jer. x. 5.

beautiful appearance. Its fruits, which are called dates, are much valued, and are eaten both fresh and preserved, and are also pressed for both syrup and wine. But it is not for its fruit alone that the palm is so valuable. From the boughs, which are yearly lopped off from the lower parts of the stem, are made baskets, bird-cages, ropes, and sacks; from the leaves, mattresses, sandals, *etc.* It is an evergreen, and lives to an extreme old age; the wood is durable and much used. How striking an emblem of a good man — he shall flourish like the palm tree. The cedar was considered by the Hebrews as the monarch of the vegetable world, on account of its magnitude, majesty, the number and extent of its boughs, and the durability of its wood, which was so remarkable that some supposed it to be incorruptible. Moreover, everything about the Oriental cedar has a strong balsamic odor, and hence the forest is so perfumed with fragrance that a walk through it is delightful. Mount Lebanon was in ancient times covered with forests of cedars, of which, however, few only now remain. Again we say to the Christian, Behold your emblem: "He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." — *J. A. James.* — *Planted by God.* — Even so have I seen a tree standing out in a dreary, stony plain, under the blazing sun, yet fresh and green, and with the stir of life in its leaves and branches; and that though I could see no gleam of water, and hear the gurgle of no stream through the stillness of the shimmering noon. Yet none the less was it planted by the waters. Down deep under the soil flowed the rills which bathed its roots and nourished its life. And the waters by which God feeds these planted lives of His in dry places are seldom seen. They flow in deep channels of God's digging, where the eye of man cannot track them, but where they run, charged with strength and gladness, to the souls which are weary and heavy laden. — *M. R. Vincent.*

The date palm has been known to produce 600 lbs. weight of fruit.

"The fickleness of professors is a stumbling-block to the world. They all say, as Cato of the civil wars between Cæsar and Pompey — They know whom to avoid, but not whom to follow. And as they honor truth, so the flourishing of your own souls depends on it. A tree often removed from one soil to another can never be expected to be fruitful; 'tis well if it make shift to live."— *Flavel.*

"We are conscious of the heavenly and spiritual elements of noble natures about us rather by their effect upon us than by any other spectacle of them."— *H. W. Beecher.*

PSALM THE NINETY-THIRD.

author, — unknown; time, later than xcii.

A Ps. celebrating the majesty of Jehovah as Ruler of the universe.

This psalm has been described as "an echo of Niagara;" *i. e.* "thundering water."

"The very first words of this psalm seem to indicate a morning of calm repose after a night of storm, a day of stillness after the tumult of battle."— *Barton Bouchier.*

"If the King, who sets fast earth and bridles seas, speaks to us, we may utterly confide in His word, and, if we do, we shall share in His stable being, in so far as man is capable of resemblance to the changeless God."—*Exp. Bib.*

1—5. (1) **reigneth,** better, *has become King:* His kingdom is visibly established. "God is regarded as having for a time laid aside, or hidden, His sovereignty, but as now at length coming forward and inaugurating the theocracy. The writer may have in his mind some recent manifestation of Divine power, or he may be anticipating the final establishment of the reign of Messiah."— *Pul. Com.* **clothed,** *etc.*, Is. li. 9; lxiii. 1. **world . . moved,** "when all the fulness of power involved in Jehovah's government of this universe actualizes itself, then will immovable stability be secured to this convulsed earth." — *Delitzsch.* (2) **throne,** this term denotes the righteous sway and government of God. — *Calvin.* **of old,** though long disregarded by His creatures. (3) **floods,** fig. for the great world-powers by wh. the Israelites were successively oppressed. **waves,** *R. V. marg.*, roaring: the dashing of the surf in thunders upon the shore. (4) **on high is mightier,** *Cheyne,* "is more glorious," *i. e.* capable of exciting æsthetic pleasure in the beholder. (5) **testimonies,** perhaps generally for the Divine rule and laws. **holiness,** showing itself in simple trust and hearty obedience. **thine house,** sec. Jehovah has Himself come to dwell therein among his people.

Jehovah the King. — I. The majesty of the King. II. The might of the King. This is manifested — 1. In the stability of the world; 2. In the subjugation of His enemies. We have here (1) The tumultuous opposers of His reign; (2) The calm Sovereign. III. The eternity of the King and of His kingdom. IV. The truth of His testimonies. V. The purity of His court. — *Wm. Jones.*

Stability of the kingdom. — The invariable perpetuity of the Divine kingdom is celebrated in these words. No vicissitudes are apprehended there, as in earthly monarchies and kingdoms, where thrones are not infrequently shaken, either on account of the death of their kings or principal men, or by reason of the unfaithfulness of subjects or ministers, or because of the schemes or attacks of enemies; none of which can disturb the Divine rule. — *Martin Geier.*

PSALM THE NINETY-FOURTH.

author, — unknown; time, the exile.

1—4. (1) **vengeance,** "God's revenge is His judicial infliction of righteous punishment." — *Fausset.* **shew thyself,** *lit.* "shine forth." Grant a theophany. (2) **Lift up thyself,** in judicial majesty; Is. xxxiii. 10. **earth,** or land of the Hebrews. **reward,** *R. V.*, "their desert;" wh. would take

Subj., an appeal to God against wicked oppressors.

De. xxxii. 35; Je. li. 56.

"This psalm, as may be easily apprehended, is a prayer of all the pious children of God, and of spiritual people, against all their persecutors, so that it may be used by all pious, godly people from the beginning till the end of the world." — *Luther.*

"Socrates, being asked what would be vexatious to good men, replied, 'The prosperity of the bad.' What would vex the bad? 'The prosperity of the good.'" — *Le Blanc.*

a Pr. xxii. 22; Is. iii. 15.

"Oh, give me liberty! for were e'en Paradise my prison, still I should long to leap the crystal walls." — *Dryden.*

"A day, an hour of virtuous liberty is worth a whole eternity in bondage." — *Addison.*

"That the self-existent and eternal God should not see is a palpable absurdity; and scarcely less so, that the God of Israel should suffer His own people to be slaughtered without even observing it." — *J. A. Alexander.*

b "Everything which is good and excellent in the creature must be possessed in absolute perfection by the Creator." — *Spk. Com.*

c Ge. vi. 5.

"He who made the sun itself, and causes it to revolve, being a small portion of His works, if compared with the whole universe, can easily see all things." — *Cicero.*

the form of a judgment. (3) **How long,** *comp.* Rev. vi. 10. (4) The words in italics are not needed. *R. V.*, "They prate, they speak arrogantly." **boast themselves,** carry themselves high.

Anonymous hymns. — There is no superscription to this psalm. There is no indication of its authorship, of the period at which it was written, or of the circumstances to which it refers. There are many of these anonymous hymns in God's Book, nameless utterances, voices of the night of weeping, shouts from the mountain tops of thought, prayers unto the God of Life, which belong to no individual, can be fathered on no solitary period, but descend as an heirloom to successive ages, and enrich every generation. As the circumstances, the victories, the shortcomings, and the possibilities of man are continually being repeated, so the religious experiences of the church do often reappear in its history, and we may receive the inspired utterances of them in one age as almost equally appropriate to the sorrows and joys of another age. — *H. R. Reynolds.* — *Trust in the living God.* — Mrs. Beecher Stowe relates a striking incident which once gave to a speech, which Frederick Douglas was delivering, a startling and almost overwhelming power. Douglas was descanting, in his usually impassioned manner, upon the wrongs and miseries of the negro race. Warming with his subject, and waxing more and more indignant with their persecutors, he seemed to lose all patience, and at last said that they must henceforth trust in the strength of their own right arms, seeing that it was in vain otherwise to hope for deliverance. At this moment there rose a tall, aged negress, who, while perfect silence reigned throughout the hall, said, in a voice not loud but deep, which thrilled every heart in that excited assembly, "*Frederick! is God dead?*"

5—8. (5) **break in pieces,** *crush.*[a] **heritage,** Ex. vi. 8. (6) **widow,** *etc.*, those whose distresses ought to excite compassion; "domestic tyrants seem to be aimed at." — *Perowne.* (7) **they say,** in their hearts. Foreign enemies did not suppose that Jehovah would not see, but trusted that their own gods were stronger than He, and would protect them. **the God of Jacob,** would not be a natural expression in the mouth of Israel's foreign foes. They knew nothing of Jacob. But it was an expression frequently used by Israelites. — *Pul. Com.* (8) **understand,** *R. V.*, "consider." **brutish,** *Polychr.*, "ye dullards." Ps. xlix. 10; xcii. 6.

The captive's release. — In the war called Braddock's war, my father was an officer in the British navy. One night as they were running close to the coast of Barbary, the officer on deck heard some person singing. A moment convinced him that he was singing the Old Hundredth psalm tune. They immediately conjectured that the singer was a Christian captive and determined to attempt his rescue. Twenty stout sailors, armed with pistols and cutlasses, manned the ship's boats and approached the shore. Directed by the voice of singing and prayer, they soon reached the abode of the Christian captive. It was a little hut at the bottom of his master's garden on a small river. They burst open the door, and took him from his knees, and in a few moments he was on the ship's deck frantic with joy. The account he gave of himself was, that his name was M'Donald, that he was a native of Scotland, and had been a captive eighteen years; he had obtained the confidence of his master, was his chief gardener, and had the privilege of living by himself. He said he was not at all surprised when they burst open his door, for the Turks had often done so, and whipped him when on his knees. — *Christian Advocate.*

9—11. (9) **planted,**[b] the argument to disprove this practical atheism proceeds from the perfections of the creature to those of the Creator. **see,** the deeds described, *vss.* 5, 6. (10) **heathen,** *R. V.*, "nations," by providential judgments. **correct,** His own erring people. **he . . know?** *R. V.*, "even he that teacheth man knowledge?" (11) **vanity,** *R. V., marg.* "a breath."[c] God not only observes all that the wicked do. He is able even to read their every thought.

The folly of practical atheism. — I. In supposing that God does not observe their conduct. II. In supposing that God will not recompense their conduct. — *W. Jones.*

Safeguards. — That is wise counsel of the Rabbins, that the three best safeguards against falling into sin are to remember, first, that there is an ear which hears everything; secondly, that there is an eye which sees everything;

thirdly, that there is a hand which writes everything in the Book of Knowledge, which shall be opened at the judgment.— *J. M. Neale.*— *The knowledge of God.*— What knowledge have we but that which is derived from Himself or from the external world?— and what is that world, but His Creation?— and what is creation, but the composition, structure and arrangement of all things according to His previous designs, plans, intentions, will, and mandate? In studying creation in any of its departments, we therefore study His mind; and all that we can learn from it must be His ideas, His purposes, and His performances. No author, in His compositions — no artificer, in His mechanisms, can more truly display their talents and ideas to others, than the unseen Creator manifests His thoughts and intelligence to us in the systems and substances which He has formed, and presents to our continual contemplation. In this sense, Nature is an unceasing revelation of them to us.— *Sharon Turner.*— *Organs of sense.*— The nervous filaments of the senses are finer than a spider's thread; yet they are the avenues of communication between the world without and the world within. They spread themselves out over a little space at the roots of the tongue, and all the savors of nature become tributaries to our pleasure. They unfold themselves over a little space in the olfactory organs, and we catch the perfumes of all the zones. They are ramified over a little space in the hollow of the ear, and the myriad voices of nature, from the shrill insect or the mellifluous song-bird to the organ-tones of heaven's cathedral, the thunder, the cataract, and the ocean, become our orchestra. They line a spot in the interior of the eye so small that the tip of the finger may cover it; when, lo! the earth and the heavens, to the remotest constellations that seem to glitter feebly on the confines of space, are painted quick as thought in the chambers of the brain. By these senses we hold connection with all external things, as though millions of telegraphic wires were stretched from every outward object, and came in converging lines to find their focus in our organs, and through these inlets to pour their pictures, their odors, and their songs into the all-capacious brain. Nay, better than this; for we have the picture, the perfume, and the music, without the encumbrance of the wires.— *Horace Mann.*

pared with the whole, is He unable to perceive all things?" — *Epictetus.*

"The thoughts of man's heart— what millions are there of them in a day! The twinkling of the eye is not so sudden a thing as the twinkling of a thought; yet those thousands and thousands of thoughts which pass from thee; that thou can not reckon, they are all known to God." — *Anthony Burgess.*

"All's well, all's best, the future's joy and woe
Is in His knowledge who alone will bless;
It is enough to know thou lov'st Him more; to know
He will not love thee less."
—*Beatrice Rothenthal.*

12–15. (12) **thou chastenest,** *comp.* He. xii. 5–9. (13) **rest,** safety fr. the evil times. *Polychr.*, "To hold himself calm in the days," *etc.* **until,** the word rendered denotes the "inevitableness" of the doom reserved for the wicked.[a] (14) **neither forsake,** for the justice of God must everywhere be ultimately vindicated, *comp.* Je. xii. 7.[b] (15) **judgment . . righteousness,** *i. e.* the disabilities under which the righteous now are placed, as Divine chastisement will presently issue in righteousness. Right will at last prevail, because God reigns. **follow it,** give in their adhesion to it.[c] *Polychr.*, "And the future be theirs who are upright in heart."

Trust in God.— As rowers in a boat turn their backs to the shore, and trust to the man at the helm, whose eye is fixed upon it, so should we proceed in duty through life,— turn our backs from our anxious cares for the future, and leave the guidance of them all to God, who guides the helm. Do thy part with industry and leave the event with God. I have seen matters fall out so unexpectedly that they have taught me in all affairs neither to despair nor to presume; not to despair, for God can help me; not to presume, for God can cross me. I will never despair, because I have a God; I will never presume, because I am but a man.—*Storms.*— A storm comes to a ship in mid-voyage. She is driven far out of her course, and is glad at last to find shelter in some friendly port. But there would soon have been shipwreck in the fair weather. The sunken rock, the unknown current, the treacherous sand, were just before the ship. The storm was her salvation. It carried her roughly but safely to the harbor. And such is affliction to many a soul. It comes to quench the sunshine, to pour the pitiless rain, to raise the stormy wind and drive the soul away to port and refuge, away to harbor and home within the circle of Divine tranquillity — in the deep calm of the everlasting Presence.— *A. Raleigh.*

[a] Ps. ix. 15; xxxv. 7, 8; Pr. xxviii. 10.

[b] Ro. xi. 2.

[c] "Judgment, now so much abused by an ungodly magistracy, shall turn back and again link itself with its fitting companion, impartial equity. All these 'upright in heart' shall hail the change with joy." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

16–19. (16) **Who,** among men. Because he found no help in man, the Psalmist turns wholly to God (17) **dwelt in silence,** *Polychr.*, "the land that is silent," that of the grave.[d] (18) **When . . said,** in time of danger. (19) **thoughts,** *lit. branching thoughts,* so meaning "anxious ones," cares, distractions.[e] *Polychr.*, "When cares crowd into my bosom."

A common incident of the journey (*vs.* 18).—I. Some slippery places as — 1.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity; Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, Bears yet a precious jewel in his head."

[d] Ps. xxxi. 18; cxv. 17.

[e] Ps. cxxxix. 23.

"Xerxes offered great rewards to him that could

find out a new pleasure; but the comforts of the Spirit are satisfactory, they recruit the heart. There is as much difference between heavenly comforts and earthly, as between a banquet that is eaten and one that is painted on the wall." — *Thomas Watson.*

"Troubles may be of our own begetting; but true comforts come only from that infinite fountain, the God of consolation; for so He hath styled Himself."— *Thomas Adams.*

"If the globe were one mass of the purest gold; if the stars were so many jewels of the finest order; if the moon were a diamond; and the sun a ruby; they were less than nothing, when compared with the infinite value of one soul."— *Brooksbank.*

"Here, then, the matter ends; faith reads the present in the light of the future, and ends her song without a trembling note."— *Spurgeon.*

Poverty and want; 2. Annoyance and vexation; 3. Dejection and perplexity, 4. Sore bereavement and trial. II. Some things concerning the traveler; rendering these the more perilous. 1. The absence of the staff or negligence in its use; 2. Drowsiness; 3. Carelessness; 4. The lamp untrimmed.— *Stems and Twigs.*

The mercies of God. — If thy soul would praise the Lord, forget not all His benefits. Recount with thyself what He hath done for the church, for the state in which thou livest, for thyself in thy own person, in thy parents, in thy children, in thy soul, in thy body, in temporal, in eternal favors, corporal and spiritual. When thou hast cast up the account of thy debts, and seest how much praise is due to God, how unable thou art to pay this debt, here is thy remedy: "Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise." — *S. Page* (1646). — *Silence.* — Henry Perreyoe, in a letter to a friend, describes with astonishment the life of the Bernardine Sisters, whom he had visited in their convent, a life unequaled for the rigor of its discipline, even in the Church of Rome. The Bernardines give their time to the direction of fallen women who have repented, and whose highest reward is to become Bernardines themselves at last. They live amongst the dreary deserts of sand that stretch along the southern coasts of France, like the first anchorites in the deserts of Africa. They eat black bread, drink water, and *never speak — never.* A sister of Chartreux may speak once in every week, a Bernardine is silent as the dead.— *Anec. Illus of O. T. Texts.*

20—23. (20) **throne of iniquity,** judgment seat marked by iniquity; tribunal of wickedness. **fellowship,** connection or alliance with God. **by a law,** hiding their unrighteous doings under the sacred name of law. "It seemed to the Psalmist at first as if all the injustice were not merely permitted but sanctioned by God."— *Cheyne.* (21) **together,** in troops, like bands of brigands. **against the soul,** or life. **condemn,** *Polychr.*, "pass condemnation on." (22) **defence,** *R. V.*, "hath been my high tower." **rock,** *etc.*, Ps. xviii. 2. (23) **bring upon,** turn back upon. Righteous retribution is certain. **in . . wickedness,** better, "by means of."

The martyr saved. — It is related, in the memoirs of the celebrated William Whiston, that a Protestant, in the days of Queen Mary, of the name of Barbar, was sentenced to be burned. He walked to Smithfield, was bound to the stake, the faggots were piled around him, and the executioner only waited the word of command to apply the torch. At this crisis tidings came of the queen's death; the officers were compelled to stay proceedings till the pleasure of Elizabeth should be known; and thus the life of the good man was spared, to labor, with some of his descendants, successfully in the service of the Lord Jesus and His church.

PSALM THE NINETY-FIFTH.

author,— unknown; time, after the return from exile

An invitation to the worship of God.

1—3. (1) **sing,**[a] as so often in the Ps. meaning *exult*, or *shout joyfully.* **a joyful noise,** "a joy which runs beyond all words."— *Augustine.* **rock of our salvation,** its firm and sure ground; as Ps. lxxxix. 26; xciv. 22. (2) **come before,** go forth to meet Him; *i. e.* anticipate His presence.— *Spk. Com.* **thanksgiving,** the offering wh. God specially desires. Ps. i. 23. **with,** *etc. Polychr.*, "With stringed instruments joyfully sing to Him." (3) **Lord,** or Jehovah. **all gods,** *i. e.* "a great King above all other *so-called* gods" — above the great of the earth (Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6); above angels (Deut. x. 17); above the imaginary gods of the heathen (Ex. xii. 12, *etc.*— *Pul. Com.*

The joys of holy worship. — How sweet are the discoveries made by Christ to believing souls! What a pleasant thing is it for spiritual eyes to behold the Sun of Righteousness, moving and shining in the spirit of a convert, as in its own proper sphere. Such as are dark, are accounted melancholy rooms; well may they be melancholy souls that want the cheering of Christ! Blessed are the people, O Lord, that walk in the light of Thy countenance; they shall know the joyful sound; they shall enjoy a continual jubilee in their hearts.— *J. Arrowsmith.* — *Psalm* 95. — This psalm, the *Venite exultemus Domino*, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord," was the chant of the Templars, the Knights of the Red Cross, when during the crusades they entered into battle with the Saracens for the conquest of Jerusalem. — *Ker.*

[a] "The Psalmist shows that the outward worship of God consists not in dead ceremonies, but chiefly in the sacrifice of praise." — *Calvin.*

"It is a part of Christian duty, and certainly of Christian wisdom, to try to catch the tone of joy in worship which rings in this psalm."— *Exp. Bib.*

4, 5. (4) **deep places,** mysteries of the unexplored recesses. **strength . . also,** *the height of the hills;* or "To whom belongs the tops of the mountains." — *Delitzsch.* God is exalted above all things as Creator. "Theodoret sees a polemic reference to the heathen temples on hill-tops." — *Cheyne.* (5) **The sea is his,** or whose is the sea. To whom belongeth the sea. **formed the dry,** Ge. i. 9.[a]

Neptune's cup. — "Almost imperceptible creatures in the sea build in the Indian Ocean a goblet. It is called 'Neptune's cup.' Sometimes it has a height of six feet and a breadth of three. It is erected solely by myriads of polypi. They have no consultation with each other. Each works in a separate cell; each is as much cut off from communication with every other as an inmate of a cell in the wards of Charlestown prison yonder is from his associates. They build the stem to the proper height, and then they begin to widen it. Everything proceeds according to a plan. Is the plan theirs, or does it belong to a Power above them, and that acts through them? As these isolated creatures build Neptune's cup, so the bioplasts, isolated from each other in the living tissues which they produce, build the rose and the violet and all flowers, the pomegranate and the cedar, the oak and palm and all trees, the eagle and all birds, the lion and all animals, the human brain and all men. Neptune's cup alone strikes us dumb. But what shall we say of the mystic structures built by the bioplasts? There is the cup; it is a fact; and the eye is another Neptune's cup; and the hand another Neptune's cup; and all this universe is another Neptune's cup; and out of such cups I, for one, drink the glad wine of Theism!" — *Joseph Cook.*

a Je. v. 22; Jno. i. 3.

"His power reaches from the loftiest summits of the mountains to the lowest depths of earth, and embraces the liquid expanse of the sea as well as the solid continents of land." — *Wordsworth.*

"Go where man may, with all his toil and searching in the heights or in the depths of the earth, he cannot find a place beyond the range of God's dominion." — *A. R. Faussett.*

6—8. (6) **worship,** the word used to indicate lowly prostration, according to the Eastern mode of adoration; prostrate the body and bow the head. **kneel,** the attitude of reverent supplication. **our maker,** including the covenant making of Israel into a nation as well as the original act of creation.[b] (7) **our God,** a strong affirmation of the claim arising out of God's *personal* relation to His covenanted people. God is exalted above His people as shepherd. **people . . hand,** "the subject of comparison and the figure are blended together." — *Perowne.* **to-day,**[c] this day: now, the accepted time. (8) **provocation,** the proper names Meribah and Massah should be retained.[d]

The difference of times (*vs.* 7). — The following times are not alike. I. Sooner or later in respect to eternity. II. Times of ignorance and knowledge. III. Before and after contracting evil habits. IV. Before and after voluntary commission of known sin. V. The times of God's gracious visitation, and when He withdraws Himself. VI. Times of health and sickness. VII. Now and hereafter, present and future, this world and the world to come, are not alike. — *Whichcote.*

Verse 8. — In any case there is the same solemn strain of warning and expostulation breaking in upon the very joy and gladness of the temple worship, as we have already observed in lxxxi. 7. Psalms like these seem to have a double purpose. They were not only designed to be the expression of public devotion, the utterance of a nation's supplications and thanksgivings, but they were intended also to teach, to warn, to exhort. They were sermons as well as liturgies. Hence, too, the prophetic character which marks them. The Psalmist, like every true preacher, comes as an ambassador from above, speaking not his own words, but the words which God has given him, the words which God himself has uttered. The warning here rests, as in lxxviii., lxxxi., *etc.*, on the example of their fathers in the desert. — *Perowne.*

b *Comp.* Ge. xii. 2; De. xxxii. 15; 1 Sa. xii. 6.

c "Often as they were faithless, the 'to-day' sounded ever anew, for the 'gifts and calling of God are without repentance.'" — *Tholuck.*

d "As at Meribah; as in the day of Massah." See Ex. xvii. 1-7; Nu. xx. 1-13.

"If self-knowledge be a path to virtue, virtue is a much better one to self-knowledge. The more pure the soul becomes, it will, like certain precious stones that are sensible to the contact of poison, shrink from the fœtid vapors of evil impressions." — *Richter.*

9—11. (9) **tempted,** in the sense of tested, assayed. Since God rightly calls for trust, any testing of Him, as if He could fail, is a dishonor to Him. The word *Massah* means *trial.* **work,** of judgment. (10) **grieved,** disgusted, felt a loathing for. **with this generation,** *R. V.*, "that generation." **people,** *etc.*, *lit.* "a people of wanderers in heart (are) they." *Polychr.*, "Perverted at heart." (11) **they should not,** or in the usual form of an oath in *Heb.*, "If they shall enter."[e] **my rest,** the land of promise.[f] But Canaan was a type of the heavenly rest: and the warning given to the Israel of his day by the present Psalmist is to be regarded as a warning that, if they followed in the steps of their forefathers, they might miss of that final and crowning "rest." — *Pul. Com.*

A dark view of sin. — If a doctor knows that he can cure a disease, he can

e "This elliptical form of the oath is equivalent to a strong negative." — *Perowne.*

f He. iii. 18; iv. 3, 8-11.

"Five persons were studying what were the best means to mortify sin; one said, to meditate on death;

the second, to meditate on judgment; the third, to meditate on the joys of heaven; the fourth to meditate on the torments of hell; the fifth, to meditate on the blood and sufferings of Jesus Christ; and certainly the last is the choicest and strongest motive of all." — *Brooks.*

"This ungrateful people did not approve of God's ways, they did not conform to His commands, and did not acknowledge the benefits which they received from His hands." — *Adam Clarke.*

afford to give full weight to its gravest symptoms. If he knows he cannot, he is sorely tempted to say it is of slight importance, and, though it cannot be cured, can be endured without much discomfort. And so the Scripture teachings about man's real moral condition are characterized by two peculiarities which, at first sight, seem somewhat opposed, but are really harmonious and closely connected. There is no book and no system in the whole world that takes such a dark view of what you and I are; there is none animated with so bright and confident a hope of what you and I may become. — *Maclaren.*

A common mistake. — Lord, I do discover a fallacy, whereby I have long deceived myself. Which is this: I have desired to begin my amendment from my birthday, or from the first day of the year, or from some eminent festival, that so my repentance might bear some remarkable date. But when those days were come, I have adjourned my amendment to some other time. Thus, whilst I could not agree with myself when to start, I have almost lost the running of the race. I am resolved thus to befool myself no longer. I see no day but to-day; the instant time is always the fittest time. In Nebuchadnezzar's image, the lower the members, the coarser the metal; the farther off the time, the more unfit. To-day is the golden opportunity; to-morrow will be the silver season; next day but the brazen one, and so on, till at last I shall come to the toes of clay, and be turned to dust. Grant, therefore, that to-day I may hear Thy voice. And if this day be obscure in the calendar and remarkable in itself for nothing else, give me to make it memorable in my soul, thereupon, by Thy assistance, beginning the reformation of my life. — *T. Fuller.*

PSALM THE NINETY-SIXTH.

author,— unknown; prob. date, after the captivity

This Ps. is quoted in 1 Chr. xvi. 23–32 and assigned to David. But the phraseology and the style, especially the frequent iteration (*vss.* 1, 2, 7, 8, 13), belong to the later Hebrew. If David, therefore, was the original author, we must suppose a reconstruction of the composition at a later period. — *Pul. Com.* **1—3.** (1) **new song,** one referring to the future.[a] New in the sense of suiting the glorious age that is dawning. **all the earth,** the Psalmist at once makes known his "universalism" by calling on the whole earth to join in his song of praise (*comp.* Ps. lxvi. 1, 4). This psalm has been well called "a missionary hymn for all ages." — *Rawlinson.* (2) **from day to day,** *i. e.* every day. (3) **heathen,** or Gentile peoples. **wonders,** "wonderful acts." **all people,** or all the nations.[b]

Declare His glory. — I. Declare among the heathen the glory of God's perfections, that they may acknowledge Him as the true God. II. Declare the glory of His salvation, that they may accept Him as their only Redeemer. III. Declare the glory of His providence, that they may confide in Him as their faithful guardian. IV. Declare the glory of His word, that they may prize it as their chief treasure. V. Declare the glory of His service, that they may choose it as their noblest occupation. VI. Declare the glory of His residence, that they may seek it as their best home. — *William Jackson.*

A prayer for Christ's kingdom. — "O most glorious and powerful Jesus, who with Thine own right hand and Thy holy arm hast gotten to Thyself, on our behalf, the victory over sin, hell, and the grave; remember this Thy mercy and truth, which Thou hast promised to all that believe on Thee; give us pardon of our sins sealed unto us by the testimony of Thy Holy Spirit, and of a good conscience; and grant that we by Thy strength may fight against our ghostly enemies, and by Thy power may overcome them, that we may rejoice in a holy peace, and sing and give Thee thanks for our victory and our crown. Extend this mercy, and enlarge the effect of Thy great victories to the heathen, that all the ends of the world may sing a new song unto Thee, and see the salvation of God; that when Thou comest to judge the earth we may all find mercy, and be joyful together before Thee in the festivity of a blessed eternity, through Thy mercies, O blessed Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus. Amen." — *Jeremy Taylor.*

4—6. (4) **great,** Ps. xlviii. 1. **praised,** *i. e.* celebrated in festive songs. **all gods,** the heathen deities.[c] (5) **idols,** *lit.* nothings.[d] **made the heavens,** therefore is the one living Creator. (6) **sanctuary,** the original phrase used seems to have been, "Strength and *gladness* are in his *place*" (1 Chr. xvi.

A call to all nations to praise God.

a "A new song; for here are set forth expectations strange to the Jewish creed of former days, and God's intention 'that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body and partakers of His promise,' begins to dawn upon the exclusive nations." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

b Mk. xvi. 15.

"Come, all ye, who, up to this hour, have been giving your worship to dead gods; come and give your hearts to the true and only God in this *new* song!" — *Henry Cowles.*

c "These are called *idols, lit nothings,* a favorite word in Is. *See* Ch. xli., xliv., but occurring also as early as Le. xix. 4; xxvi. 1." — *Perowne.*

d 1 Cor. viii. 4.

27) — terms suiting the simplicity of David's time. When the psalms came to be used in the temple service, loftier language was more fitting. The whole passage has probable reference to the glory of God as seated between the cherubim in the first temple. — *Pul. Com.*

Strength and beauty (*vs.* 6). — They meet in the sanctuary of God in undivided perfection. I. There is the strength and beauty of attraction. II. Of an unflinching purpose — to reign, save, judge. III. Of a perfect organization. IV. Of imparted character. — *H. T. Miller.*

The weakness of idols. — A little boy who lived in the house of a heathen said to him one day: "There is but one God — the one who made the earth, and the sky, and everything. It is He who gives us the rain and the sunshine, and He knows what we do and what we leave undone. He hears us when we pray, and He, the Eternal One, will punish us if we do wrong, and reward us if we do right. He can save us or He can destroy us. But these images that you pray to are only lumps of baked clay. They can't see or hear; how, then, can they do you any good or save you from any trouble? You ought to talk to God's messenger about that." He meant the missionary. The heathen paid no heed to him, but soon afterwards went on a little journey. While he was gone, the boy took a stick and broke all the images except the largest, into the hands of which he put the stick. When the man returned, he was furious to see what had happened, and exclaimed: "Who has done this?" "Perhaps," said the little boy, "the big idol has been beating his little brothers." "Nonsense," said the man. "Don't talk such stuff as that! Do you think I'm a fool? You know as well as I do that the thing cannot even raise its hand. It was you, you little rascal! It was you! And to pay you for your labor of wickedness, I'll beat you to death with the same stick." And seizing the stick, he approached him. "But," said the boy gently, "how can you trust to a god so weak that a child's hand can destroy him? Do you suppose that, if he can't take care of himself or his companions, he can of you and the world, let alone *making* you?" The heathen stopped to think, for it was a new idea. Then he broke his great idol, and went and kneeled down to pray to the true God, and called Him "My Father." — *Schmidt.*

7—10. (7) **kindreds,** *etc.*, the Gentile nations are thus addressed.[a] **give,** *etc.*, ascribe in joyful, trustful songs. This is the principle of all true prayer; ascribing glory to God, rather than seeking gifts from Him. (8) **bring an offering,**[b] *minchah*, an unbloody sacrifice. **courts,** *lit.* "before him:" *comp.* 1 Chr. xvi. 29. (9) **beauty of holiness,** or "in holy vestments."[c] **fear,** *R. V.*, "tremble." (10) **Lord reigneth,** or Jehovah is King: "hath taken to Himself His great power and reigned." **world,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "is established that it cannot be moved;" Ps. xciii. 1. **judge,** in the general sense of ruling. **righteously,** *R. V.* "with equity."

The nature and spirit of Divine worship (*vss.* 8, 9). — I. Religion is essentially connected with worship. II. Divine worship must be personal. III. Personal worship must be public. IV. Holy. V. Adoring and grateful. VI. In the spirit of cheerful liberality. 1. The offerings may be of varied amount; 2. Cheerful and voluntary; 3. Continuous; 4. Grounds of the offering. — *J. Burns.*

The reign of Jehovah. — At a public festival at Raiatea, a South Sea Island, some of the chiefs and others addressed the company, in brief and spirited appeals to their memory of the abominations of past times, and to their gratitude for the glorious and blessed changes which the Gospel of Christ had wrought among them. They compared their present manner of feasting, their improved dress, their purer enjoyments, their more courteous behavior, the cleanliness of their persons, and the delicacy of their language in conversation, with their former gluttony, nakedness, riot, brutality, filthy customs, and obscene talk. One of the speakers observed: "At such a feast as this, a few years ago, none but kings or great chiefs, or strong men, could have got anything good to eat; the poor, and the feeble, and the lame, would have been trampled under foot, and many of them killed in the quarrels and battles that followed the gormandizing and drunkenness." This," said another, "is the reign of Jehovah — that was the reign of Satan. Our kings might kill us for their pleasure, and offer our carcasses to the Evil Spirit; our priests and our rulers delighted in shedding our blood. Now, behold, our persons are safe, our property is our own, and we have no need to fly to the

"The heavens, which roof over all the earth, declare to every land Jehovah's creative power, and His supremacy above all gods But the singer's eye pierces their abysses, and sees some gleams of that higher sanctuary of which they are but the floor. There stand Honor and Majesty, Strength and Beauty."—*Maclaren.*

"Oh, if so much
of beauty doth reveal
Itself in every vein of life and nature,
How beautiful must be the Source itself,
The Ever-Bright One!"
—*Esaias Tegner.*

"Dagon could not stand before the ark of the covenant; no more can idols before the power of Christianity." — *John Bate.*

[a] "The families of the nations themselves are called upon to take up the song in wh. Israel has made known to them the salvation of Jehovah."—*Perowne.*

[b] "A collective singular, in allusion to the Eastern custom of bringing gifts when admitted into the presence of kings and rulers."—*Spk. Com.*

In Madagascar now, every person entering the presence of the sovereign makes *kasina*, or a present.

[c] *Delitzsch, comp.* with the "wedding garment" of the N. T. parable.

"Idolatry by its reaction of the character worshiped upon the character of the

worshiper, causes its devotees to become corrupt, depraved or bestial."

mountains to hide ourselves, as we used to do when a sacrifice was wanted for Oro, and durst not come back to our homes till we heard that a victim had been slain and carried to the marae." — *Whitecross.*

a Comp. Is. xliv. 23.

" To be in heaven is to love for ever God — and thou must love here. Here thou wilt find all that thou canst and oughtst to love; for souls, remade of God, and molded over again into His sunlike emblems, multiply His might and love; the saved are suns, not earths; and with original glory shine of God."—*Bailey.*

11—13. (11) **heavens rejoice,** inanimate creation is summoned to take part in the joyful strain.[a] **sea roar,** as if in a loud psalm. (12) **field,** *etc.*, by reason of the prosperities of the righteous reign. **trees . . rejoice,** a bold, poetic figure. (13) **cometh,** better, He is come: "the coming seems as if it were actually taking place under the eyes of the Psalmist." **people,** *R. V.*, "peoples." **with his truth,** *Polychr.*, "in His faithfulness."

The temple of creation. —

Your voiceless lips, O flowers, are living preachers,
Each cup a pulpit, every leaf a book,
Supplying to my fancy numerous teachers
From loneliest nook.

'Neath cloister'd boughs each floral bell that swingeth,
And tolls its perfume on the passing air,
Makes Sabbath in the fields, and ever ringeth
A call to prayer,—

Not to the domes where crumbling arch and column
Attest the feebleness of mortal hand,
But to that fane most catholic and solemn
Which God hath planned,—

To that cathedral, boundless as our wonder,
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply,
Its choir the winds and waves, its organ thunder,
Its dome the sky.

There, amid solitude and shade, I wander
Through the green aisles, and, stretch'd upon the sod,
Amid the silence reverently ponder
The ways of God. — *Longfellow.*

author,— unknown; time, later restoration

Subj., a call to worship in view of the majesty of Jehovah.

PSALM THE NINETY-SEVENTH.

cf. Is. xlii. 10-12; Hab. iii.

1—4. (1) **reigneth,** or is now king.[b] **isles,** terms used for the islands and coasts of the Medit. Sea, or in a wider sense, of heathen countries.[c] (2) **Clouds,** *etc.*, fig. taken from giving of law on Mt. Sinai.[d] "God's veiling Himself in darkness bears witness to His earnestness as Judge." — *Delitzsch.* **habitation,** *R. V.*, "foundation," Ps. lxxxix. 14. (3) **A fire,** better, *fire*, the Divine symbol, Ps. l. 3.[e] **burneth,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "blazed about His steps." (4) **enlightened,** *lit.* "gave shine unto;" "illumined."

b "All the verbs from 1-9, whether in the past or future, must be regarded as *prophetic perfects*; to the sanguine imagination of the Psalmist the kingdoms of this world are already become the kingdom of Jehovah." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

c Ge. x. 5; Ps. lxxii. 10; Is. xlii. 4; xlix. 1; li. 5; lx. 9; lxvi. 19; Zep ii. 11.

d Ex. xix. 9-16; xx 21.

e Comp. Ha. iii. 5.

f "The frequent allusions in this series of Ps. to the convulsions of the earth, and the melting of the hills, suggest th idea that some great earthquake, like that in the days of King Uzziah, was fresh in the memory of the people."—*Spk. Com.*

g Mi. iv. 13; Zec. iv. 14; vi. 5.

h Is. xl. 5; lxvi. 18.

God's reign matter of joy to all (*vss.* 1, 2). — I. All things are under the control of the Lord Jehovah. II. Some parts of this Divine administration are mysterious and incomprehensible to man. III. Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. IV. Jehovah's reign is matter of joy to all. — *Iota in* 400 *Sks.*

Mystery. — I was one day riding with a friend; we were discussing a subject, and I expressed myself surprised that such a measure was not adopted. "If I were to tell you one thing," said he, "it would make all clear." I gave him credit that there did exist something which would entirely dispel my objections. Now, if this be the case, in many instances, between man and man, is it an unreasonable conclusion that all the unaccountable points which we may observe in the providence and government of God should be all perfection in the Divine Mind. — *Cecil.*

5—7. (5) **hills,** better, "mountains." **wax,** *see* Ps. lxviii. 2.[f] **Lord . . earth,** Jos. iii. 11, 13.[g] (6) **heavens declare,** bec. God is regarded as appearing in the heavens, and judging therefrom. **people,** peoples, or nations.[h] (7) **Confounded,** *R. V.*, "Ashamed," *Polychr.*, "were brought to disgrace" by the glorious manifestation of the true God. **worship . . gods,** better

rendered, "all the gods prostrate themselves before Him," as in the instance of Dagon prostrate before the ark of God.

Adoration of God. — When a man gravely worships what has been engraved by a man's hand, and puts his trust in a mere nothing and nonentity, he is indeed brutish, and when he is converted from such absurdity, he may well be ashamed. A man who worships an image is but the image of a man, his senses must have left him. He who boasts of an idol makes an idle boast. Bow down yourselves, ye fancied gods. Let Jove do homage to Jehovah, let Thor lay down his hammer at the foot of the cross, and Juggernaut remove his blood-stained car out of the road of Immanuel. If the false gods are thus bidden to worship the coming Lord, how much more shall they adore Him who are godlike creatures in heaven, even the angelic spirits? Paul quotes this passage as the voice of God to angels when He sent His Son into the world. All powers are bound to recognize the chief power; since they derive their only rightful authority from the Lord, they should be careful to acknowledge His superiority at all times by the most reverent adoration. — *Spurgeon.*

The Lord of the whole earth. — In this title lies concealed the reason for the liquefaction of the hills, for the God who here manifests himself is he who created the earth, and is able therefore to reduce it to nothing. — *Martin Geier.*

8, 9. (8) **Zion . . glad,** that coming of Jehovah, which was a terror to the worshipers of idols, was a triumphant joy to His own people.[a] **daughters of Judah,** poetic fig. for the towns of wh. Jerus. was the mother city. **because of thy judgments, O Lord.** It does not show any vindictive feeling, if the saints, persecuted so long, "rejoice" when an end is put to their sufferings by the final judgment of the wicked. — *Pul. Com.* (9) **art high,** Ps. lxxiii. 18.

The exalted God. — You see the shadow of the heavens in a lake. But the heavens that look out of that placid water do not seem very deep; the shadow of heaven is shallow because the heaven shadowed there is low. But when the low clouds have all passed away, look down then into the lake and tell what sight you see; the heaven shadowed in the water is deep, like eternity now. When your joy in Christ's love does not rise high, your grief over the sins that crucified Him does not sink very deep. Hate of evil is shallow because love to Him is shallow. But when I live more by looking at Jesus Christ and what He has done for me, I shall grieve more over the plague of my own evil heart. — *W. Arnot.*

10—12. (10) **hate evil,**[b] *Polychr.*, "Jehovah loves those who hate wickedness." **saints,** this term does not in Scrip. mean absolutely holy ones; but is equal to our "servants of God" or "children of God." (11) **Light is sown,** *i. e.* scattered or diffused; strewn along the pathway of the righteous.[c] **gladness,** "the irrepressible joy which comes from a sense of His favor and protection." (12) **Rejoice,** *etc., comp.* Ps. xxxii. 11, xxx. 4. **remembrance,** *etc.*, or "give thanks to His holy memorial:" *R. V.*, "to His holy name" (for God's memorial is His name Jehovah, Ex. iii. 15).

The king's subjects. — I. The character of the king's subjects. 1. They are sincere and upright; 2. They are devout; 3. They "love the Lord." II. The privilege of the king's subjects. 1. Preservation from evil; 2. Deliverance from enemies; 3. Bestowal of gladness. III. The duty of the king's subjects. 1. To hate evil; 2. To thankfully "rejoice in the Lord." — *Wm. Jones.*

Hatred for sin. — I once walked into a garden with a lady to gather some flowers. There was one large bush whose branches were bending under the weight of the most beautiful roses. We both gazed upon it with admiration. There was one flower on it which seemed to shine above all the rest in beauty. This lady pressed forward into the thick bush and reached far over to pluck it. As she did this, a black snake which was hid in the bush, wrapped itself around her arm. She was alarmed beyond all description, and ran from the garden, screaming and almost in convulsions. During all that day she suffered very much from fear; her whole body trembled, and it was a long time before she could be quieted. That lady is still alive. Such is her hatred now of the whole serpent race, that she has never since been able to look at a snake, even though it were dead. No one could ever pursuade her to venture again into a cluster of bushes, even to pluck a beautiful rose. Now this is the way the sinner acts who truly repents of his sins. He thinks of sin as the serpent that once coiled itself round him. He hates it. He dreads it. He

"Her fruits are all balmy and sweet; she affords none of those blighted ones, so common in the life of man, and so like the fabled apples of the Dead Sea, fresh and beautiful to the sight, but when tasted, full of bitterness and ashes." — *Sir Humphry Davy.*

"Poetry here seems to assume the highest tone of triumph and exultation, and to revel, if I may so express myself, in all the extravagance of joy." — *Robert Lowth.*

a "In the same spirit, our Lord, when speaking of the signs of fear which shall be the precursors of His second coming, says, Lu. xxi. 28." — *Perowne.*

b Comp. Job i. 1; Am. v. 15; Ro. xi. 9.

c "But compare the foll use of the poetic figure: 'Now morn, her rosy steps in the Eastern clime advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl.'" — *Milton.*

"The verb used here generally denotes a sowing (literal or metaphorical) of seed in the ground, with a view, that is to harvest. And this signif. is appropriate here." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"There are joys which long to be ours. God sends ten thousand truths, which come about us like birds seeking inlet; but we are shut up to them, and so they bring us nothing, but sit and sing awhile upon the roof, and then flee away." — *Beecher.*

"The stars are mansions built by Nature's hand, and haply, there the spirits of the blest dwell, clothed in radiance, their immortal rest." — *Wordsworth.*

flies from it. He fears the places where it inhabits. He does not willingly go into the haunts. He will no more play with sin than this lady would afterwards have fondled snakes. — *Meade.*

PSALM THE NINETY-EIGHTH.

author, — unknown; date, after the captivity

Subj., the whole creation invited to praise God. Comp. Ps xcvi.

1. (1) But an echo of Psalm xcvi. **new song,** the new feature being the share of the Gentiles in the worship of Jehovah. **gotten,** *etc.*,[a] *lit. R. V.*, "hath wrought salvation for him."

Marvelous things. — I. He hath created a marvelous universe. II. He has established a marvelous government. III. He hath bestowed a marvelous gift. IV. He hath provided a marvelous redemption. V. He hath inspired a marvelous book. VI. He hath opened a marvelous fulness. VII. He hath effected a marvelous transformation. — *W. Jackson.*

Worship to profit. — A minister in Ireland was preaching from this text, when there came into the church a little, ragged, pale-faced boy. He sat near the pulpit, and seemed to drink in God's truth. Next Sunday he came again, but after that the minister missed him. Two months passed, when, late one night, an Irishman knocked at his door, and said, "Oh, sir, come away to my little boy; he is very ill; but he heard ye preach, and he wants to see ye." The minister said, "I will come in the morning." "O, but plase your riverence, the morning will be too late; ye must come to-night, for he is dying." He followed the man two miles across the moors, till they came to a solitary hut. He entered, and in a corner, on some straw, lay his little hearer, sadly worse, and very near death. The boy recognized the minister, pressed his hand, and, while he raised the other thin little one to heaven, whispering, "His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory," his happy spirit passed away to his Saviour's home.

2, 3. (2) **righteousness,** parallel with *salvation*, a term used in the later portion of Isaiah. **heathen,** *R. V.*, "nations." (3) **mercy and truth,** loving kindness and faithfulness. "The two attributes expressive of God's *covenant relationship* to His people." "He has recalled His promise of showing peculiar peace to Israel."[b]

A Messianic pœan. — The swelling melody of Ps. xcviii. is set to the key of "Glory to God in the highest!" If the prophetic eye were not resting on the Messianic advent and the marvelous things of later times, such lyric raptures would be extravagant. This outburst is suited alike to the advent of Bethlehem and to the later advent in clouds. There is, too, a recurring occasion for this lofty hymn one's life long, in every fresh discovery of our Lord's righteousness, and onward till the end of time. The humblest, loneliest believer belongs equally to the choir.

4—6. (4) **make . . praise,**[c] *rend.* "Break forth into rejoicing, and play." — *Delitzsch.* (5) **harp,** Ge. iv. 21. **voice of a psalm,** Is. li. 3. (6) **cornet,** "*Heb. chatsoteroth;* they were the straight trumpets (such as are seen on the arch of Titus) used by the priests for giving signals."— *Perowne.*

Psalms.— With psalms Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah celebrated their victories. Psalms made glad the heart of the exiles who returned from Babylon. Psalms gave courage and strength to the Maccabees in their brave struggles to achieve their country's independence, and were the repeated expression of their thanksgivings. The Lord of Psalmists and the son of David, by the words of a psalm proved Himself to be higher than David; and sang psalms with His apostles on the night before He suffered, when He instituted the holy supper of His love. With psalms Paul and Silas praised God in the prison at midnight when their feet were made fast in the stocks, and sang so loud that the prisoners heard them. And after his own example the apostle exhorts the Christians at Ephesus and Colossæ to teach and admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Jerome tells us that in his day the psalms were to be heard in the fields and vineyards of Palestine, and that they fell sweetly on the ear, mingling with the songs of birds, and the scent of flowers in spring. The ploughman as he guided his plough chanted the Hallelujah, and the reaper, the vine dresser, and the shepherd sang the songs of David. "These," he says, "are our love songs, these the instruments of our agriculture." Sidonius Apollinaris makes his boatmen, as

[a] *Comp.* Is. lix. 16; lxiii. 5.

"God hath gotten victory over the power of Bab., wh. laid His temple in the dust, but wh. He had now chastised by the arms of Cyrus, whom He had made His instrument in restoring His people, and laying again the foundations of His temple." — *Wordsworth.*

"O ye who are new in Christ, though formerly old in the Old Adam, sing ye to the Lord." — *Psalter of Peter Lombard.*

[b] Is. xlix. 6; lii. 10; Lu. i. 54, 55, 68-70, 72; ii. 30, 31; Ac. xiii. 46, 47.

"Pentecost deserves a new song as well as the Passion and the Resurrection: let our hearts exult as we remember it."— *Spurgeon.*

[c] Is. lii. 9.

"The word used here prob. denotes sounds made with the mouth, as distinguished fr. instrumental music." —*Spk. Com.*

"The trumpet served the same purpose, in a religious and civil sense, as bells among Christians, and the voice among Mohammedans. Indeed, it is understood that Mohammed directed the voice to be employed, in order to mark a distinction between his own sect and the Jews with their trumpets and the Christians with

they urge their heavily-laden barge up stream, sing psalms, till the river banks echo again with the hallelujah, and beautifully applies the custom, in a figure, to the voyage of the Christian life.— *Perowne.*

7—9. (7) **sea,** *etc.*, *Comp.* Ps. xcvi. 11, 12. **world,** *etc.*, Ps. xxiv. 1. (8) **clap their hands,** bold metaphor taken fr. Is. lv. 12. Clapping the hands was, and is still, an expression of satisfaction and joy. (9) **Before,** *etc.*, "God by his righteous judgment will bring the whole earth from a state of sorrow into a state of salvation and joy."— *Hengstenberg.* Ps. xcvi. 13.

Nature at worship.— The congregation is— I. Vast. Sea, earth, rivers, hills. II. Varied. Diverse in character, word, aspect, each from the other, constant and alike in this alone, that *all, always* worship God. III. Gladsome. In this like the worshipers in heaven, and for the same reason — sin is absent. — *E. G. Gange.*

Nature's praise.— The setting forth the praise of Christ for the redemption of sinners, may not only furnish work to all reasonable creatures; but also if every drop of water in the sea, and in every river and flood, every fish in the sea, every fowl in the air, every living creature on the earth, and whatsoever else is in the world: if they all had reason and ability to express themselves; yea, and if all the hills were able by motion and gesticulation to communicate their joy one to another; there is work for them all to set out the praise of Christ.— *David Dickson.*— *A psalm of praise.*— The psalm calls for universal praise. The very reading of the psalm, so joyous, so jubilant, so animated, so exalting, is fitted to awaken the mind to praise; to arouse it to thankfulness; to fill it with joy. One cannot read the psalm without being a happier man; without being lifted above the world; without lofty views of God; without feeling that He is worthy of this universal praise; without recognizing that we are in a world where the mind should be joyful; that we are under the dominion of a God whose reign should fill the mind with gladness. — *Barnes.*

PSALM THE NINETY-NINTH.

author,— unknown; date, time of the restoration

Subj., praise of the Thrice Holy One.

1—4. (1) **Lord reigneth,** *see* Ps. xciii. 1; xcvii. 1. **people,** *R. V.*, "peoples," *i. e.* all the nations upon earth. **between,** *R. V.*, "upon," suggests the presence of God in His temple. **cherubims,** Ps. lxxx. 1.[a] **let . . moved,** or "the earth is moved." *Polychr.*, "the earth quakes." (2) **great in Zion,** by reason of some recent exhibition of His power and grace. (3) **Let them,** the nations, or peoples, of *vs.* 2. **it is holy,** or "He is holy."[b] (4) **king's strength,** better *rend.* "And the strength of a king who loveth judgment Thou hast established;"[c] the same king who is mentioned *vs.* 1. Jehovah. His might is no arbitrary power, like that of earthly tyrants, but a judgment-loving might. His power only expresses itself in righteousness.—*Perowne.*

Justice is not merely established, but executed in God's kingdom; the laws are carried out, the executive is as righteous as the legislative. Herein let all the oppressed, yea, and all who love that which is right, find large occasion for praise. Other nations under their despots were the victims and the perpetrators of grievous wrong, but when the tribes were faithful to the Lord they enjoyed an upright government within their own borders, and acted with integrity towards their neighbors. That kingcraft which delights in cunning, favoritism, and brute force is as opposite to the Divine kingship as darkness to light. The palace of Jehovah is no robber's fortress nor despot's castle, built on dungeons, with stones carved by slaves, and cemented with the blood of toiling serfs. The annals of most human governments have been written in the tears of the downtrodden, and the curses of the oppressed; the chronicles of the Lord's kingdom are of another sort; truth shines in each line, goodness in every syllable, and justice in every letter. Glory be to the name of the King whose gentle glory beams from between the cherubic wings.— *Spurgeon.*

5—9. (5) **footstool,**[d] the lower part or step of the king's throne. Israel is called upon to worship God as he sits in His holy temple, enthroned above the cherubim, with His feet upon the mercy-seat.— *Pul. Com.* (6) **Moses . . among his priests,** though not called a priest in the Pentateuch, Moses performed many priestly acts. **call . . name,** *i. e.* who were men of worship and prayer.[e] "Instances of the justice of the divine rule."— *Cheyne.* (7)

their bells."— *Kitto's Pictorial Bible.*

"As, when men behold any curious work of a skilful craftsman, straightway they will leave the work, and inquire after him that made it, they may praise his skill; so it is the duty of Christians, when they behold everywhere in all the creatures the admirable and unspeakable wisdom, goodness, and power of God, to make haste from the creature, and go forward to the Creator to praise and glorify Him." — *Cawdray.*

"To count their numbers were to count the sands that ride in whirlwinds the parched Lybian air." — *Armstrong.*

a Ex xxv. 22.

b "God's name is God Himself in His revealed holiness." —*Delitzsch.*

c "And the might of a king who loveth the right hast Thou established in righteousness." — *Delitzsch.*

d "Allusion may be to the great day of atonement, when the high priest, as the representative of the whole nation, carried the confessions and worship of the people, with the blood of the sacrifices, to the ark and its mercy seat."— *Spk. Com.* 1 Chr. xxviii. 2; Ps. cxxxii. 7.

e "The experience of these servants of God is cited for encouragement."— *Fausset.*

cloudy pillar, *R. V.*, "pillar of cloud;" this specially refers to Moses and Aaron; but direct Divine communications were also given to Samuel. **kept his testimonies,** such obedience alone could make their worship acceptable. (8) **forgavest them,** pardoning their sins, but not removing the judgment that they should not enter the Promised Land. **inventions,** *R. V.*, "doings," Eccl. vii. 29, contrivances dictated by *self-will*. (9) **at . . hill,** or *towards*, Da. vi. 10,

The revelation of the cloud, or what God foreshadowed to Israel in the cloudy pillar. 1. That God was willing to commune with man. 2. That sinful man could not see God and live. 3. That God should become incarnate, veiled in flesh as in the cloud. 4. That He should be their shelter, protector, guide. 5. That God manifest in the flesh should lead them to the Promised Land — Heaven.— *C. Davis.*

"I do not say that we ought not to make plans, nor to try to carry them out. Every earnest man will do that; only there is wisdom in holding our plans loosely, and subject to God's modification."—*Vincent.*

"Alpine climbers say that the icy peaks which sometimes they attempt to climb are like 'the neck of a bottle,' and it is hard work to keep from sliding into the abyss. Life has paths similarly slippery, and unless a Divine guide uphold us, our steps will slide."

"Life is the soul's nursery."—*Thackeray.*

True worship.—

He asks no taper lights, on high surrounding
The priestly altar and the saintly grave;
No dolorous chant nor organ music sounding,
Nor incense clouding up the twilight nave.

For he whom Jesus loved hath truly spoken:
The holier worship which He deigns to bless
Restores the lost, and binds the spirit-broken,
And feeds the widow and the fatherless!

Types of our human weakness and our sorrow!
Who lives unhaunted by his loved ones dead?
Who, with vain longing, seeketh not to borrow
From stranger eyes the home-lights which have fled?

— *Whittier.*

author, — unknown: date, after the captivity

PSALM THE ONE HUNDREDTH.

Subj. call of all the world to the service of the true God.

1—5. (1) **Make . . noise,** raise a shout. Ps. xcviii. 4. **all ye lands,** *Polychr.*, "thou whole earth." (2) **Serve,** *comp.* Ps. ii. 11. (3) **Know ye,** *i. e.* learn by personal experience. **not we ourselves,** *R. V.*, "and we are his."[a] (4) **be thankful,**[b] *i. e.* express your thankfulness. (5) **good,** a term that blends righteousness and mercy. **truth,** *R. V.*, "faithfulness" to covenant and promise. All men's hope is in God's "faithfulness," that He will keep His promises to them — pardon them, deliver them, cleanse them, and give them rest in His kingdom forever. — *Pul. Com.*

a Ez. xxxiv. 30, 31.

b Ps. cxvi. 17-19; Is. xxxv. 10; 1 Pe. ii. 9.

Joyfulness of the service of God (*vs.* 2). — I. The obligation, duty, and privilege of thanksgiving. Our highest calling and work is to praise and bless God with our lips, our hearts, and our lives. II. Consider the reasons why we should serve the Lord with gladness. 1. He is our maker, supporter, God; 2. He is the author of reconciliation and redemption, and His rule is the rule of righteousness and love; 3. Because of the largeness, freeness, universality, unchangeableness of His love; 4. Because the very principles of service are a well-spring of life and gladness; 5. Because it is a reasonable service; 6. Because we thus most truly represent and heartily commend His Gospel and service unto men. — *Watson Smith.*

"Among the Pss. of triumph and thanksgiving this stands pre-eminent as rising to the highest point of joy and grandeur. No local restrictions, no national exclusiveness, can find place in the contemplation of God as the common Creator and Father of Man." — *Psalms chron. arranged.*

A great oratorio. — If we are right in regarding Psalms xciii.-xcix. as forming one continuous series, one great prophetic oratorio, whose title is "Jehovah is King," and through which there runs the same great idea, this psalm may be regarded as the doxology which closes the strain. We find lingering in it notes of the same great harmony. It breathes the same gladness; it is filled with the same hope, that all nations shall bow down before Jehovah, and confess that He is God. — *Perowne.* Luther would have immortalized his name had he done no more than written the majestic air and harmony to which we are accustomed to sing this psalm, and which, when the mind is in a truly worshiping frame, seems to bring heaven down to earth, and to raise earth to heaven, giving us anticipations of the pure and sublime delights of that noble and general assembly in which saints and angels shall forever celebrate the praises of God. — *Ingram Cobbin.*

"Can you bear to be waited upon by a servant who goes moping and dejected to his every task? You would rather have no servant at all than one who evidently finds your service cheerless and irksome." — *George Bowen.*

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FIRST.

author, — David: prob. date, 2 Sa. vi. 12–15.

Subj., a monarch's pious resolutions

1—4. (1) **mercy and judgment,** these are properly only Divine attributes, but they can in measure be imitated by a king.[a] Luther styles this psalm, "David's mirror for rulers." **sing,** or play to the harp. (2) **behave,** *etc.*, "take good heed to the way of integrity;" "conduct myself wisely and uprightly, in the path of innocence." **come unto me,** to aid me.[b] **perfect heart,** *i. e.* one thoroughly sincere. (3) **I will set no,** as an object of imitation or achievement. **wicked thing,** *Heb.* "thing of Belial." *R. V.* "base thing." **work,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "the dealing of madmen I hate." **not cleave,** it may come as temptation, but shall not be encouraged. (4) **froward,**[c] "a heart that deals faithlessly both towards God and man." De. xxxii. 20. **not know,** have acquaintance with favor. **wicked person,** *R. V.*, "evil thing."

It shall not cleave to me. — A bird may light upon a man's house; but he may chose whether she shall nestle or breed there, or no: and the devil or his instruments may represent a wicked object to a man's sight; but he may choose whether he will entertain or embrace it or no. For a man to set wicked things before his eyes is nothing else but to sin of set purpose, to set himself to sin, or to sell himself to sin, as Ahab did, 1 Kings xxi. — *George Hakewill.* — *The prince's psalm.* — It is related of Ernest the Pious, Duke of Saxe-Gotha, that he sent an unfaithful official a copy of the 101st psalm, and that it became a proverb in the land when any magistrate had done wrong, "He will certainly receive the prince's psalm to read." — *Ker.*

a "He meditates on the mercy and righteousness of God, that he may learn the lesson of that mercy and righteousness himself." — *Perowne.*

b "When Thou shalt come unto me and assist me, I will walk wisely in a perfect way." — *Tholuck.*

c Adj fr. *from-ward*, as opposed to *toward*.

5—8. (5) **privily,** secretly, treacherously. Ju. ix. 31; "men will be so far from gaining favor with him by means of unloving, traitorous tale-bearing and sycophancy, of the serpentine malignity of which David himself had had abundant experience in his relation to Saul, that it will rather call down his anger upon them." — *Delitzsch.* **high look,** *lit.* lofty-eyed, *i. e.* supercilious, arrogant. **proud heart,** *lit.* "wide of heart;" *i. e.* puffed up and blown out with pride. **will . . suffer,** *Polychr.*, "I cannot abide." (6) **mine . . land,** to choose and to favor all such, giving them places of authority and influence. **serve,** *R. V.*, "minister unto," *i. e.* find promotion to office easy. (7) **worketh deceit,** Ps. lii. 2. **not tarry,** *R. V.*, "be established;" *i. e.* be allowed to remain undisturbed. (8) **early,**[d] *R. V.*, "morning by morning."

d The Psalmist evidently means to say that fr. day to day, executing judgment in the morning according to the Eastern custom (Je. xxi. 12), he would by degrees eliminate fr. Israel all the wicked who should be found worthy of death." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

Comp. 2 Sa. xxiv. 11; Je. xxi. 12; Ps. lxxiii. 14; Lu. xxii. 66.

Faithfulness. — As a clerk in a country store in Illinois, Abraham Lincoln quickly became known for his honesty. He was truthful in what he said about the goods, he gave good weight, and in particular, he lost no time and spared no pains in correcting mistakes. He was closing the store one evening when a woman called for a half pound of tea. In the morning he saw from the weight in the scale that he had given her only a quarter of a pound. Leaving everthing else, he weighed out the other quarter and carried it to her. Another customer paid him six and one-quarter cents more than was his due, and when the store was closed at night he hastened to correct the mistake, although she lived two miles away. — *Youth's Companion.*

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SECOND.

author, — unknown; date, late in the captivity

Subj., the bitter cry of the exile.

1—5. (1) **my cry,** the prayer of a sufferer becomes a *cry.*[e] (2) **Hide not,** considered to be the worst of all evils; Ps. xxx. 7. **speedily,** the *delays* of God being most trying to the pious soul. (3) **like smoke,** or into smoke; "pass away into nothingness." **burned,** "smolder like," *etc.* **as an hearth,** *R. V.*, "firebrand" when placed in the fire.[f] (4) **smitten,** as with the hot sun.[g] **forget . . bread,** in the absorption of his great grief. (5) **to my skin,** *R. V.*, "flesh." La. iv. 8. An expression denoting extreme emaciation.[h]

Consumed like smoke. — There are certain minor troubles or annoyances, which form what may be called the smoke of our daily life; things which are not so much actually injurious (unless we make them so), but petty worries. They are not the clouds which overshadow our career, and assuredly not any part of the storms of life, but simply smoke. And as we have most of us observed, just in the way that a puff of dense smoke coming from a passing steam-engine will completely shut out from our gaze the sun's

e "The Ps. opens with familiar expressions of prayer, such as rise in the heart and mouth of the praying one without his feeling that they are of foreign origin." — *Delitzsch.*

f "Transitory as the smoke of a fire is the poet's life, devoured as with the flame of fire is his person." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

g Ps. cxxi. 6; Ho. ix. 16; Jonah iv. 8.

h *Comp.* Job xix. 20.

orb; so the smoke of some vexation, of itself trival enough, will obscure for the time our view of the Sun of Righteousness, and occasion us either to err from the path of duty, or to pause in it. Many events occur in the Christian's history which are not of sufficient importance to be called "crosses," yet in their succession they produce a perceptible influence. In the poet's words they are —

"The cares which petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved."

"Gold can no more fill the spirit of a man than grace his purse."

6—10. (6) **pelican,** a bird that lives in swamps. Le. xi. 17, 18. Both the figs. of the pelican and the owl express extreme loneliness.[a] **desert,** better, "ruined places." (7) **watched,** sleep being driven away by pain and sorrow. **sparrow alone,** *Polychr.*, "I am sleepless, and I mourn, like a solitary bird," a striking object of pity.[b] (8) **are sworn,** *R. V.*, "curse by me;" use my name as a curse.[c] (9) **eaten ashes,** *comp.* La. iii. 16. **mingled . . weeping,** "the mourner's paradox — ashes his bread, tears his drink."— *Cheyne.* Ps. xlii. 3. (10) **thine indignation,** the bitterest thing in our cup of grief is the feeling that it is punishment for sin, the anger of our gracious Father. **lifted . . down,** better with *R. V.*, "taken me up and cast me away." God's wrath has seized and whirled him aloft, only to cast him, as worthless, away."— *Perowne.*

a The owl is called in the Arabic, "mother of the ruins."

b "When one of these has lost its mate he will sit upon the house-top alone, and lament by the hour his sad bereavement."— *Thomson.*

c "When they curse choose me as an example of misery, and imprecate upon themselves or others my misfortunes."— *Perowne.*

A pelican of the wilderness. — Here only [at Hulet] have I seen the pelican of the wilderness, as David calls it. I once had one of them shot just below this place, and, as it was merely wounded in the wing, I had a good opportunity to study its character. It was certainly the most somber, austere bird I ever saw. It gave one the blues merely to look at it. David could find no more expressive type of solitude and melancholy by which to illustrate his own sad state. It seemed as large as a half-grown donkey, and when fairly settled on its stout legs, it looked like one. The pelican is never seen but in these unfrequented solitudes.— *W. M. Thomson.*— *I am as a sparrow alone.*— It is evident that the "sparrow alone and melancholy upon the house-tops" cannot be the lively, gregarious sparrow which assembles in such numbers on these favorite feeding-places [the house-tops of the East]. We must therefore look for some other bird, and naturalists are now agreed that we may accept the *Blue Thrush* (*Petrocossyphus cyaneus*) as the particular tzippor, or small bird, which sits alone on the house-tops. The color of this bird is a dark blue, whence it derives its popular name. Its habits exactly correspond with the idea of solitude and melancholy. The blue thrushes never assemble in flocks, and it is very rare to see more than a pair together. It is fond of sitting on the tops of houses, uttering its notes, which, however agreeable to itself, is monotonous and melancholy to a human ear. — *J. G. Wood.*

"When the cheerful birds with sweetest notes do sing their Maker's praise: among the which the merrie nightingale, with swete and swete, her breast against a thorn, rings out all night."— *Vallans.*

"A small grievance makes us beside ourselves; a great sorrow makes us retire within ourselves" —*Richter.*

11—15. (11) **shadow,** evening shadow.[d] *Comp.* Ps. cix. 23. The fig. describes the near approach of death, **decline th,** *i. e.* "that lengthens, as shadows do when the day declines."— *Pul. Com.* **withered,** as *vs.* 4, (12) **shalt endure,** *R. V., marg.* "sittest as king forever." **remembrance,** *R. V.*, "memorial," 1 Pe. i. 24, 25. (13) **upon Zion,** whose desolations seemed illustrated to the Psalmist by his own. **the set time,** the time when her warfare is accomplished. By this phrase "is probably meant the time fixed by Jeremiah for the termination of the captivity and the restoration of Jerusalem (Jer. xxv. 11, 12; xxix. 10), and alluded to by Daniel in Dan. ix. 2."—*Pul. Com.* (14) **stones . . dust,** suitable words when Jerus. was still a heap of ruins. The pleasure taken was but a melancholy pleasure. **favour,** *R. V.*, "have pity upon." (15) **So,** *i. e.* when Divine deliverances for Zion are revealed.

d "When it is the time of evening the shadows lengthen, but when it is dark they are no longer discernible, but come to an end and go."—*Rashi.*

"The singer sees the indication that the hour fixed in God's eternal counsels is at hand, because he sees how God's servants, who have a claim on Him and are in sympathy with His purposes, yearn lovingly after the sad ruins and dust of the forlorn city. Some new access of such feelings must have been stirring among the devouter part of the

Revival, and its symptoms (*vss.* 12, 13). — I. There is a favorable time to promote the revival of the church. 1. The source to be looked to: 2. The nature of the revival to be expected — deliverance, union, prosperity; 3. The time when it may be expected. II. That such revival is always preceded by certain infallible signs. 1. Humiliation before God; 2. Believing prayer; 3. Affection for the ordinances of God's house; 4. Self-denying efforts in God's cause. — *J. Wileman.*

Pleasure in Zion. — It was a good omen for Jerusalem when the captives began to feel a home-sickness, and began to sigh after her. We may expect the modern Jews to be restored to their own land when the love of their country begins to sway them, and casts out the love of gain. To the church

of God no token can be more full of hope than to see the members thereof deeply interested in all that concerns her; no prosperity is likely to rest upon a church when carelessness about ordinances, enterprises, and services is manifest; but when even the least and lowest matter connected with the Lord's work is carefully attended to, we may be sure that the set time to favor Zion has come. The poorest church member, the most grievous backslider, the most ignorant convert, should be precious in our sight, because forming a part, although possibly a very feeble part, of the new Jerusalem. If we do not care about the prosperity of the church to which we belong, need we wonder if the blessing of the Lord is withheld?—*Spurgeon.*

exiles. . . . When good men begin to lay the church's or the world's miseries to heart, it is a sign that God is beginning to heal them."—*Exp. Bib.*

16—22. (16) **build up Zion,** *R. V.*, "hath built . . . hath appeared, *etc.*, restoring her from her ruins. **his glory,** as the faithful Promiser. (17) **destitute,** exiles who were without country or home. (18) **written,** *i. e.* the story of the returning of Divine favor to Zion. **people . . created,** an implied antithesis between the new creation of the nation of Israel and their present destruction. — *Calvin.* (19) **looked down,**[a] well acquainted with all the sufferings of His people, though for a time He held back His hand. (20) **appointed to death,** *Heb.* "sons of death." Ps. lxxix. 11. (22) **to declare,** *R. V.*, "that men may declare." **gathered together,** fr. their scattering in the captivity.

Zion built. — God is Zion's purchaser, architect, builder, inhabitant, Lord. I. Zion built up. Conversions frequent; confessions numerous; union firm: edification solid; missions extended. II. God glorified. In its very foundation: by its ministry; by difficulties and enemies; by poor workers, and poor materials; and even by our failures. III. Hope excited. Because we may expect the Lord to glorify Himself. IV. Inquiry suggested. Am I concerned, as built, or building? not merely doctrinally, but experimentally? — *Spurgeon.*

a De. xxvi. 15.

"Jesus is not a subject of study; He is a revelation to the soul — that or nothing."—*Ian Maclaren.*

"God takes notice not only of the prayers of His afflicted people, which are the language of grace; but even of their groans, which are the language of nature."—*Matthew Henry.*

23—28. (23) **weakened,** *etc.*, the Psalmist here returns to his personal afflictions. The fig. may be taken from De. viii. 2. **in the way,** *i. e.* "the journey of life." **shortened my days,** *i. e.* "made me grow old prematurely."(24) **in the midst,** the very time of my strength; *comp.* the prayer of Hezekiah. A righteous Jew felt that God was under obligations to grant him long life. (25) **Of old,** *etc.*, He. i. 10. (26) **perish,** as merely created things. **thou change them,** the very changes and perishings being controlled by Him "whose years are throughout all generations." (27) **the same,** *lit.* "Thou art He," *i. e.* "thou art the one eternal and unchangeable existence — the one reality." He. xiii. 8.[b] (28) **continue,** the objects of Divine regard.

For the sick. I. Submission — The Lord sent the trial — "*He* weakeneth," *etc.* II. Service — exonerated from some work, He now requires of me patience, earnestness, *etc.* III. Preparation — for going home. IV. Prayer — for others to occupy my place. V. Expectation — I shall soon be in heaven, now that my days are shortened. — *Spurgeon.*

A new vesture. — Time impairs all things, the fashion becomes obselete and passes away. The visible creation, which is like the garment of the invisible God, is waxing old and wearing out, and our great King is not so poor that He must always wear the same robes; He will ere long fold up the worlds and put them aside as worn out vestures, and He will array Himself in new attire, making a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. How readily will all this be done. "Thou shalt change them and they shall be changed; as in the creation so in the restoration, omnipotence shall work its way without hindrance. — *Spurgeon.*

b Is. xli. 4; xliii. 10.

"Can you wonder that the true Proprietor should occasionally assert His right by sending the hail-storm or the lightning to smite the earth? Were the Divine Being never to assert His claim, man might indulge the thought that he was the terminating center of all things." — *J. Parker.*

"Old age, and waxing old as a garment, is written on the fairest face of creation."—*Rutherford.*

"The vision of God is the one thing needful for worship and for conduct."—*George Adam Smith.*

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRD.

author, — unknown; time after the return from exile

1, 2. (1) **all . . me,** *Polychr.*, "all that is deepest within me;" all the parts of his soul are called upon with separate distinctness, "upon intellect, feeling, sentiment; upon his understanding, heart, and all their powers."—*Spk. Com.* (2) **benefits,** a word summing up all God's gracious ways with him.[c]

Subj. the goodness of Jehovah.

Psalm 103. — "When Gustavus Adolphus entered Augsburg, the city of the Protestant Confession, after his great victory at Leipsic which struck the decisive blow for religious freedom in Germany, he went straight to the Church of St. Ann, and caused this psalm to be sung in the German version."

c "This vs. touches the secret spring of so much ingratitude — forgetfulness, the want of

recollection, or gathering together again of all the varied threads of mercy."—*Perowne*

"Never be satisfied with religious work done from a sense of duty; keep on till you do it for love of it."

— *Ker.* — "*All that is within me.*"— In the camphor tree every part is impregnated with the precious perfume; from the highest twig to the lowest root the powerful gum will exude. Thus grace should permeate our whole nature, and be seen in every faculty, every word, every act, and even every desire. If it be "in us and abound," it will be so. An unsanctified part of our frame must surely be like a dead branch, deforming and injuring the tree. "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and *all that is within me*, bless His holy name." When praise is truly spiritual, it pervades the whole man. — *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.*

a Is. xl. 31.

"Well may we wonder that the great God should stoop so low, to enter into such a covenant of grace and peace, founded upon such a Mediator as Christ, with such utter enemies, base creatures, sinful dust and ashes as we are. This is the wonder of angels, and will be matter of admiration and praising God to us for all eternity."—*Sibbs.*

"Bring a man to see the best covered table in the world, looking at it might gratify his eyes, but would never satisfy his mouth. We must taste before we can see that God is good." — *Newton.*

3—5. (3) **all,** the stress of the verse lies on this word; every one of them, so that not a trace of them is left. **diseases,** sicknesses in general. (4) **destruction,** or the pit, Ps. xvi. 10. **crowneth thee,** maketh thy life bright and joyous, or that of one who is crowned. Note that God's favor is the true crown of life. "God's benefits will not be before our eyes, unless our sins be also before our eyes." — *Augustine,* (5) **mouth,** poetic fig. for necessity and desire. God "gives Himself to us as the bread of life." **youth,** *etc.,* better as Pr. Bk. Vers. "Making thee young and lusty as an eagle."[a] "The comparison is to be understood of the annual moulting of the eagle; its renewing of its feathers is an emblem of the renewing of one's youth through grace." — *Delitzsch.*

Tender mercies. — I do not know that I can do better than tell you a little incident that took place in my native town of Stirling. Workmen were blasting the castle rock, near where it abuts upon a walk that lies open to the street. The train was laid and lit, and an explosion was momentarily expected. Suddenly trotting round the great wall of the cliff, came a little child going straight to where the match burned. The men shouted — (it was *mercy*) — and by their very terror in shouting, alarmed and bewildered the poor little thing. By this time the mother also had come round: in a moment saw the danger; opened wide her arms, and cried from her very heart, "*Come to me, my darling,*" — (that was *tender* mercy) — and instantly, with eager pattering feet, and little arms opened to her arms, and tear-filled eyes answering to her eyes — the little thing ran back and away, and stopped not until she was clasped in her mother's bosom — wealth of sunny hair loosened on it, and lips coral red pressed to mother's pallid lip of fear — as the motherly heart gave way to tears, in the thought of so imperiled an escape: for it was barely by a second, as the roar of the shattered rock told. — *Alexander B. Grosart.*

b Ne. ix. 17, 31; Joel ii. 13.

"We wear mercies, we breathe mercies, we walk on mercies; our whole life is but a passage from one mercy to another." — *Gurnall*

"The God to whom love turns undoubting and praise rises without one note of discord is the God who has spoken His own name by deeds which have entered into the history of the world."—*Exp. Bib.*

6—8. (6) **for all,** and not for me only. (7) **his ways,** of righteousness and judgment, Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. Here the ways of Jehovah "are those kept by Himself in His progress in connection with the history of redemption." (8) **merciful,** *etc.,* Ps. lxxxvi. 15, cxlv. 8.[b]

Plenteous in mercy (*vs.* 8). — I. Reason cannot assure us that God is plenteous in mercy. II. His dispensations do not prove that God is plenteous in mercy. III. The Scriptures declare that God is plenteous in mercy. IV. The gift of Christ demonstrates that God is plenteous in mercy. V. The experience of penitents confirms that God is plenteous in mercy. — *G. Brooks.*

Mercy. — Here is compassion for the weak and sorrowing, grace for the undeserving, long suffering for the provoking mercy for the guilty, and truth for the tried. God's love assumes many forms, and is lovely in them all. Into whatsoever state we may be cast, there is a peculiar hue in the light of love which will harmonize with our condition; love is one and yet sevenfold, its white ray contains the chromatic scale. Are we sorrowful? We find the Lord full of compassion. Are we contending with temptation? His grace comes to our aid. Do we err? He is patient with us. Have we sinned? He is plenteous in mercy. Are we resting on His promise? He will fulfil it with abundant truth. — *Spurgeon.*

c Comp. Is. lvii. 16.

d Le. xix. 18.

e God's love cannot be measured by all the measures of the universe." — *Perowne.*

9—12. (9) **always chide,** or be contending.[c] **keep,** *i. e.* cherish any grudge. He will accept repentance and amendment. He is not implacable.[d] (10) **not according,** *etc.,* on what principles then are God's dealings based? "He remembereth that we are dust" (*vs.* 14), so the Judge is merciful. Law knows no mercy, but the administrator of law may. (11) **as the heaven,** *marg.* "according to the height of heaven." No better conception of infinite distance could be given.[e] **mercy,** "For the love of God is broader than the

measure of man's mind, and the heart of the eternal is most wonderfully kind." (12) **east . . west,** "the largest measures which the earth can afford."[a]

Past benefits (*vs.* 10). — I. Man stands in a continued relation to the past. II. Man is called upon to reason from the past to the future. III. This call to reason from the past to the future is an incidental illustration of the unchangeableness of God, — what He was, He will be. Apply: 1. The atheism of anticipation should be corrected by the reverent gratitude of retrospection; 2. He who reviews the past thankfully may advance to the future hopefully; 3. Nothing forgotten so soon as benefits. — *Parker.*

From the east to the west. — An astronomical fact may give, perhaps, new and more exalted views of the force of this passage. The distance from north to south is measurable. In every sphere there are north and south poles — both fixed points; and on the earth the distance between them is about twelve thousand miles. So that had the Psalmist said, "As far as the north is from the south," our conceptions would have been thus limited. It is otherwise with the east and the west. There are no eastern and western poles. From every point alike in the circuit of the world, the east extends in one direction, the west in the other. Thus, the traveler westward, for example, might be be said to be forever chasing the west without coming nearer to it. The Psalmist himself might not have known this astronomical fact; yet, regarding his words as dictated by the Spirit of God, we are surely permitted to read them in the light of modern science, and so to discern in them the most forcible illustration that can be imagined of the illimitable distance to which God has removed the iniquities of His people. — *S. S. Teacher.*

13, 14. (13) **as a father,**[b] *comp.* De. xxxii. 6; Job x. 8; Is. xxix. 16; lxiii. 16; lxiv. 8; Matt. vii. 7–11. **the Lord pitieth,** *Polychr.*, "father loves. . . . Jehovah loves;" with a love that is father-like.[c] (14) **our frame,** our formation; or our fashioning (Ge. ii. 7).[d] Man's frailties are tenderly regarded. God estimates what we *can* do, as well as what we *should.* **dust,** Ge. iii. 19. Perhaps the Psalmist is thinking that God gave the bodily form according to His will, just as the potter gives what shape He pleases to the clay. The material in itself is worthless.

God's pity. — I. Whom God pities; "them that fear Him." II. How He pities; "as a father pitieth his children." III. Why He pities; "for He knoweth our frame." He hath reason to know our frame, for He framed us, and having Himself made man of the dust, "He remembers that we are dust." — *Matthew Henry.*

A father's treatment of his son. — A celebrated preacher, in illustrating the truth contained in that passage, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," was often wont to refer to the following fact which he had learned in Dublin; "A gray-headed and pious father had a very wicked son. The old man had often prayed and wrestled with God on his behalf. But he became worse and worse. Never did the father close his doors against him. One day, one of the father's neighbors addressed him with considerable severity, saying, 'Why harbor that reprobate son of yours? Why don't you turn him out of doors, and banish him from your house?' 'Ay, ay,' said the aged saint, his gray locks trembling with emotion, 'you can all turn him out of doors but his own father.'"

15–18. (15) **As for man,** *i. e.* as a mortal being he is very helpless. **as grass,** a frequent Scrip. comparison.[e] (16) **wind,** east wind, wh. quickly changes a flourishing garden into a waste.[f] **place . . more,** even the greatest of men are soon forgotten. *See* Job vii. 10. (17) **mercy of the Lord,** goodness, justice, faithfulness to promise, patience, all blend in the Divine *mercy.* **from everlasting,** not merely continuing ever, but rising over the God-fearing man, like the encompassing heavens. **fear him,** and therefore hope in His mercy.[g] (18) **covenant,** "the blessings of the covenant are no inalienable right. There is a limit to God's mercy. Children's children can only inherit its blessings by cleaving to it." — *Perowne.* De. vii. 9.[h]

Man and mercy (*vss.* 15–18). — These passages form a contrast between man's life and God's mercy. I. There is a contrast in their strength. II. A contrast in their beauty. III. A contrast in their duration. 1. Man cannot carry out his designs after death, but mercy executes her designs independent of His presence; 2. Mercy distributes her invaluable blessings among families throughout all generations. — *Homilist.*

a "Words which gained new force in the mouths of those who had been gathered fr. the far-off regions of the East to their own home." — *Wordsworth.*

Comp. Is. xxxviii. 17; Mi. vii. 19.

"When sin is pardoned it is never charged again; the guilt of it can no more return than east can become west, or west become east." — *Stephen Charnock.*

b God is compared with earthly fathers not bec. He is like them, but bec. His incomparable love towards us cannot be expressed otherwise." — *Calvin.*

c "The life and death of God manifest in the flesh are the best comment upon these signal words of prophecy." — *Spk. Com.*

Comp. Mal. iii. 17.

d Comp. Ge. vi 3. "It is a far happier thing to be pitied of God, than to be envied of men." — *Sir R. Baker.*

e Ps. xxxvii. 2, 10, 36; xc. 5, 6; Is. xl. 6–8; li. 12; 1 Pe. i 24.

f "Such wind is an emblem of every form of peril that threatens life; often enough it is really a breath of wind that snaps off a man's life." — *Delitzsch.*

g "For the third time God's mercy is said to be upon 'them that fear Him' (*vs.* 11, 13), as if to remind us that there is a love wh. they only know who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, who fear Him, and walk in His ways." — *Perowne.*

h He. viii. 10, 12.

His duty.—A Virginia circuit-preacher reports an illustration of the faith that would remove mountains, which he heard from the lips of a negro preacher who was talking to his congregation on the subject of obeying the Lord's commands, whatever they might be, and however difficult they might seem. "Bredren," said the old preacher, "whatever de good God tell me to do in dis blessed book"— holding up an old and evidently much-read Bible — "dat I'se gwine to do. If I see in it dat I mus' jump troo a stone wall, I'm gwine to jump at it. Goin' troo it 'longs to God to 'tend to; but jumpin' at it 'longs to me, my bredren!" The illustration was simple and homely enough, but it had an evident effect upon the old preacher's hearers, who might have failed to understand a more elegant explanation.— *Youth's Com.*

"From everlasting, by predestination; to everlasting, by glorification; the one without beginning, the other without end."—*Bernard.*

"Not only mightily executing the word when heard; but ever intently listening, ready to catch the intimation of his will."—*William Kay.*

19—22. (19) **the heavens,** in opposition to the earth, on wh. kings' thrones are set, is the "unchangeable realm above the rise and fall of things here below." **all,** absolutely all created existence. (20) **angels,** suggested by the reference to the "heavens" in *vs.* 19.[a] **excel in strength,**[b] or, "ye strong warriors." **do his commandments,** "their life endowed with heroic strength is spent entirely in an obedient execution of the word of God." **hearkening,** *comp.* angel attributes, Is. vi. 2. (21) **hosts,** "prob. includes not only the angels, but the forces of nature, and the stars, so closely related in the Hebrew mind to the angelic beings."—*Cheyne.* (22) **works,** upon the earth. Prob. meaning all living rational creatures.[c]

Praise.—See how finite man can awaken unbounded praise! Man is but little, yet, placing his hands upon the keys of the great organ of the universe, he wakes it to thunders of adoration! Redeemed man is the voice of nature, the priest in the temple of creation, the precentor in the worship of the universe. O that all the Lord's works on earth were delivered from the vanity to which they were made subject, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God: the time is hastening on and will most surely come; then will all the Lord's works bless him indeed. The immutable promise is ripening, the sure mercy is on its way. Hasten, ye winged hours!—*Spurgeon.*

a "His call to these arises fr. the consciousness of the church on earth that it stands in living like-minded fellowship with the angels of God, and that it possesses a dignity wh. rises above all created things, even the angels which are appointed to serve it."—*Delitzsch.*

b Ps. lxxviii. 25; *marg.*, lxxxix. 6; Joel iii. 11.

c Ps. cxlv. 10.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FOURTH.

author, — unknown; date, after the exile

An anthem of natural theology, or a Divine ode of creation.

1—5. (1) **very great,** such simple words indicate feeling that transcends all language. **clothed,** *etc.*, as Ps. xciii. 1. (2) **light,** referring to the work of God on the first day.[d] **garment,** or robe, as for a great king.[e] **stretchest out,** *etc.*, a brief description of the work of the second day: *comp.* Gen. i. 6–8. **curtain,** *i. e.* tent, curtain. "Heaven is to the Jews a tent of safety, of rest, of a fatherly hospitality in which God lives with His creatures." (3) **chambers,** *lit.* "upper chambers," *i. e.* Paradise. God's creation is poetically conceived of as a splendid palace where God, the great King, dwells. **waters,** those above the firmament are like the palace roof. *Polychr.*, "Thou framest out of water Thine upper stories." **chariot,** in wh. He rides forth. When He walks it is on the wind. (4) **maketh,** *etc.*, *lit.* "Who makes His messengers winds; His servants a fire flaming," meaning that winds and lightning fires are His messengers.[f] "He clothes His messengers with the might, the swiftness, the all pervading subtility of wind and fire."—*Perowne.* (5) **foundations,** wh. are like His palace floor; the first part of the third day's work; Gen. i. 5–8.

Cosmos.—It might almost be said that this one psalm represents the image of the whole Cosmos. We are astonished to find in a lyrical poem of such a limited compass, the whole universe—the heavens and the earth—sketched with a few bold touches. The calm and toilsome labor of man, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, when his daily work is done, is here contrasted with the moving life of the elements of nature. This contrast and generalization in the conception of the mutual action of natural phenomena, and this retrospection of an omnipresent invisible power, which can renew the earth or crumble it to dust, constitute a solemn and exalted rather than a glowing and gentle form of poetic creation.—*A. Van Humboldt.*—*Extract from the Zendavesta.*—The following beautiful invocation to the Creator, taken from the Parsee Zendavesta, bears a remarkable parallelism to various passages in the Old Testament, a parallelism which affords indubitable evidence that the relics of a patriarchal revelation are yet to be traced amidst the obscurities and corruptions of the older theologies of Asia:

d Ge. i. 3.

"Light is put first, as being to man the most glorious and splendid of God's works, and the very vehicle of the splendor of them all."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

e "In comparing the light to a robe, he signifies that though God is invisible, yet His glory is manifest."—*Calvin.*

"Is there in the universe a created thing more worthy to be the robe of Jehovah, whose very being is such that He dwelleth in darkness."—*Herder.*

f He. i. 7.

"1. I invite and announce to me the Creator, Ahura-Mazda, the brilliant, the majestic, greatest, best, most beautiful; 2. The strongest, most intellectual, of the best body, the highest through holiness; 3. Who is very wise, who rejoices afar; 4. Who created us, who formed us, who keeps us, the holiest among the heavenly." — *Yacna, I.*

6—9. (6) *vss.* 6–8 are a poetical explanation of Ge. i. 9. **coveredst it,** for the early condition of the earth as surrounded with water or vapor, *comp.* Ge. i. 2.[a] (7) **rebuke,** or command.[b] **thunder,** wh. best represents to the poet what the voice of God must have been. **hasted away,** *Polychr.* "shrank together." (8) **go up,** better *rend.* "The mountains rose, the valleys sank;" due to the subsiding waters.[c] (9) **set a bound,** separating the sea from the land. God broke this once on account of sin, but renewed the covenant forever with Noah; Gen. ix. 9–16.

God seen in His works. — I. See God in the heavens. In sun, moon, stars, cloud, wind, lightning, rain, and dew. II. See God in the earth. In its order; its relations of sea and land; its mountains, sea margin, valleys, streams, trees, flowers, *etc.* III. See God in the creatures of earth. All animals, their habits and needs. All graciously provided for.

The ocean. —

Now stretch your eye off shore, o'er waters made
To cleanse the air, and bear the world's great trade,
To rise and wet the mountains near the sun,
Then back into themselves in rivers run,
Fulfilling mighty uses, far and wide,
Through earth, in air, or here, as ocean-tide.
Ho! how the giant heaves himself, and strains
And flings to break his strong and viewless chains;
Foams in his wrath; and at his prison doors,
Hark! hear him! how he beats, and tugs, and roars,
As if he would break forth again, and sweep
Each living thing within his lowest deep. — *Richard H. Dana.*

"If the one end of mercy were not the beginning of another, we were undone." — *P. Henry.*

a Job xxxviii. 4, 6; 2 Pe. iii. 5.

b "This vast, swelling, tumultuous sea hears the 'rebuke' of God, and sinks to its appointed place; the earth appears, emerges fr. her watery covering, and shows her surface diversified with mountain and valley."—*Perowne.*

c "The expressions may describe the tumultuous rush of the waters over the mountains and into valleys in quest of the spots where God has determined they are to abide." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

? Job xxxviii. 8–11.

"Nature is the chart of God, mapping out all His attributes."—*Tupper.*

10—13. (10) **valleys,** or torrent-bed. **run . . hills,** *rend.* that they should make their way between the mountains. (11) **wild asses,**[d] peculiarly wild creatures, untended by man, but cared for by God. God's mercy includes all His works; He careth for the animals. (12) **By them,** or above them. **shall the fowls,** omit "shall," Ge. i. 30; ii. 19. **sing,** *lit.* gave out their voice. (13) **chambers,** *see vs.* 3. The clouds are up in the roof of God's palace. **satisfied,** refreshed and nourished.[e] **fruits . . works,** *i. e.* the rain.

Springs. — Men cut places for rivers to run in, but none but God can cut a channel to bring spiritual streams into the soul. The Psalmist speaks of the sending forth of springs as one great act of the providence of God. Philosophy cannot show the reason of it. The Psalmist doth it well: God sends them into the valleys, His providence and power keeps them continually running: he that would have his soul watered must go to God in prayer. — *Ralph Robinson.*

d The swift, unapproachable *onager.* Job xxxix. 5–8.

e Ps. lxv. 9, 10; Je. x. 13.

"Nature creates and produces, at one and the same time, the rudiments and principles of the whole body, and of every component part." —*Bacon.*

14, 15. (14) **grass . . herb,** Ge. i. 11, 29, 30. The term "herb" includes corn, *etc.* **service of man,** perhaps should be, "for the labor of man," that he, by his labor, should bring food out of the earth. (15) **wine,** *etc.*, man's luxuries as well as man's necessities are supplied by God's gracious provision.[f]

The growing grass. — Grass grows as well as herbs, for cattle must be fed as well as men. God appoints to the lowliest creature its portion and takes care that it has it. Divine power is as truly and as worthily put forth in the feeding of beasts as in the nurturing of man; watch but a blade of grass with a devout eye and you may see God at work within it. The herb is for man, and he must till the soil, or it will not be produced, yet it is God that causeth it to grow in the garden, even the same God who made the grass to grow in the unenclosed pastures of the wilderness. Man forgets this and talks of his produce, but in very truth without God he would plough and sow in vain. The Lord causeth each green blade to spring and each ear to ripen; do but watch with opened eye and you shall see the Lord walking through the cornfields. — *Spurgeon.*

f Corn, wine and oil were the glory of the Promised Land. De xi. 14; xviii. 4.

"Nature is mighty; art is mighty; artifice is weak. For Nature is the work of a mightier power than man. Art is the work of man, under the guidance and inspiration of a mightier power. Artifice is the work of mere man, in the imbecility of his mimic understanding."—*Hare.*

16–18. (16) **trees of the Lord,** those in the second clause called "the cedars of Lebanon." Mighty trees, yet God abundantly satisfies them.[a] Called trees of God because not planted by any human hands; trees of the forest and mountain, in contrast with the vine and olive. **full of sap,** *R. V.*, "are satisfied," "*i. e.* drink in sufficiently God's rain so that they grow up and flourish amazingly." (17) **the stork,** Le. xi. 19.[b] (18) **wild goats,** mentioned as beyond human care. **conies,** *Polychr.*, "marmots." Le. xi. 5.

The cedars of Lebanon (*vs.* 16).—We have here—I. The absence of all human culture. 1. The Lord's trees owe their planting entirely to Him; 2. They are not dependent on man for their watering; 3. No mortal might protects them; 4. They preserve a sublime indifference to human gaze; 5. Their exaltation is all for God, not for man; 6. They are independent of man in their expectations. II. The cedars of Lebanon are a glorious display of the Divine care. 1. In the abundance of their supply; 2. They are always green; 3. Note their grandeur, size, and fragrance; 4. Attentively think upon the perpetuity of them; 5. They are very venerable. III. The fulness of the living principle. 1. Full of sap—this is vitally necessary; 2. Essentially mysterious; 3. Radically secret; 4. Permanently active; 5. Externally operative; 6. Abundantly to be desired.—*Spurgeon.*

The stork.—In many cases the stork breeds among old ruins, and under such circumstances it is fond of building its nest on the tops of pillars or towers, the summits of arches, and similar localities. When it takes up its abode among mankind, it generally selects the breeding-places which have been built for it by those who know its taste, but it frequently chooses the top of a chimney, or some such locality. When it is obliged to build in spots where it can find neither rocks nor buildings, it builds on trees, and, like the heron, is sociable in its nesting, a whole community residing in a clump of trees. It is not very particular about the kind of tree, provided that it be tolerably tall, and strong enough to bear the weight of its enormous nest; and the reader will at once see that the fir-trees are peculiarly fitted to be the houses for the stork.—*J. G. Wood.*

19–23. (19) **Moon,** mentioned first bec. to the *Heb.* night naturally preceded the day. **for seasons,** to mark them. Work of the fourth day: Ge. i. 14. This is to be taken with the next clause. **sun,** *etc.*, observes the laws appointed for him, *Polychr.*, "knows his journey home." (20) **makest darkness** (Ge. i. 16–18), by withdrawing the light, and throwing portions of the earth into shade. **the beasts,** night being their feeding time. **creep forth,** or move about. (21) **young lions,** not *cubs*, but fierce lions, just in their prime vigor; even they must wait on God.[c] (22) **gather,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, "get them away." (23) **until the evening,** God having given him the day, as He has given the beasts the night.

Darkness and the beasts that creep forth therein. 1. Ignorance of God and unrestrained lusts. 2. Sins discovered. Beasts there before, but not noticed, now terrify man. 3. Spiritual despondency, dismay, despair, *etc.* 4. Church lethargy. All sorts of heresies, *etc.*, begin to creep forth.—*A. G. Brown.*

Night.—Then is the lion's day, his time to hunt his food. Why should not the wild beast have his hour as well as man? He has a service to perform, should he not also have his food? Darkness is fitter for beasts than man; and those men are most brutish who love darkness rather than light. When the darkness of ignorance broods over a nation, then all sorts of superstitions, cruelties, and vices abound: the gospel, like the sunrising, soon clears the world of the open ravages of these monsters, and they seek more congenial abodes. We see here the value of true light, for we may depend upon it, where there is night there will also be wild beasts to kill and to devour.—*Spurgeon.*

Night and death.—

Mysterious night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report Divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus, with the host of heaven, came,
And lo! creation widened in man's view.

a "He satisfies with His abundant rain the world of plants and trees, the cedars of Lebanon."—*Spk. Com.*

b *Ciconia alba*, or *nigra*, or both common in Palestine, and build their nests in trees and marshy forest places.

"Blest silent groves! O may ye be forever mirth's best nursery! May pure contents forever pitch their tents upon these downs, those meads, these rocks, these mountains, and peace still slumber by these purling fountains."—*Raleigh.*

"At this season of the year there is a revolution in nature which certainly claims our attention. It is the time the birds lay, and hatch their young. This annual miracle passes in a manner before our eyes. What little we know of the generation of birds is sufficient to prove the wisdom of the Creator."—*Sturm.*

c "It is the chief object of the writer as far as this part of the Ps. is concerned, to depict God's care for all His creatures, and their dependence on Him for all their necessities."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"All true work is sacred; in all true work, were it but true hand-labor, there is something of divineness. Labor, wide as the earth, has its summit in heaven."—*Carlyle.*

Creation — so far at least as concerns this world — has been compared to a pyramid Beginning with the mineral, passing upwards into the vegetable, and rising into the animal kingdom, we find man standing upon its apex, the crowning work of God.

Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O sun! or who could find,
Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
Why do we, then, shun death with anxious strife?
If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life?
— *J. Blanco White.*

"Improvable reason is the distinction between man and the animal."— *Binney.*

24—27. (24) **manifold,** many-sided and various. **wisdom,** the special wisdom of adaptation to circumstances and necessities. **thy riches,** *R. V., marg.* "creatures."[a] (25) **So is,** *R. V.*, "yonder is." **sea,**[b] the Mediterranean is chiefly in the thought of the Jewish poets. **creeping,** *Polychr.*, "wherein is a countless swarm." (26) **ships,** "carrying the thoughts and the passions, the skill and the enterprise of human hearts." **leviathan,** not the "crocodile" of Job xli. 1, but "sea-monsters" in general. (27) **wait . . thee,** the Creator who art also the Provider.

The spiritual significance of the universe (*vss.* 24–30). — This psalm suggests — I. That the Divine existence should constitute the central fact in all contemplations of the universe. 1. To disprove the speculations of pantheism; 2. To annihilate the materialistic theory; 3. To invest the universe with a mystic sanctity. II. That the principle of dependence is everywhere developed in the universe. Hence we infer — 1. That there exists an absolutely self-existent power; 2. That each part of the universe has its own mission; 3. That profound humility becomes every intelligent agent. III. That an intelligent contemplation of the universe is calculated to increase man's hatred of sin. 1. Because sin mars the harmony of law; 2. Because God, in having made so wondrous a universe, has proved Himself too good a Being to be disobeyed. — *Parker.*

Nature aiding science. — When Smeaton had reflected long, in search of that form which would be best fitted to resist the combined action of wind and waves, he found it in the trunk of the oak. When Watt was employed to conduct the supply of water across the Clyde to the city of Glasgow, he borrowed his admirable contrivance of a flexible water-main from considering the flexibility of the lobster's tail; and so, when M. Brunel was engaged in superintending the construction of the tunnel under the Thames, it was from observing the head of an apparently insignificant insect that he derived his first conception of the ingenious shield which he introduced in advance of the workmen to protect them from being crushed by the falling in of the earth. — *S. S. Teacher.*

a Ne. ix. 6.

b Ps. cvii. 23-31.

"Now, nature has made nothing in vain. Wherever she has prepared a habitation she immediately peoples it. She is never straitened for want of room. She has placed animals, furnished with fins, in a single drop of water, and in such multitudes that Leeuwenhoek, the natural philosopher, reckoned up to thousands of them." — *Bernardin de St. Pierre.*

"Who taught the natives of the field and wood to shun their poison and to choose their food? Prescient the tides and tempests to withstand, build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand?" — *Pope.*

28—32. (28) **gather,** as their provender: pick up from the earth or sea.[c] **filled,** *R. V.*, "satisfied." (29) **takest . . breath,** so not their food only, but their health and life depend on God.[d] (30) **spirit,** or breath. Gen. i. 2; "the great vivifying agent of all creation." **renewest,** as after the deluge. (31) **glory,** of the living Provider and Ruler. "The Psalmist prays that there may be no further interruption of the glorious course of nature besides the deluge, which has come into his thoughts in connection with the destruction of animal life." — *Pul. Com.* **rejoice,** as in creation He saw everything to be *good.* (32) **looketh,** *etc.*, poetical figures of God's majesty, power, and awe-inspiring presence.

The commissariat of creation. — The problem is the feeding of "the creeping things innumerable, both small and great beasts," which swarm the sea; the armies of birds which fill the air, and the vast hordes of animals which people the dry land; and in this sentence we have the problem solved, "That thou givest them they gather." The work is stupendous, but it is done with ease because the Worker is infinite: if He were not at the head of it the task would never be accomplished. Blessed be God for the great THOU of the text. It is every way our sweetest consolation that the personal God is still at work in the world: leviathan in the ocean, and the sparrow on the bough, may be alike glad of this; and we, the children of the great Father, much more. — *Spurgeon.*

c *Hengstenberg* thinks there is a distant reference to the gathering of the *manna.*

d "The breath of life which God breathed into man's nostrils is, according to the poetical conception, recalled to God when man dies." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

"In every aspect of nature there is joy; whether it be in the purity of virgin morning, or the somber gray of a day of clouds, or the solemn pomp and majesty of night; whether it be the chaste lines of the crystal, or the waving outline of distant hills, tremulously visible through dim vapors; the minute petals of the

33—35. (33) **long as I live,** a proper response to such a conviction of God's power and goodness. (34) **meditation,** *Polychr.*, correctly, "May my meditation please Him!" (35) **sinners,** who fail to recognize and love this God of mercy

fringed daisy, or the overhanging form of mysterious forests." — *F. W. Robertson.*

"The study of nature requires two qualifications of the mind, which at first sight appear to be opposed to each other — the comprehensive view of a bold genius that embraces the whole, and the minute and careful inspection of an unwearied industry that lives upon the smallest objects" — *Buffon.*

Destruction of the wicked. — It fell to my lot some years ago to undertake a walk of some miles, on a summer morning, along a seashore of surpassing beauty. It was the Lord's day, and the language of the hundred and fourth psalm rose spontaneously in my mind as one scene after another unfolded itself before the eye. About half way to my destination the road lay through a dirty hamlet, and my meditations were rudely interrupted by the brawling of some people, who looked as if they had been spending the night in a drunken debauch. Well, I thought, the Psalmist must have had some such unpleasant experience. He must have fallen in with people, located in some scene of natural beauty, who, instead of being a holy priesthood to give voice to nature in praise of her Creator, instead of being, in the pure and holy tenor of their lives, the heavenliest note of the general song, — filled it with a harsh discord. His prayer is the vehement expression of a desire that the earth may no longer be marred by the presence of wicked men, — that they may be utterly consumed, and may give place to men animated with the fear of God, just and holy men, men that shall be a crown of beauty on the head of this fair creation. — *William Binnie.*

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FIFTH.

author, — unknown; date, after the return from captivity

Recounting the dealings of Jehovah with His people,

1—4. (1) **give thanks,** Is. xii. 4.[a] Thanks are especially due bec. God's ways with His people have proved *merciful* ways. **call . . name,**[b] the covenant-name, Jehovah. **people,** "peoples;" the nations around. (2) **talk ye of,** *Polychr.*, "devoutly praise," so as to make Jehovah's ways generally known.[c] (3) **Glory,** or boast ye; laud and magnify it. (4) **his strength,** or the "ark of His strength" (2 Chr. vi. 41; Ps. cxxxii. 8), a poetic figure for the temple, where God's strength, or glory, is manifested.[d]

Sing psalms. — Psalmody is the calm of the soul, the repose of the spirit, the arbiter of peace. It silences the wave, and conciliates the whirlwind of our passions, soothing the impetuous, tempering the unchaste. It is an engenderer of friendship, a healer of dissension, a reconciler of enemies. For who can longer count him his enemy, with whom to the throne of God he hath raised the strain? Psalmody repels the demons, and lures the ministry of angels. It is a weapon of defense in nightly terrors and a respite from daily toil. To the infant it is a presiding genius; to manhood a crown of glory; a balm of comfort to the aged; a congenial ornament to women. — *Basil.*

5—8. (5) **wonders,** or tokens; with special reference to the miracles in Egypt. **judgments,** his sentences upon the Egyptians (*vss.* 28-36[e]). (6) **his servant,** this is a descrip. of Israel, not of Abraham. **his chosen,** *R. V.*, "his chosen ones," plural agreeing with the word "children," not with Jacob.[f] (7) **the Lord,** better read, "Jehovah, our God." "He is in covenant relation with us, and at the same time Judge of all the earth." (8) **for ever,** or always. **commanded,** or confirmed; established.

Our God. — What a joy it is that our God is never absent from us, He is never non-resident, never an absentee ruler, His judgments are in all the places in which we dwell. If the second clause of this verse refers to the whole world, it is very beautiful to see the specialty of Israel's election united with the universality of Jehovah's reign. Not alone to the one nation did the Lord reveal Himself, but His glory flashed around the globe. It is wonderful that the Jewish people should have become so exclusive, and have so utterly lost the missionary spirit, for their sacred literature is full of the broad and generous sympathies which are so consistent with the worship of "the God of the whole earth." Nor is it less painful to observe that among a certain class of believers in God's election of grace there lingers a hard, exclusive spirit, fatal to compassion and zeal. It would be well for these also to remember that their Redeemer is "the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe." — *Spurgeon.*

9, 12. (9) **made,** or entered into at first.[g] (10) **for a law,** statute; fixed, inviolable promise. "To have the permanence of perpetual law." **Israel,** *i. e.* Jacob after he received the name, Israel. (11) **lot,** *marg. cord.*[h] or measured portion. *Polychr.*, "As your heritage and possession." (12) **few . . in number,** the small family and tribe of Abraham is thus referred to: *lit.* "men of number."[i] **strangers,** *R. V.*, "sojourners," Ge. xv. 7.

a Four Ps. begin in the same way, cv., cvii., cxviii., cxxxvi.

b Comp. Ge. iv. 26; Ex. xxxiii. 19; xxxiv. 5.

c The idea of *speaking* is conveyed by the original, rather than merely meditating.

d "Seek Him where His mighty strength abides; *i. e.* in His temple in wh. He dwells, and in wh. His face is seen of His worshipers." — *Spk. Com.*

e Ex. vi. 6; vii. 4; xii. 12; Ps. cxix. 13.

f "It is on this ground bec. they are Abraham's seed, bec. they are God's chosen, bec they are Jacob's children, heritors of the covenant and the promises, that they are bound beyond all others to remember what God has done for them."— *Perowne.*

g Ge. xvii. 2; xxii 16; xxvi. 3; xxviii. 13; xxxv. 11; Lu. i. 73; He. vi. 17.

h "Line of measurement, and thence the portion assigned by measurement." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

i Ge. xxxiv. 30.

Comfort to the few. — The typical and spiritual Israel few at first. A few in the ark peopled the world. Small companies have done wonders. Christ's presence is promised to two or three. God 'saveth not by many or by few. *etc.* — *Spurgeon.*

Small beginnings. — The blessings promised to the seed of Abraham were not dependent upon the number of his descendants, or their position in this world. The covenant was made with one man, and consequently the number could never be less, and that one man was not the owner of a foot of soil in all the land, save only a cave in which to bury his dead, and therefore his seed could not have less inheritance than he. The smallness of a church and the poverty of its members are no barriers to the divine blessing, if it be sought earnestly by pleading the promise. Were not the apostles few, and the disciples feeble, when the good work began? Neither because we are strangers and foreigners here below, as our fathers were, are we in any the more danger: we are like sheep in the midst of wolves, but the wolves cannot hurt us, for our shepherd is near. — *Spurgeon.*

13—16. (13) **When . . another,** descriptive of the wandering life of the patriarchs.[a] (14) **reproved,** *etc.*, Pharaoh, Ge. xii. 17; Abimelech, xv. 3, 7, 18. (5) **Touch not,** Ge. xxiv. 11. **anointed,** *i. e.* my chosen, consecrated ones.[b] (16) **land,** of Canaan: during the residence in it of the patriarchs. Ge. xii. 10; xxvi. 1. **staff,** *i. e.* "bread that strengtheneth man's heart." Le. xxvi. 26.

Heavenly guidance. — There was once a picture of a little child, in the dress of a pilgrim, walking slowly along a narrow path which was bounded on each side by a terrific precipice, the edges of which were hidden from his view by a luxuriant thicket of fruits and flowers. Behind the child was an angel with a countenance of mixed tenderness and anxiety, his hands placed lightly on the shoulders of the little pilgrim, as if to keep him in the centre of the path, while the child, having closed his eyes, that he might not perceive the tempting snares on either side, is walking calmly forward, content not to see where he plants each footstep, so long as he feels the gentle and guiding touch of the angel upon him. His whole aspect is that of peace, confidence and conscious safety, so long as he follows the guidance of his heavenly monitor, and presses onward in his way.

17—22. (17) **before them,** by gracious providences God prepared for the residence in Egypt. Yet the events all happened naturally and simply. **who was sold,** *Polychr.*, "Joseph was sold." (18) **laid in iron,**[c] *R. V.*, "in chains of iron." No account is given in Genesis of severity of treatment suffered by Joseph in the prison-house, but the curtailment of his liberty was in itself bitter bondage. (19) **word,** or word of promise. This prob. refers to Joseph's interpretation of the dreams of the chief butler and chief baker. **Came,**[d] *R. V.*, "Came to pass;" "*i. e.* when the chief butler found favor and the chief baker was hanged." (20) **sent and loosed,** Ge. xli. 14. (21) **substance,** or possession. (22) **bind,** Joseph's position as head of the state gave him command over all the other officials. **teach,** *etc.*, *Polychr.*, "to chastise the elders."

Wisdom-taught senators (*vs.* 22).— We have here — I. God's instruction to senators. 1. By the life-work of the great and good; 2. By the events in a nation's history; 3. By insight into a nation's deeds. II. God's purpose in the instruction of senators 1. The entire well-being of a country; 2. Advancement in scientific achievements; 3. Perfection of his creation. Inquire — (1) How far we have wisdom-taught senators; (2) How far our nation is a wise and understanding people.— *W. N. Percival.*

God's way.— Joseph's journey into Egypt was not so costly as Jonah's voyage when he paid his own fare; his free passage was provided by the Midianites, who also secured his introduction to a great officer of state by handing him over as a slave. His way to a position in which he could feed his family lay through the pit, the slaver's caravan, the slave market and the prison, and who shall deny but what it was the right way, the surest way, the wisest way, and perhaps the shortest way. Yet assuredly it seemed not so. God's way is *the* way. Our Lord's path to His mediatorial throne ran by the cross of Calvary; our road to glory runs by the rivers of grief.— *Spurgeon.*

23—27. (23) **Israel,** the man Israel, called Jacob in the next sentence. But the name is used to include the tribe. (24) **he increased,** *i. e.* God.

"If God were to forget His engagements He would cease to be God 'If God were to forget for one moment,' says Macdonald, 'the universe would grow black—vanish—rush out again from the realm of law and order into chaos and night.'"

"They are all under the ægis of His protection, and for their sakes kings of many a dynasty and age have been rebuked."—*Exp. Bib.*

a Ge. xii. 1, 9; xiii. 18; xx. 1; He. xi. 9.

b "Consecration to office by anointing is the custom of a later age than that of the patriarchs." — *Spk. Com.*

"Sith in the Almightie's everlasting seat, she first was bred and born of heavenly race, from thence pour'd down on man by influence of grace."—*Spenser.*

c For the fig. *comp.* Ps. cvii. 10

d Fire will burn off a thin plating of silver from a copper coin and reveal the base metal beneath, but it will only brighten into a glow the one which is all silver." —*Exp. Bib.*

Joseph's feet were hurt in irons, to fit him to tread more delicately in the king's palace at Zoan; and when the Lord's time was come, by the same stairs which winded him into the dungeon he climbs up into the next chariot to Pharoah's." — *Samuel Lee.*

"Would we worship aright, our hearts must look up and cry, 'Teach me, Holy Spirit, to worship,' and He will do it."—*R. A. Torrey.*

(25) **their heart,** *i. e.* the heart of their enemies.[a] **deal subtilly,** to conspire against. (26) **sent Moses,** Ex. iii. 10. (27) **shewed,** *R. V.*, "set among them."

The magic skin.— In the fable of the magic skin, it gave the wearer power to get anything he wanted; but every time he gratified his wishes, the skin shrank and compressed him into smaller dimensions, until, by and by, with the last wish, life itself was crushed out. The magic skin is selfishness. It is a great thing to learn to say *No* to one's self instead of indulging every whim and wish, even though there be nothing sinful in it. Moses renounced the pleasures and treasures of Egypt for the sake of a higher recompense of reward. There was no necessary wrong in his inheriting the royal treasures and enjoying the pleasures of Egypt, so far as they were not in themselves sinful; but Moses had a high vocation, and these would have been hindrances; so he renounced them.— *A. T. Pierson.*

28—32. (28) **darkness,** Ex. x. 22. **they rebelled not,** if the "not" is to stand in this passage, it must be referred to Moses and Aaron. Professor Cheyne, however, following the Septuagint and Peshito versions, cancels the "not." — *Pul. Com.* (29) **waters,** the river Nile was worshiped by the Egyptians; hence this plague showed the impotency of the national deities. **blood,** Ex. vii. 20. (30) **frogs,** Ex. viii. 6. (31) **divers sorts of,** *R. V.*, "swarms of." **flies, lice,** prob. dog-fly or some sort of beetle is meant: gnats rather than lice. Ex. viii. 17, 24. **coasts,** *R. V.*, "borders." (32) **hail,** Ex. ix. 23.

Hail. —I had ridden out to the excavations [at Gizeh], when seeing a large black cloud approaching, I sent a servant to the tents to take care of them, but as it began to rain slightly I soon rode after him myself. Shortly after my arrival a storm of wind began; I therefore ordered the cords of the tents to be secured, but soon a violent shower of rain came in addition, which alarmed all our Arabs, and drove them into the rock-tomb, in which is our kitchen. . . . Suddenly the storm became a regular hurricane, such as I had never witnessed in Europe, and a hailstorm came down on us, which almost turned the day into night. . . . It was not long before first our common tent fell down, and when I had hastened from that into my own, in order to hold it from the inside, this also broke down above me. — *Carl Richard Lepsius.*

33—36. (33) **smote,** *etc.*, by great hailstones. Ex. ix. 13–35. (34) **locusts,** Ex. x. 1–20. (35) **the fruit,** both herbs and leaves of trees. (36) **firstborn,** Ex. xii. 29. **chief,** better, "the firstlings."

Locusts. —The locusts had devoured every green herb and every blade of grass; and had it not been for the reeds, on which our cattle entirely subsisted while we skirted the banks of the river, our journey must have been discontinued, at least in the line that we had proposed. The larvæ, as generally is the case in this class of nature, are much more voracious than the perfect insect; nothing that is green seems to come amiss to them. The traces of their route over the country are very obvious for many weeks after they have passed it, the surface appearing as if swept by a broom, or as if a harrow had been drawn over it. — *John Barrow.*

37—40, (37) **silver and gold,** Ex. xii. 35. **feeble person,** *Polychr.*, "that stumbled," *i. e.* was unable to travel, Is. v. 27. (38) **glad,** Ex. xii. 33. (39) **cloud,** "over their heads as a protection against the burning sun." Ex. xiii. 21. (40) **quails,** Ex. xvi. 12. **bread of heaven,** manna, which fell as if out of heaven.

God's provision. —I. God often gives in love what is not asked. So the bread of heaven, which was beyond all they could ask or think. II. He sometimes gives in anger what is asked. They asked for flesh to eat — "and He brought quails." — *G. Rogers.*

Beacons. — In the army of Alexander the Great, the march was begun by a great beacon being set upon a pole as a signal from headquarters, so that "the fire was seen at night, the smoke in the day-time;" and the plan is still found in use amongst the caravans of Arabia. It is probable enough, in that unchanging land, that such may have been the custom at the time of the Exodus, and that God taught the people by parable in this wise, as well as by fact, that He was their true leader, and heaven the general pavilion, whence the order of march was enjoined. — *Neale and Littledale.*

[a] "It must be recollected that the origin of malice was in the Egyptians themselves, lest blame be imputed to God."—*Calvin.*

"God's plans like lilies pure and white, unfold; we must not tear the close-shut leaves apart; time will reveal the calyxes of gold." — *Mary R. Smith.*

"What is the human mind, however enriched with acquisition or strengthened by exercise, unaccompanied by an ardent and sensitive heart? Its light may illumine, but it cannot inspire. It may shed a cold and moonlight radiance upon the path of life, but it warms no flower into bloom; it sets free no icebound fountain."—*Tuckermann.*

"A good heart is the sun and moon, or, rather, the sun, and not the moon, for it shines bright and never changes, but keeps its course truly." — *Shakespeare.*

"Nemesis is one of God's handmaids." —*W. R. Alger.*

Feeble, vs. 37, *lit.* "stumbling," used fig. for "poor." They should be all wealthy in the full sense of wealthiness, in person and purse. In Isa. xvi. 14, "small and feeble" of the remnant of Moab—*i. e.* scant in numbers, not mighty.

"This *feeble* wood may him little avail."— *Blind Harry's Wallace.*

"There is no future pang can deal that justice on the self-condemned he deals on his own soul."—*Byron.*

"Whatever is good and comes from on high is universal and without reserve; but in the heart's recesses darkness dwells."— *Schiller.*

41—45. (41) **opened the rock,** at Rephidim, Ex. xvii. 1, 2. At Kadesh, Nu. xx. 11.[a] (42) **remembered,** *etc.*, Ex. ii. 24. **holy,** *i. e.* either divine or inviolable. **promise,** *R. V.*, "word." (43) **gladness,** poss. alluding to the song sung after crossing the Red Sea.[b] (44) **labour,** put for the fruits of labor, their cities, vineyards, treasures, *etc.* (45) **they,** *etc.*, *i. e.* the people of Israel.[c]

Design of Israel. — The chosen nation was to be the conservator of truth, the exemplar of morality, the pattern of devotion; everything was so ordered as to place them in advantageous circumstances for fulfilling this trust. Theirs was a high calling and a glorious election. It involved great responsibilities, but it was in itself a distinguished blessing, and one for which the nation was bound to give thanks. Most justly then did the music close with the jubilant but solemn shout of Hallelujah, "*Praise ye the Lord.*" If this history did not make Israel praise God, what would? — *Spurgeon.*

a Ps. lxxviii. 15, 16, 20; 1 Co. x. 4.

b Is. xxxv. 10.

c "This was God's purpose, that Israel should be a holy nation in the midst of other nations, a priesthood representing the world, and claiming it for God as His world."—*Perowne.*

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SIXTH.

author, — unknown; date, after the return from captivity

Subj., Israel's unfaithfulness and God's faithfulness.

1—5. (1) This *vs.* is a "doxological formula" copied by many of the later Psalms. **Praise,** *Heb. hallelujah.* From this beginning the Ps. is classed as the first of the Hallelujah Psalms.[d] **good,** in His gracious dealing with men. **mercy,** or graciousness, loving-kindness. **for ever,** in generation after generation. (2) **utter,** *i. e.* sufficiently and worthily. **his praise,** the glory wh. God has manifested calling for praise. (3) **keep judgment,** better, "keep the right." (4) **Remember me,** a personal plea to be permitted to share in God's blessing to His people. **favor . . people,** *lit*, "in the favor of Thy people," or "in the time of Thy showing favor to Thy people." (5) **chosen,** plural, "chosen ones."

God's favor to His people (*vs.* 4). — I. What this prayer implies. 1. That God is the hearer and the answerer of prayer; 2. That He has a peculiar people; 3. That He regards His people with a special love. II. What this prayer expresses. 1. A real participation of God's love to His own people; 2. A full participation of God's love to His own people; 3. A personal participation of God's love to His own people. — *G. Brooks.*

His mercy. — Oh this mercy of God! I am told that it is an ocean. Then I place on it four swift-sailing crafts, with compass, and charts, and choice rigging, and skillful navigators, and I tell them to launch away, and discover for me the extent of this ocean. That craft puts out in one direction, and sails to the north; this to the south; this to the east; this to the west. They crowd on all their canvas and sail ten thousand years, and one day come up the harbor of heaven; and I shout to them from the beach, "Have you found the shore?" and they answer, "No shore to God's mercy." Swift angels, despatched from the throne, attempt to go across it. For a million years they fly and fly; but then come back and fold their wings at the foot of the throne, and cry, "No shore! no shore to God's mercy!" — *Talmage.*

d Ps. cxi.-cxiii., cxvii., cxxxv., cxlvi.-cl.

"If any distinction is to be made between *keeping judgment* and *doing righteousness*, the first may describe inward rectitude, the second its outward exhibition in act."—*Spk Com.*

"Nothing so melts a heart in penitence as the remembrance of God's love, and nothing so heightens the evil of sin as the consideration of the patient goodness which it has long flouted."—*Maclaren.*

6—9. (6) **We have sinned,** this is the key-note of the ps. which is one of *confession.*[e] **with our fathers,**[f] so the Psalmist "regards the nation as a whole, one in guilt and one in punishment." **committed iniquity,** *Polychr.*, "turned back." (7) **wonders,** miracles of judgment and deliverance. **provoked him,** *R. V.*, "were rebellious." Ex. xiv. 11, 12. (8) **name's sake,** not bec. the Hebrews were worthy, but to prove the righteousness of the Divine character. Ex. xiv. 18. (9) **rebuked,** *comp.* Ps. civ. 7; Is. l. 2. **depths,** left exposed by the retreating sea. God's way through the ocean depths was as safe for them as through the wilderness.[g] **wilderness,** *Polychr.*, "pasture-land." *Midbar*, the word translated "wilderness," is properly a smooth stretch of down, very level, and suited for sheep-walks.

Why are men saved? (*vs.* 8). — I. Here is a glorious Saviour. II. The favored persons. These people were — 1. Stupid; 2. Ungrateful; 3. Provoking. III. The reason of salvation. 1. To manifest His nature; 2. To vindicate His name. IV. The obstacles overcome in saving them. 1. The claims of law; 2. The demands of conscience; 3. The great accuser. — *C. H. Spurgeon.*

Our father's sins. — Antiquity is no infallible argument of goodness; though Tertullian says the first things were the best things; and the less they distanced from the beginning, the poorer they were; but he must be understood

e *Comp*, 1 Ki viii. 47; Da. ix. 5.

f "Israel was bearing at this time the punishment of its sins, by which it had made itself like its forefathers."—*Delitzsch.*

g Is. li. 10; lxiii. 13; Na. i. 4.

"The sun is the eye of the world, and he is indifferent to the negro or the cold Russian, to them that dwell under the line, and them that stand near the tropics,

only of holy customs. For iniquity can plead antiquity; he that commits a new act of murder finds it old in the example of Cain; drunkenness may be fetched from Noah; contempt of parents from Ham; women's lightness from the daughters of Lot. There is no sin but hath white hairs upon it, and is exceeding old. But let us look further back yet, even to Adam; there is the age of sin. This is that St. Paul calls the old man; it is almost as old as the root, but older than all the branches. Therefore our restitution by Christ to grace is called the new man. — *Thomas Adams.*

the scalded Indian, or the poor boy that shakes at the foot of the Riphian hills; so is the mercy of God."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

10—15. (10) **him that hated,** the Egyptian Pharaoh. (11) **waters covered,** Ex. xiv. 28. (12) **sang his praise,** allusion to the song of Moses, Ex. xv. (13) **soon forgat,** Ex. xv. 24; xvi. 2. *Heb.* "they made haste, they forgat." **waited not,** *etc.*, "they did not wait for the development of God's plans respecting them, preferring (*vs.* 43) their own counsel."—*Kay.* (14) **lusted exceedingly,** *lit.* "lusted for themselves a lust," Nu. xi. 4. **tempted,** "tried to restrain God with their importunate, eager desire."[a] — *Spk Com.* (15) **leanness,**[b] *Polychr.*, "And sent them a wasting disease," LXX. *trans.* *satiety.* The *Heb.* term is used to describe the effects of the plague, or withering sickness. **soul,** *i. e.* the physical organism in general.

Prayer for wrong things (*vs.* 15).— Chactas, the blind old sachem in Chateaubriand's Wertherion romance, is made to bring the story to an end by relating a parable to his woe-fraught young listener. It tells how the Meschacebé, soon after leaving its source among the hills, began to feel weary of being a simple brook, and so asked for snows from the mountains, water from the torrents, rain from the tempests, until, its petitions granted, it burst its bounds and ravished its hitherto delightsome banks. At first the proud stream exulted in its force, but seeing ere long that it carried desolation in its flow, that its progress was now doomed to solitude, and that its waters were forever turbid, it came to regret the humble bed hollowed out for it by nature, the birds, the flowers, the trees, and the brooks, hitherto the modest companions of its tranquil course.— *F. Jacox.*

16—18. (16) **envied Moses,** the second great sin in the wilderness, rebellion against the leaders appointed by Jehovah; Nu. xvi., xvii. **saint,** the *Heb.* term denotes official sanctity — that derived from a Divine consecration. (17) **opened,** Nu. xvi. 30, 32; xxvi. 10. **covered,** *Polychr.*, "closed over the crew," *etc.*; Nu. xvi. 35. (18) **fire,** against the princes of the congregation who presumed to offer incense before the Lord; Korah and his company; Nu. xvi. 2, 35. **wicked,** Nu. xvi. 26.

Ministerial envy (*vs.* 16).— Will any workman malign another because he helpeth him to do his Master's work? Yet, alas, how common is this heinous crime amidst men of parts and eminency in the church! They can secretly blot the reputation of such as stand cross to their own; and what they cannot for shame do in plain and open terms, lest they be proved palpable liars and slanderers, they will do in general and malicious intentions, raising suspicions where they cannot fasten accusations. And so far are some gone in this satanical vice that it is their common practice, and a considerable part of their business, to keep down the estimation of those they dislike, and defame others in the slyest and most plausible way; and some go so far that they are unwilling that any that are abler than themselves should come into their pulpits, lest they should be applauded above themselves. Yea, so far does this cursed vice prevail, that in great congregations, that have need of the help of many teachers, we can scarcely get two in equality to live together in love and quietness, and unanimously to carry on the work of God! But unless one of them be quite below the other in parts, and content to be so esteemed, or unless one be a curate to the other and ruled by him, they are contending for precedency, and envying each other's interest, and walking with strangeness and jealousy towards each other, to the shame of the profession, and the great wrong of the congregation.— *Baxter.*

19—23. (19) **made a calf,** the third great sin in the wilderness, false worship through the likeness of a calf: — idolatry; Ex. xxxii. 4, (20) **their glory,**[c] Him who was their glory; Jehovah, their glorious God. *Polychr.*, "They bartered their honor for the image of a bull," *etc.* **into the similitude,** *R. V.*, "For the likeness of." (21) **forgat God,** against this they had been duly warned, *see* De. iv. 16–18. (22) **land of Ham,** Ps. lxxviii. 51; cv. 23, 27. (23) **destroyed them,** Ex. xxxii. 10.[d] "God was ready to have

[a] "Six distinct cases of rebellion are enumerated as occurring between the time of the passage of the Red Sea and that of the entry into Canaan."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

[b] "This may refer to the loathing of food, followed by great mortality, the *soul* being here used only in a physical sense of the life. But the fig. sense is equally true, and equally pertinent. The very heart and spirit of a man, when bent only or supremely on the satisfaction of its earthly desires and appetites, is always dried up and withered."— *Perowne.*

"Envy is the daughter of pride, the author of murder and revenge, the beginner of secret sedition, and the perpetual tormentor of virtue. Envy is the filthy slime of the soul; a venom, a poison, or quicksilver which consumeth the flesh, and drieth up the marrow of the bones"—*Socrates.*

"Dionysius the tyrant," says Plutarch, "out of envy, punished Philoxenius, the musician, because he could sing, and Plato, the philosopher, because he could dispute, better than himself."—*J. Whitecross.*

[c] *Comp.* Je. ii. 11. "Glory, like light, is used in Scrip. to denote Divine perfections."—*Perowne.*

[d] "Had not Moses His chosen stood

destroyed all Israel, and to have raised up a new Israel out of the descendants of Moses, had not Moses pleaded with extreme earnestness on the people's behalf." — *Pul. Com.*

The molten calf.— The modern Jews are of opinion that all the afflictions which ever since have, do, or shall befall their nation, are still the just punishments on them for this their first act of idolatry. And the rabbins have a saying that God never inflicts any judgment upon them, but there is an ounce of His anger on them for their ancestors' making the golden calf. A reverend friend of mine, conversing at Amsterdam with a Jewish youth (very capable and ingenious for one of that nation), endeavored to make him sensible of God's anger upon them for rejecting and crucifying of Christ, for which foul act he showed how the Jews have lived many hundred years in miserable banishment. But the youth would in no wise acknowledge in their sufferings any effect or punishment of their murdering of Christ, but taking his Bible turned to God's threatening immediately after their making of the calf (Exod. xxxiii. 34): "Nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them," so interpreting and applying all the numerous calamities which since have befallen them to relate to no other cause than that their first idolatry. Whereas, indeed, the arrears of their idolatry long ago were satisfied, and this is a new debt of later date contracted on themselves by their infidelity.— *Thomas Fuller.*

24—27. (24) **despised,** *etc.*[a] The fourth sin in the wilderness, the murmuring at Kadesh-barnea. Nu. xiii., xiv. The occasion referred to is the visit and report of the spies. **his word,** of assurance and promise that they should possess it. (25) **murmured,** Nu. xiv. 2. (26) **lifted . . hand,** the attitude of one taking an oath, Nu. xiv. 30.[b] **to overthrow,** *R. V.*, "that He would overthrow;" this was His oath. (27) **overthrow,** make to fall.[c]

Human perversity.— I. Despising the choicest inheritance. II. Disbelieving the best authenticated word. 1. Unbelief dishonoring God. 2. Unbelief excluding man from his inheritance. III. Murmuring against the arrangements of the wisest and kindest of beings. IV. Disobeying the commands of the most sovereign authority. V. Receiving deserved punishment. VI. Entailing misery upon their posterity.— *Hom. Com.*

Murmuring! — It must have been a malady characteristic of the Hebrew people, or a disease peculiar to that desert. As we proceed with this narrative we are constantly meeting it, creaking along in discord harsh and chronic, or amazing earth and heaven by its shrill, ear-piercing paroxysms. They lift up their eyes, and as the Egyptians pursue, the people murmur. They come to a fountain, the water is bitter, and once more they murmur. Then no bread; murmurings redoubled. Moses is no longer in the Mount; murmurs. He takes too much upon him; more murmurs. When shall we reach that Promised Land? — murmurs extraordinary, loud murmurs. We are close to the land, but its inhabitants are giants, and their towns walled up to heaven. Oh, what a take-in! and the last breath of the last survivors of that querulous race goes forth in a hurricane of reproach and remonstrance — a perfect storm of murmurs.— *James Hamilton.*

28—31. (28) **Baal-peor,** Nu. xxv. 3. "The Moabite idol[d] worshiped on the summit of Peor." This was the fifth flagrant transgression against Jehovah in the wilderness. **of the dead,** offered to the dead, or lifeless objects of heathen worship.[e] Usage, however, is rather in favor of some allusion to necromantic rites, as in Deut. xviii. 11, "one who seeketh to the dead;" Isa. viii. 19, "should a people seek to the dead (by the aid of necromancers, consulting them as Saul consulted the Witch of Endor), on behalf of the living?" — *Perowne.* (29) **inventions,** *R. V.*, "doings," Ps. xcix. 8. **plague,** *i. e.* the slaughter sanctioned by Jehovah. **break in,** or made a breach. The image is that of a river wh. has burst its barriers.[f] (30) **Phinehas,** Nu. xxv. 7, 8. (31) **counted,** *etc.*,[g] *comp.* the similar expression, Ge. xv. 6.

Passages from the history of a rebellious people. — I. An incorrigibly rebellious people. 1. Here is idolatry. 2. Here is adultery. 3. Here is rebellious murmuring. II. A brave man acting as minister of justice in a critical time. 1. Here is a brave act of justice. 2. A brave act of justice staying the Divine vengeance. 3. A brave act of justice recognized and rewarded by God. III. A holy man sinning and suffering by reason of the sin of others. 1. Their provocation of Moses aggravated the guilt of the rebellious people. 2. Their

before Him in the gap, as a valiant soldier guarding His city when a breach is made in the wall, and stayed Him by prayers and entreaties, lest He should destroy them?"—*Spk. Com.*

"It is to be hoped, we shall never live to see a time, when the miracles of *our* redemption shall be forgotten; when the people shall solicit their teachers to fabricate a new philosophical deity for them to worship, instead of the God of their ancestors." —*George Horne.*

a Je. iii. 19; Zec. vii. 14.

b Ge. xiv. 22; Ex. vi. 8; De. xxxii. 40.

c Le. xxvi. 38; De. xxviii. 64.

"There are many people the brilliancy of whose minds only depend upon the heart. When they open that it is hardly possible for it not to throw out some fire."—*Desmahis.*

"When pilgrims to the Celestial city begin to doubt the Lord of the way, they soon come to think little of the rest at the journey's end, and this is the surest way to make them bad travelers."—*Spurgeon.*

d "Called *Kamosh.*" — *Hengstenberg.*

e 1 Co. viii. 4.

f Ex. xix. 24.

g "The act of Phinehas was counted a righteous act, forever memorable, and rewarded by God with a perpetual priesthood."—*Spk. Com.*

"It appears that the high priesthood was confined to the line of Phinehas from his own time to the fall of Jeru-

salem, if we except the high priesthood of Eli, the descendant of Ishamar, uncle of Phinehas." —Jennings and Lowe.

"God has His champions left in the worst times, and they will stand up when the time comes for them to come forth to battle." — Spurgeon.

[a] Ju. iii. 6.

"According to Solomon, life and death are in the power of the tongue; and as Euripides truly affirmeth, every unbridled tongue in the end shall find itself unfortunate; for in all that ever I observed in the course of worldly things, I ever found that men's fortunes are oftener made by their tongues than by their virtues, and more men's fortunes overthrown thereby, also, than by their vices." — Sir W. Raleigh.

[b] 1 Co. viii. 5.

LXX. trans. daimoniois, and Jerome daemonibus, whence our Eng. Ver. has devils.

"We cannot describe the natural history of the soul, but we know that it is Divine. All things are known to the soul. It is not to be surprised by any communication. Nothing can be greater than it, let those fear and those fawn who will. The soul is in her native realm; and it is wider than space, older than time, wide as hope, rich as love. Pusillanimity and fear she refuses with a beautiful scorn; they are not for her who putteth

provocation does not exonerate Moses from guilt. Provocation is not compulsion. 3. God punishes sin even in the best of men in whom it is a great exception. IV. The great God contending against human sin. 1. By the plague, because of the idolatry and licentiousness of the people. 2. By the exclusion of Moses from the promised land.—Wm. Jones.

Righteous Zeal.—Believer, can you read this and feel no shame? Do your bold efforts testify your zeal? Sinners blaspheme God's name. Do you rebuke? His Sabbaths are profaned. Do you protest? False principles are current? Do you expose the counterfeits? Vice stalks in virture's garb. Do you tear down the mask? Satan enthralls the world. Do you resist? Nay, rather are you not dozing unconcerned? Whether Christ's cause succeeds, or be cast down, you little care. If righteous zeal girded your loins and braced your nerves, and moved the rudder of your heart, and swelled your sails of action, would God be so unknown, and blasphemy so daring?—Henry Law.

32—35. (32) **waters of strife,** R. V., "of Meribah." The sixth sin in the wilderness committed in the 40th year of the wandering; Nu. xx. 13. **went ill,** De. i. 37; iii. 26; xxxii. 50, 51. (33) **provoked,** R. V., "were rebellious against"; whose spirit is not mentioned; prob. God's Spirit is intended. **spake unadvisedly,** Nu. xx. 10—12. "One man's sin often leads to another's, but does not necessitate it. The people 'provoked Moses' spirit' by their murmurs and reproaches. He was vexed, impatient, carried away by a gust of passion, and made the unfitting speech."—Pul. Com. (34) **not destroy,** etc., see Ex. xxiii. 31—33; xxxiv. 12, 13; Jos. xxiii. 12, 13; Ju. i., ii. 1—3. **concerning whom,** R. V., "as." (35) **mingled,** mixed themselves with them by intermarriage."[a] **works,** bad works; their immoralities.

"He Spake Unadvisedly."—A gracious person may be surprised and fall suddenly among thieves that lurk behind the bushes. Nay, very holy men, unless wonderfully wary, may be quickly tript up by sudden questions and unexpected emergencies. Who knows the subtlety of sin, and the deceitfulness of his own heart? Take heed of answering quickly, and send up sudden ejaculations to heaven before you reply to a weighty and doubtful motion.—Samuel Lee.

36—39. (36) **a snare,** Ex. xxiii. 33; Ju. ii. 2, 3, 11. (37) **devils,**[b] i. e. false gods. R. V., "demons." (38) **polluted,** the strongest word. Nu. xxxv. 33. "The land, the very soil itself, was polluted and accursed, as well as the inhabitants." (39) **own works,** acts of wilfulness, not of obedience to God. The idolatrous rites were men's inventions, not God's appointments. **went a whoring,** Polychr., "practiced idolatry;" Ex. xxxiv. 14, 15.

Patronizing Idolatry in India.—It is lamentable to think how long after our [English] power was firmly established in Bengal, we, grossly neglecting the first and plainest duty of the civil magistrate, suffered the practices of infanticide and suttee to continue unchecked. We decorated the temples of the false gods; we provided the dancing girls; we gilded and painted the images to which our ignorant subjects bowed down; we repaired and embellished the car under the wheels of which crazy devotees flung themselves at every festival to be crushed to death; we sent guards of honor to escort pilgrims to the places of worship; we actually made oblations at the shrines of idols. All this was considered, and is still considered, by some prejudiced Anglo-Indians of the old school, as profound policy. I believe that there never was so shallow, so senseless a policy. We gained nothing by it. We lowered ourselves in the eyes of those whom we meant to flatter. We led them to believe that we attached no importance to the difference between Christianity and heathenism. Yet how vast that difference is! I altogether abstain from alluding to topics which belong to divines; I speak merely as a politician, anxious for the morality and the temporal well-being of society; and so speaking, I say that to countenance the Brahminical idolatry, and to discountenance that religion which has done so much to promote justice, and mercy, and freedom, and arts, and sciences, and good government, and domestic happiness, which has struck off the chains of the slave, which has mitigated the horrors of war, which has

raised women from servants and playthings into companions and friends, is to commit high treason against humanity and civilization.—Macaulay.

40—43. (40) **he abhorred,** the feelings characteristic of man can only by accommodation be applied to God. (41) **gave .. heathen,** as recorded in the Book of Judges.[a] (42) **subjection,** they were bowed down.[b] (43) **provoked him with,** R. V., "were rebellious in." **their counsel,** wh. was not His counsel, though that they should have sought. **brought low,** Polychr.; "wasted away in;" Le. xxvi. 39.

44—48. (45) **remembered,** etc., Le. xxvi. 41, 42. **repented,** De. xxxii. 36; Ps. xc. 13. The expression is anthropomorphic, and must be understood so as not to clash with the declaration, "God is not a man, that he should repent" (1 Sam. xv. 29).—Pul. Com. (46) **pitied,** etc., comp. 1 Kings viii. 50.[c] (47) **Save us,** this prayer is appropriate to those still in exile, and helps to fix the date of the Psalm. (48) **Blessed,** etc., a doxology, prob. added by some later hand, wh. marks the close of the fourth book.

Praise to God for His Mercies (vs. 48).—Behold—I. The ebullition of heart here manifested. 1. What is it that the Psalmist has been contemplating? 2. And was not all this a ground for praise and thanksgiving? From hence we may clearly see—II. The corresponding feeling which it should generate in us. 1. We have experienced an infinitely greater redemption than they; 2. And yet we have been as rebellious as ever they were; 3. Yet is God more merciful to us than ever He was to them; 4. What then should be our sense of gratitude towards Him? Address—(1) Those who are not yet liberated from their bondage; (2) Those who have been brought into the liberty of the children of God.—Simeon.

on her coronation robes, and goes out through universal power." — Emerson.

[a] Ju. ii. 14, iii. 12, 13, x. 7—9; Ps. lxxviii. 59—61.

[b] Comp. Ju. iii. 30, iv. 23, viii. 28, xi. 33.

"The more sympathies we gain or waken for what is beautiful, by so much deeper will our sympathy be for that which is most beautiful—the human soul." —Lowell.

[c] 2 Ki. xxv. 27; Ne. i. 11; Je. xlii. 12; Da. i. 9.

"There is a kind of gratitude in thanks, though it be barren, and bring forth but words" —Southern.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH.

Author. — unknown: date much after return fr. exile.

Subj., Jehovah's goodness to those who call upon Him.

1—3. (1) **good,** Ps. cvi. 1.[a] (2) **redeemed,** those just delivered out of exile and captivity by Jehovah; comp. Is. lxii. 12. **Enemy,** i. e. Babylon. (3) **all lands,** all parts of Babylon, and all other countries where temporary refuge had been found. **the south,** lit. "the sea," i. e. the Red Sea, lying south of Palestine.[b]

God's Providence.—Whatever may have been the circumstances under which the Psalm was written, or the particular occasion for which it was intended, there can be no doubt as to the great lesson which it inculcates. It teaches us not only that God's Providence watches over men, but that His ear is open to their prayer. It teaches us that prayer may be put up for temporal deliverance, and that such prayer is answered. It teaches us that it is right to acknowledge with thanksgiving such answers to our petitions. This was the simple faith of the Hebrew Poet.—Hom. Com.—The Cost of Redemption.—There are sometimes rare and beautiful wares brought into the market that are invoiced at almost fabulous rates. Ignorant people wonder why they are priced so high. The simple reason is that they cost so much to procure. That luxurious article labelled £200 was procured by the adventurous hunter, who, at the hazard of his neck, brought down the wild mountain goat, out of whose glossy hair the fabric was wrought. Yonder pearl that flashes on the brow of the bride is precious because it was rescued from the great deep at the risk of the pearl-fisher's life, as he was lifted into the boat half-dead, with the blood gushing from his nostrils. Yonder ermine, flung so carelessly over the proud beauty's shoulder, cost terrible battles with polar ice and hurricane. All choicest things are reckoned the dearest. So is it, too, in heaven's inventories. The universe of God has never witnessed aught to be reckoned in comparison with the redemption of a guilty world. That mighty ransom no such contemptible things as silver and gold could procure. Only by one price could the Church of God be redeemed from hell, and that the precious blood of the Lamb—the Lamb without blemish or spot—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.—T. Cuyler.

[a] Je. xxxiii. 11.

"Our faults are like a grain of sand beside the great mountain of the mercies of God."—Vianney.

[b] "The poet prefers to indicate a chief physical feature of the country lying below Palestine instead of its actual direction.....The sea here cannot mean the Dead Sea, for the region fr. wh. those redeemed are gathered must surely be beyond the borders of Palestine."—Jennings and Lowe.

Nothing affords a surer test of the reality of worship than the worshiper's joy in it. — Alexander McLaren.

4—7. (4) **They,** i. e. ancient Israel or any caravan in general. **solitary way,** lit. "waste of a way;" i. e. in a desert track.[a] (5) **Hungry,** etc., suitable description of the desert experiences. **fainted,** lit. covered itself, "was well nigh being extinguished." (6) **Then they cried,** when pressed by the utmost need.[b] (7) **led them,** "caused them to journey." **right way,** R. V., "straight way." **city of habitation,** or "where men dwell;" and where they might settle.

The Right Way.—I. The right way is not always a pleasant way. 1. Long; 2. Difficult; 3. Lonely; 4. Hazardous. II. The right way is always the best way. 1. God is our leader; 2. Heaven is the goal.—W. W. Whythe.

The Right Way.—The true philosophy of life is summed up here, in simply following God. Over the Apennines there is a wonderful railroad, on which, in a space of less than seventy miles, one passes through forty-three tunnels, some of them of very great length. The road is full of magnificent outlooks, but every few moments you go plunging into a tunnel. And certainly the traveler over this road would show his good sense by sitting still and being carried along the line of the rail; and not by getting out at the first station, and striking into the mountains to find another path, because he did not like the tunnels. He would be almost sure to be lost and to starve to death. The road has been built to carry him to his destination by the shortest way, and he will get there more quickly and safely through the tunnels than in any other way. O, if we could only believe the same thing of God's way! We want to build our own road, all out in the light; and the consequence is, it is much less direct than God's, and much more dangerous, and we cannot bring it out where we wish. God's way lies through the tunnels, long ones often, but it is the best road, the safest road: we shall reach the end most surely and quickly by it. And remember, it is not all tunnels either: in the region of the high rocks, where the tunnels are needed, are the most glorious prospects. If God's way is partly in darkness, the light places are full of beauty, commanding such outlooks of mercy and love as ought to reconcile us to the intervals of darkness.—M. B. Vincent.

8—11. (8) **Oh that,** etc.,[c] the refrain of the Ps. (9) **longing soul,** comp. Is. xxix. 8. (10) **sit,** R. V., "sat;" the figs. of this vs. are applied to Joseph's imprisonment (Ps. cv. 18); comp. Is. ix. 2; Job xxxvi. 8. (11) **rebelled,** against the messages of the prophets; by resistance against the commands and by blasphemy against God.

Praising God (vs. 8).—I. Let us daily praise God for common mercies; common as we frequently call them, and yet so priceless, that when deprived of them we are ready to perish. II. The sweetest and loudest note in our songs of praise should be of redeeming love.—Spurgeon.

12—14. (12) **with labour,** or trouble, misery. **fell down,** lit. stumbled. **none to help,** in their affliction it appeared as if God was inflicting merited punishment. (13) **Then,** etc., as vs. 6. (14) **darkness,** etc., as vs. 10.

In Their Trouble.—Observe the words, "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble." Not before, nor after, but in it. When they were in the midst of it; when trouble was wrapped round their head, as the weeds were wrapped round the head of Jonah; when they were surrounded by it, and could see no way out of it; when, like a person in a mist, they saw no way of escape before or behind; when nothing but a dark cloud of trouble surrounded their souls, and they did not know that ever that cloud would be dispersed;—then it was that they cried.—J. C. Philpot.

15—20. (15) **Oh that,** as vs. 8. (16) **broken .. sunder,** comp. Is. xl. 2. (17) **Fools,** etc.,[a] a general statement suggested by the special instances just recalled to mind. For term fool, see Ps. xiv. 1: wilful transgressors. **are afflicted,** or bring on themselves affliction. (18) **soul,** i. e. their physical organism; Job xxxiii. 20, 22. (19) **Then,** etc., vs. 13. (20) **word,** "we detect in such passages the first glimmering of St. John's doctrine of the agency of the personal Word. The Word by which the heavens were made (xxxiii. 6) is seen to be not merely the expression of God's will, but his messenger mediating between Himself and His creatures."—Perowne. **destructions,** grave-pits, Job xxxiii. 18; La. iv. 20.

a "Travel in distant, unexplored regions may be meant, enforced of necessity or by foreign compulsion.....All such miserable wanderers are admonished that chance does not direct their steps, but God's mercy redeems." —Calvin.

b "The original words, by their order and grammatical form, seem to express that the cry for help was followed immediately by help." —Spk. Com.

"The bird flies away to the thicket, and the fox hastens to its hole, every creature uses its refuge in the hour of danger, and even so in all peril let us flee unto Jehovah, the Eternal Protector." —Spurgeon.

c "Let them praise to Jahve His goodness, and His wonders to the children of men." — Delitzsch.

Dr. Johnson once reproved the Rev. Dr. Maxwell for saying grace in his presence without mentioning the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and hoped he would be more mindful in future of the apostolical injunction.

"From David we learn to give thanks in everything. Every furrow in the Book of Psalms is sown with seeds of thanksgiving." — Jeremy Taylor.

a "By folly is meant want of wisdom, i.e. ignorance of God and pravity of life which issues in ruin."—Spk. Com.

Confidence in God.—Sea-going ships do not trust to themselves in the windings of a river. Where they are hemmed in between rock and quicksand, grazing now the one and now the other, they take care to have a steam tug, both to bear them forward and guide them aright. They make no attempt at independent action. But I have also observed, that as soon as they get clear of the narrows,—as soon as they have attained a good offing and an open sea, they heave off, and hoist their own sails. They never want a steamer till they come to narrow water again. Such is the trust in God which the unreconciled experience. In distress they are fain to lean on the Almighty. While they are in the narrows, death seeming near on every side, conscious that they have no power and no skill, they would hang on the help of a Deliverer. Most devout they are and most earnest. But when they begin to creep out of these shoals of life,—when the path opens wide and clear and safe again, they heave off, and throw themselves on their own resources. Forthwith and henceforth they live without God in the world, until they are driven into straits again. Then they remember God and pray, as a distressed ship makes signals for help when she is entering a tortuous channel. This is not to have confidence in God. This is to provoke Him to anger.—Arnot.

21—24. (21) **Oh that,** vs. 8. (22) **rejoicing,** or singing, Polychr. "Rehearse His deeds with shouts of joy." (23) **go down,**[b] or traverse the sea. **business,** that of fishermen, traders, passengers, as well as sailors. (24) **wonders,** those of storm and calm, as indicated in vs. 25.[c]

Spiritual Navigation (vss. 23, 24).—I. Its weather is fouler to some than to others. II. An exposure to terrible disasters. III. There need be no shipwrecks. 1. He has an infallible chart; 2. He might have a safe anchorage; 3. He might have an all-sufficient captain.—Thomas.

The Sea.—We, made familiar with the sea by our reading, our travels, our scientific research, our sports—to many of whom a sea voyage is a luxury—we can but faintly realize the dread which the ocean inspired in a Hebrew. It was a significant threat which Moses threw out in his address to the Israelites, that, if they should refuse obedience to God, they should be carried back to Egypt in ships. They would have dreaded the conveyance as much as the return to bondage. —M. R. Vincent.

25—27. (25) **waves thereof,** of the sea. (26) **They,** i. e. the sailors. **melted,** there seems a reference to the physical suffering endured on a voyage. (27) **stagger,** with the movement of the vessel. **wit's end,** lit. "all their wisdom swallows itself up:" i. e. comes to nought.[a]

God in the Wind (vs. 25).—The celebrated St. Chad (a name known in early Church history) peculiarly recognized the finger of God in the "stormy wind" and tempest. It is recorded of him that if whilst reading he heard the sound of the wind, he would stop and utter a short prayer that God would be merciful to His people. If it increased, he would close the book, and, falling on his knees, remain fixed in prayer. But if it grew into a violent storm, then he would go to his church, and pass hours in earnest supplications and psalms. "Have you not read," he would say, "'The Lord thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave forth His voice. Yea, He sent out His arrows and scattered them, and He shot out lightnings and discomfited them?' For the Lord moves the air, raises the wind, darts lightnings, and thunders from heaven, to excite the inhabitants of the earth to fear Him, to put them in mind of the future judgment, to dispel their pride, and vanquish their boldness, by bringing into their thoughts the dreadful time when, the heavens and the earth being in a flame, He will come in the clouds with great power and majesty, to judge the quick and the dead."

28—30. (28) **Then,** etc., vs. 13. (29) **a calm,** Polychr., "He hushed the storm to a gentle whisper." (30) **haven,** Heb. a place surrounded or enclosed, a creek, cove, or fiord.

31—34. (31) **Oh that,** vs. 8. (32) **assembly,** or sitting place. "Reference of the vs. is to the temple and the judgment-seat, the two chief places of public resort." "The psalmist holds it to be not enough for men who have received deliverance to thank God secretly in their chambers. He requires them to make public profession of their thank-

"God, who is Guide and Emancipator, is also Healer and Lifegiver, and He is all these in the Word, which has become flesh, and dwelt and dwells among men."—Exp. B. The best thoughts are ever swiftest winged, the duller lag behind.

"There is nothing more foolish than an act of wickedness; there is no wisdom equal to that of obeying God." — Albert Barnes.

[b] Is. xlii. 10; Jno. i. 3.

[c] "The description of the sea in this Ps., its terrors and occupations, could not have been written before the reign of Solomon." — Dean Stanley.

"Mariners are said in Hebrew to 'go down' to the sea, bec. of the fact that the surface of the sea is below the level of the land." — Jennings and Lowe.

[a] "The waves rise up in mountains, then sink into deep valleys; the pilot skills not what to seek or shun, and his art is folly."—Ovid.

This "is the most highly finished, the most thoroughly poetical, of each of the four pictures of human peril and deliverance. It is painted as a landsman would paint it — the waves running mountains high, on which the tiny craft seemed a plaything, the helplessness of human skill, the gladness of the calm, the safe refuge in the haven." — Perowne.

fulness."—Pul. Com. (33) **turneth rivers,** etc., either by physical catastrophe, or by moral and political changes such as have rendered Babylonia a desert. Comp. Is. l. 2. (34) **barrenness,** marg. saltness.[a] **wickedness,** etc., the productiveness or barrenness of the soil is vitally related to the moral char. of a nation.

All Should Praise God (vs. 31).—I. Consider the goodness of God. 1. It is eternal; 2. Universal; 3. The source of all goodness. II. Consider His wonderful works. 1. In the mechanism of our frames; 2. In the adaptations of nature; 3. In His providential government; 4. In the plan of redemption. III. How ought we to praise Him? 1. In every heart; 2. By every means; 3. In every place; 4. At all times.—W. W. Whythe.

Hereof Judæa is at this day a notable instance (besides many parts of Asia, and Africa, once very fruitful, now, since they became Mahometan, dry and desert). Judæa, saith one, hath now only some few parcels of rich ground found in it; that men may guess the goodness of the cloth by the fineness of the shreds.—John Trapp.

35—38. (35) **standing water,** Polychr., "pools of water."[b] (36) **prepare,** etc., see the injunction of Jeremiah to the captives (Jer. xxix. 5). (37) **which may yield,** etc., Polychr., "and gather the fruits of the harvest." (38) **cattle to decrease,** this modest under-statement suggests a very great increase, comp. Job. xlii. 12. The riches of the people largely consisted in cattle.

The Beauty of Nature.—The fact is that there is hardly a roadside pond or pool which has not as much landscape in it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues of variable pleasant light out of the sky. Nay, the ugly gutter that stagnates over the drain-bars in the heart of the foul city is not altogether base; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark, serious blue of the far-off sky, and the passing of June clouds. It is at your own will that you see in that despised stream either the refuse of the street or the image of the sky. So it is with almost all other things that we unkindly despise.—Ruskin.

39—43. (39) **minished,** weakened, lessened in number. (40) **upon princes,**[a] who have acted thus oppressively towards His people. **wander,** etc., "wandering in a wilderness without a way denotes helpless embarrassment." (41) **like a flock,** Polychr., "increases his kindred like a flock of sheep;" suggestive of large increase, Job xxi. 11. (42) **righteous,** etc., Job v. 16, xxii. 19. (43) **Whoso is wise,** or if there be any truly wise.[b] **understand,** R. V., "consider."

Providence.—How great a volume might be written de observandis Providentiæ, concerning the observable things of Divine Providence. I have seen a picture (one of those you call kitchen-pieces) concerning which it hath been proposed to me, that for so many hours I should view it as curiously as I could; yet the proposer would for any wager undertake to show me something in it which I did not observe. Truly Providence is such a thing, I can never look upon it, I can never take the motions of it into my thoughts, but some new observation tendereth itself into my thoughts, I must turn my eyes from this wonderful work, for I see they will not be satisfied with seeing, my mind will never be filled with observation.—John Collinges.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH.

1—4. (1) **heart is fixed,** "steadfast," Ps. lvii. 7, 8. **my glory,** i. e. "my soul," all the powers and faculties wh. belong to mankind created in the image of God. (2) **early,** as the sign of earnestly.[c] (3) **nations,** peoples living round about God's people. (4) **above the heavens,** "high as the heavens;" Ps. lvii. 10. **truth,** "faithfulness. **clouds,** or skies.[d]

The Immensity of Mercy (vs. 4).—I. The moral character and number of its objects. II. The grand purpose of its operations. III.

"Surely oak and threefold brass surrounded his heart who first trusted a frail vessel to the merciless ocean." —Horace.

[a] Job xxxix. 6.

"When I meet with a querulous husbandman, he tells me of a churlish soil, of a wet seed-time, of a green winter, of an unkindly spring, of a luke warm summer, of a blustering autumn; but I tell him of a displeased God, who will be sure to contrive and fetch all seasons and elements, to his own most wise drifts and purposes."— Joseph Hall.

[b] Is. xli. 18, 19.

"Yes! place me 'mid far stretching woodless wilds! where no sweet song is heard; the heath bell there, would soothe my weary sight, and tell of Thee."—Cowper.

"The glorious light of all the sky was underneath this globe, and birds grew silent." —Washington Irving.

[a] Job xii. 21.

[b] Comp. Hos. xiv. 9.

author prob. David in part; time, vss. 6-10, early monarchy; the rest Maccabaean.
Contents, Ps. lvii. 7-11, and Ps. lx. 5-12.

[c] Better, "I will awake the dawn."

[d] Je. li. 9.

"As thou wouldst have God prosper thy labor in the day and sweeten thy

The extraordinary means it employs. IV. The countless multitudes it has saved. V. The exhaustless provisions which remain.—Thomas.

The Great Mercy of God.—God will fill the hungry soul, because He Himself hath excited and stirred up this hunger; He plants holy desires in us, and will not He satisfy those desires which He Himself hath wrought in us? As in the case of prayer, when God prepares the heart to pray, He prepares His ear to hear. God will satisfy the hungry, because the hungry soul is most thankful for mercy. The Lord loves to bestow His mercy where He may have most praise; we delight to give to them that are thankful. Musicians love to play where there is the best sound. God loves to bestow His mercies where He may hear of them again. God keeps open house for hungry sinners; He invites His guests, and bids them come "without money." Wait awhile, and thou shalt be filled. Spiritual mercies are not only worth desiring, but waiting for.—F. Watson.

5, 6. (5) **Be thou exalted,** or, Oh show Thyself exalted. Polychr., "Arise above," etc. (6) **thy beloved,** plural, referring in the original passage (Ps. lx. 5) to the followers of David. **me,** R. V., "us."

Praise to God.—Let thy praise be according to the greatness of thy mercy. Ah, if we were to measure our devotion thus, with what ardor should we sing! The whole earth with its overhanging dome would seem too scant an orchestra, and all the faculties of all mankind too little for the hallelujah. Angels would be called in to aid us, and surely they would come. They will come in that day when the whole earth shall be filled with the praises of Jehovah. We long for the time when God shall be universally worshiped, and His glory in the gospel shall be everywhere made known. This is a truly missionary prayer. David had none of the exclusiveness of the modern Jew, or the narrow-heartedness of some nominal Christians. For God's sake, that His glory might be everywhere revealed, he longed to see heaven and earth full of the Divine praise. Amen, so let it be.—Spurgeon.

7—13. (7) **spoken,** respecting the establishment of David's dynasty.[a] (8—13) **Gilead,** etc., see notes on Ps. lx. 7—12. (10) **the strong city,** i. e. Petra, the Rock-city of Edom.

Moab is My Washpot.—The office of washing the feet was in the East commonly performed by slaves, and the meanest of the family, as appears from what Abigail said to David when he took her to wife, "Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord," 1 Sam. xxv. 41; and from the fact of our Saviour washing His disciples' feet, to give them an example of humility, John xiii. 5. As this office was servile, so the vessels employed for this purpose were a mean part of household stuff. When, therefore, it is said, "Moab is my washpot," the complete and servile subjection of Moab to David is strongly marked. This is expressed, not by comparing Moab to a slave who performs the lowest offices, as presenting to his master the basin for washing his feet, but by comparing him to the mean utensil itself.—James Anderson. Petra.—His hand shall lead him even to Petra, which seems unapproachable by human strength. That marvelous rock-city of the Edomites is surrounded by rocks some of which are three hundred feet high, and a single path twelve in width leads to it. The city itself is partly hewn out of the cloven rocks, and its ruins, which, however, belong to a later period, fill travelers with amazement.—A. F. Tholuck.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND NINTH.

1—5. (1) **Hold,** etc., or "be not silent." "If God makes no sign when men are grievously persecuted, he seems to be indifferent to their sufferings. Surely He will not thus treat one who praises Him continually." Ps. xxviii. 1, xxxv. 22. "God speaks when He interferes to judge and to save."—Delitzsch. **God . . praise,** De. x. 21; Je. xvii. 14. (2) **mouth,** etc., wicked men had spoken lies and slander against him. (3) **without a cause,** any ground, or occasion, given them by me (John xv. 25). (4) **my love,** i. e. in return for my love to them. **prayer,** lit.

rest in the night, clasp them both together with thy morning and evening devotions." — Wm. Gurnall.

"The law of the pleasure of having done anything for another is, that the one almost immediately forgets having given, and the other remembers eternally having received." —Seneca.

"He that has nature in him must be grateful; it is the Creator's primary law, that links the chain of beings to each other." — Madden.

"Whatsoever I do, I would think what will become of it when it is done. If good, I will go on to finish it. If bad I will either leave off where I am, or not undertake it at all." — Feltham.

[a] 2 Sa. vii.

"It is not conclusive evidence that we are not called to undertake a given work or perform a certain duty, because it is very difficult, or even impossible for us to succeed without special help from God." —W. S. Plumer.

"Thoughts are but dreams, till their effects be tried." — Shakespeare.

author, unknown.
date, early in the Babylonian captivity.
A Psalm of imprecation.

"Slander is a poison which extinguishes charity, both in the slanderer and in the person who listens to it; so that a single calumny may prove fatal to

"but I, prayer:" i. e. prob. "I take refuge in prayer." (5) **rewarded me,** requited, comp. Ps. xxxv. 12, xxxviii. 20.

Prayer.—Persecuted saints are men of prayer, yea, they are as it were made up all of prayer. David prayed before; but, oh, when his enemies fell a persecuting of him, then he gave himself up wholly to prayer. Oh, then he was more earnest, more fervent, more frequent, more diligent, more constant, and more abundant in the work of prayer! When Numa, king of the Romans, was told that his enemies were in arms against him, he did but laugh at it, and answered, "And I do sacrifice;" so when persecutors arm themselves against the people of God, they do but divinely smile and laugh at it, and give themselves the more up to prayer. When men arm against them, then they arm themselves with all their might to the work of prayer; and woe, woe to them that have armies of prayer marching against them.—Thomas Brooks. Evil for Good.—At the battle of Alma, in September, 1854, a wounded Russian was calling piteously for water. Captain Eddington, whose heart was kind and charitable, ran to him, and, stooping, gave him the much-desired beverage. The wounded man revived. The captain ran forward to join his regiment, when the wretch, who had just been restored by his kindness, fired, and shot him who had been his friend in the time of need.—Hom. Com.

Calumny.—

"No might nor greatness in mortality
Can censure 'scape; back-wounding calumny
The whitest virtue strikes: what king so strong,
Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?"

—Shakespeare.

6—9. (6) **Set,** as a judge, or ruler. Let him experience the bitterness of the lot wh. he tries to make for me. **Satan,** "adversary," a malicious accuser. **right hand,** to plead against him. (7) **condemned,** go out guilty. **prayer .. sin,** or a failure, i. e. let not his pleas for mitigation of punishment be attended to. Some think, however, that prayer to God is meant.[a] (8) **take his office,** Polychr., "seize his possessions," Ac. i. 20. (9) **children,** by Mosaic law the family shared in the curse of the wicked man.

Imprecations.—The other morning at family worship, I happened to be reading one of the imprecatory psalms, and my little boy, a lad of ten years, asked with some earnestness: "Father, do you think it right for a good man to pray for the destruction of his enemies like that?" I said, "My son, if an assassin should enter the house by night, and murder your mother, and then escape, and the sheriff and citizens were all out in pursuit, trying to catch him, would you not pray to God that they might succeed and arrest him, and that he might be brought to justice?" "Oh, yes!" said he, "but I never saw it so before. I did not know that that was the meaning of these Psalms." "Yes," said I, "my son, the men against whom David prays were bloody men, enemies to the peace of society, seeking his own life, and unless they were arrested and their wicked devices defeated, many innocent persons must suffer."—F. G. Hibbard.

10—13. (10) **vagabonds,** as Cain, Ge. iv. 12. **desolate places,** Cheyne, "let them be driven from their desolate houses." (11) **extortioner,** or usurer. **strangers,** barbarians and foreigners. (12) **extend mercy,** when his punishments and sorrows are upon him. (13) **posterity be cut off,** Polychr., "let extirpation befall his posterity." Comp. Is. liii. 8. **generation following,** i. e. his grandchildren. Let them be the last of his race.

The Imprecatory Psalms.—They illustrate an imperfect moral development under the partial influence of the Spirit of God. So viewed, there is no reason to apologize for them, or to condemn them, much less to imitate them. We may accept them as part of the Bible and not be troubled by them.—W. E. Barton.

14—17. (14) **of his fathers,** these, if not forgiven, may be visited on him.[a] (15) **them,** the sins mentioned in vs. 14. **memory of them,** of the sinners of vss. 2—13. (16) **broken in heart,** the feeble-hearted one, whom he should have pitied and helped.[b] (17) **cursing,** he loved

an infinite number of souls, since it kills not only those who circulate it, but also those who do not reject it." — St. Bernard.

"A Christian prays at rising, at lying down, and as he walks: like a prime favorite at court, who has the key to the privy stairs, and can wake his prince by night." —A. M. Toplady.

"Constant thought will overflow in words unconsciously." — Byron.

a "His prayer not addressed to the human judge for mitigation of the sentence, but here, as always, prayer to God." — Perowne.

"If He prayed who was without sin, how much more it becometh a sinner to pray." — St. Cyprian.

"'Mysterious' was the one word written opposite this psalm in the pocket Bible of a late devout and popular writer. It represents the utter perplexity with which it is very generally regarded."—Joseph Hammond.

"Nurture your mind with great thoughts. To believe in the heroic makes heroes." — D'Israeli.

"These terrible verses are prophecy, but they are prayers too; and prayers which can only be accounted for by remembering the spirit of the old dispensation."—Exp. B.

a Ex. xx. 5.

b "This vs had its most signal fulfilment when the people arose and constrained Pilate to crucify the Man of sorrows."—Stier.

doing it to others, not receiving it on himself. **let it be far,** etc., Polychr., "let none light on him."

God Does Not Despise the Poor (vs. 16).—Moses was the son of a poor Levite; Gideon was a thresher; David was a shepherd-boy; Amos was a herdsman; the Apostles were "ignorant and unlearned:" Zwingle emerged from a shepherd's hut amongst the Alps; Melancthon was a workman in an armorer's shop; Martin Luther was a child of a poor miner; Carey, who originated the plan of translating the Bible into the language of the millions of Hindostan, was a shoemaker in Northampton; Dr. Morrison, who translated the Bible into the Chinese language, was a last-maker in Newcastle; Dr. Milner was a herd-boy in Aberdeenshire; Dr. Adam Clark was the child of Irish cotters; John Foster was a weaver; Andrew Fuller was a farm-servant; William Jay of Bath was a herdsman.—Bowes.

18—20. (18) **into .. water,** as the water into his inward parts.[c] Polychr., "let him clothe. . . . Let his curses soak into," etc. (19) **garment,** "let it cling to him both outwardly and inwardly—inwardly, as the penetrating oil; outwardly, as the everyday dress."—Pul. Com. (20) **reward,** wages, or Divine recognition and visitation.

Clothed with Cursing.—I remember hearing of a rich man who had a large plantation. He was the most terribly profane man that had ever been known in the neighborhood. He could hardly speak a word on any subject without mingling it with oaths. It was perfectly shocking to hear him speak. At length he was seized with a stroke of something like paralysis. This left him in good health, only he had lost the use of his limbs. And the remarkable thing about it was, that the power of speech was taken away from him, except that he could still swear. Profane words were all that he could utter. A dreadful garment it must have been to wear.—Bib. Ill.

21—25. (21) **do thou for me,** R. V., "deal thou with me." **O God the Lord,** O Jehovah Adonai.[d] "The twofold name of God, and the pronoun 'Thou' (Heb.), show the intensity of the appeal." (23) **gone,** or "I pass away." **tossed .. locust,**[e] as shaken out of the deep folds of as Eastern robe. (24) **fasting,** the sign of sorrow and humiliation. **faileth of fatness,** is wasted so as to contain no more fatness. (25) **shaked their heads,** doubtfully, counting him one given up for lost by reason of God's punishments. Comp. Ps. xxii. 7, xliv. 14; Matt. xxvii. 39.

For Thy Name's Sake.—My enemies would soon become my friends and my protectors, if I would but renounce my allegiance to thee; my refusal to disobey thee constitutes all my crime in their eyes. My cause, therefore, becomes thine, it will be to thy glory to declare thyself on my side, lest the impious should take occasion from my sufferings to blaspheme thy holy name, as if thou hadst not the power to deliver, or wert utterly indifferent to those who, renouncing all human help, have put their confidence in thee.—Jean Baptiste Massillon.

26—28. (26) **Help me,** the tone here changes from lamentation to confident hope of deliverance. (27) **done it,** brought the Psalmist out of the distressing circumstances of wh. his enemies took such unfair advantage. (28) **thy servant,** Ps. lxix. 17.

Prayer.—I. The Prayer. II. The Believing Title: "O Lord my God." III. The attribute relied upon. IV. The motive for the petition —Spurgeon.

Thy Mercy.—As thy mercy is, so let thy salvation be. The measure is a great one, for the mercy of God is without bound. When man has no mercy it is comforting to fall back upon God's mercy. Justice to the wicked is often mercy to the righteous, and because God is merciful He will save His people by overthrowing their adversaries.—Spurgeon. Curses.—Fear not thou, who art a saint, their imprecations; this is but like false fire in the pan of an uncharged gun, it gives a crack, but hurts not; God's blessings will cover thee from their curse.—William Gurnall.

29—31. (29) **Let mine,** etc., R. V. marg., "Mine adversaries shall be:" the language of confident expectation that his prayer is heard and answered. (30) **among the multitude,** i. e. in the congregation; Ps. xxii. 25. (31) **stand .. poor,** i. e. Jehovah is ready to repel any false accuser. **condemn,** lit. "from the judges of his soul."[a]

"This is a fearful arithmetic: if the wicked add sins, God will add plagues. If they subtract from others their rights, God shall subtract from them his mercies." — Thomas Adams.

[c] "He has clothed himself in cursing, he has drunk it in like water (Job xv. 16, xxxiv. 7), it has penetrated even to the marrow of his bones, like the oily preparations which are rubbed in and penetrate to the bones." — Delitzsch.

"The world is a mirror which, on the whole, gives back the smile or the frown which we present to it. The psalmist does not doubt that, in general, the curser is cursed back again and the blesser blessed." —Maclaren.

[d] Ps. lxviii. 20 cxl. 7, cxli. 8.

[e] Job xxxix. 20.

"When we have only a little we should be satisfied; for this reason, that those best enjoy abundance who are contented with the least; and so that the pains of poverty are removed, simple fare can give a relish equal to the most expensive luxuries."—Epicurus.

"Troubles are usually the brooms and shovels that smooth the road to a good man's fortune, of which he little dreams."—Basil.

[a] "The contrast bet. the closing thought and vs. 6 is remarkable. At the right hand of the tormentor stands Satan as an ac-

cuser, at the right hand of the tormented one stands God as his vindicator; he who delivered him over to human judges is condemned, and he who was delivered up is 'taken away out of distress and fr. judgment' by the Judge of the judges." — Delitzsch.

"It was wont to be said of Archbishop Cranmer, if you would be sure to have Cranmer do you a good turn, you must do him some ill one; for, though he loved to do good to all, yet especially he would watch for opportunity to do good to such as had wronged him." — Spencer.

The last words which Miss Willard uttered as she was about to pass on to the other world were: "How beautiful to be with God!" Died Feb. 17, 1898.

author,— David

A Psalm of Messiah, as Priest-King.

Principal N. T. references are Matt. xxii. 44; Mk. xii. 36; Lu. xx. 42; Ac. ii. 34; He. i. 3, 13.

a "A formula used in prophetic or other solemn or express declarations."—Fausset.

b "Equivalent to saying, 'Be thou associated with Me in My kingly dignity, in My power and universal dominion."—Perowne.

c "An expression derived from the custom of placing the foot upon the necks of the vanquished." —Spk. Com.

d "He gives us no other mark as to the spot in which Christ is

Adrian and the Bishop (vs. 31).—Terantius, captain to the Emperor Adrian, presented a petition that the Christians might have a temple by themselves, in which to worship God apart from the Arians. The emperor tore his petition, and threw it away, bidding him ask something for himself, and it should be granted. Terantius modestly gathered up the fragments of his petition, and said, with true nobility of mind, "If I cannot be heard in God's cause, I will never ask anything for myself."—Cheever. The Power of Prayer to Change our Moods.—There is clearly a different tone in the closing portion of this psalm. It may not be so evident as we should like it to have been, but it is there. The storm of angry feeling dies down, and we only hear mutterings after the loud thunder-peals. There is gradually more earnest prayer for himself, less concern about his enemy, and a fuller confidence that God will answer his prayer, and, in His own wise way, bless the good and shame the evil. It is his praying on that has wrought this change of mood. He has prayed himself into a better mind, by the very saying out so freely all the bitter things he had thought and felt. Prayer Changes our Moods by Exhausting the Bad Moods.—Here is a most singular thing. Saying out all our bad feelings to a fellow-man would only intensify the badness. We should excite ourselves even to plan revengeful things. But if we say out all our bad feelings to God, we find they get exhausted. Somehow, in His presence, we cannot keep them up. Another mood must come, as tears come when passion has expended itself. So prayer helps by finding us the opportunity for safely saying out all that is in our hearts. Prayer Helps Us by Encouraging New and Better Moods.—Gradually, as we pray on, the sense of God's presence makes us feel kinder. We cease to want our enemy punished, we want ourselves vindicated; and then presently we feel as if we could just leave our enemy in the hands of God. The Judge of all the earth will surely do the right. So mood after mood changing for the better, we come at last to the Christian mood, and do as the Lord Jesus did, and as St. Stephen did—pray for our enemies.—Pul. Com. At the Right Hand of the Poor.—One of the oldest Rabbinical commentaries has a very beautiful gloss on this passage. "Whenever a poor man stands at thy door, the Holy One, blessed be His Name, stands at his right hand. If thou givest him alms, know that thou shalt receive a reward from Him who standeth at his right hand."—Alfred Edersheim.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TENTH.

1—3. (1) **The Lord,** "Jehovah." **said,**[a] lit. an oracle, or utterance of Jehovah. "In our opinion the Divine oracle in vs. 1 is not a declaration made by the community, which is absolutely impossible, nor even an utterance of an unknown prophet regarding David, but an oracle which has just now been made to David (Matt. xxii. 43), an utterance of David's regarding the promised coming Christ."—Delitzsch. **my Lord,** i. e. David's Lord, or Messiah. **my right hand,** or on My throne.[b] **footstool,** the emblem of complete submission.[c] (2) **rod . . strength,** or strong sceptre: emblem of a king's power. **rule thou,** or assume dominion.[d] (3) **shall be willing,** R. V., "offer themselves willingly." **beauties of holiness,** or clad in holy, festive garments. **from . . youth,** some understand this of the Messiah Himself and explain, "As the dew of the morning, abundant, refreshing, spreading far and wide, miraculous, so is the might of thy perpetual youth" (Spk. Com.); others, and the larger number, interpret it of Messiah's army, "As dew out of the early morning dawn, descending by a silent, mysterious birth from the starlit heaven, so comes to Messiah his mighty host of followers" (comp. Isa. xxvi. 19).—Pul. Com.

Christ's Kingdom.—I. The internal evidence of Christ's kingdom is in His people's willingness: "Thy people shall be willingness—thy people shall be a people all willing"—all volunteers, not pressed men. II. The external evidence of it lies in His people's holiness; "the beauties of holiness;" or as it may be rendered—"in the magnificence of His sanctuary," for the ornaments of the sanctuary and the dress of the

priests were very splendid. When you once give yourselves to God, you become temples of God; and sanctity must adorn that heart which is a living temple of the Holy Ghost.—J. Bennett.

Conquests of Christ.—What successes did the Jews anticipate from their Messiah? The wildest dreams of their rabbis have been far exceeded. Has not Jesus conquered Europe, and changed its name into Christendom? All countries that refuse the cross wither. . . . And the time will come when the vast communities and countless myriads of America and Australia, looking upon Europe as Europe now looks upon Greece, and wondering how so small a space could have achieved such mighty deeds, will still find music in the songs of Zion, and still seek solace in the parables of Galilee.—B. Disraeli.

4—7. (4) **sworn,** comp. Heb. vi. 13, 17, 18. **not repent,** the oath and decree are absolutely immutable. **a priest,** "this is the first intimation of the union of the kingly and priestly functions in the person of Messiah." **forever,** this priesthood wh. is the prototype of Christ's priestly relation to humanity, rests on an unchangeable foundation. **order of,** or manner of, i. e. such a priesthood as was suitable for humanity at large. Melchizedek was a Gentile priest. **Melchizedek,** Ge. xiv. 18—24. (5) **The Lord,** i. e. Jehovah. **strike through,** or dashes in pieces.[a] (6) **judge,** in sense of bringing overwhelming punishments on them. **heathen,** R. V., "the nations." **dead bodies,** a fig. taken fr. the scenes of a great battle.[b] But Messiah's triumphs are spiritual. **wound,** R. V., "shall strike through." **heads,** i. e. the rulers or princes. (7) **drink .. way,** "of the brook shall he drink in the way." **lift .. head,** refreshed by his drinking, he derives new vigor for the pursuit of his enemies.

Melchizedek Type of Christ (vs. 4).—I. In His name and title. 1. His name—King of Righteousness; 2. His title—King of Peace. II. In the mystery of His origin. 1. Without genealogy—Divine Sonship; 2. Without parentage—Incarnation. III. In the perpetuity of His priesthood. IV. In His benediction. 1. The person; 2. The manner; 3. The substance.—McEwen.

The Order of Melchizedek.—I. Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. 1. That order was unique; (1) In its loneliness; (2) In that it was underived and untransmitted; (3) In its efficacy; 2. That order was righteous; 3. That order was peaceful; 4. That order was royal; 5. That order was superior; (1) In its antiquity; (2) In its perpetuity; (3) In its universality. II. Christ's appointment to this priesthood is held under Divine authority.—Wm. Jones.

Christ's Empire.—"Alexander," remarked the great Napoleon, "Cæsar, and myself have founded empires. But upon what do we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love; and at this moment millions of men would die for Him. I die before my time, and my body will be given back to the earth to become food for worms. Such is the fate of him who has been called the great Napoleon. What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, and adored, and which is extended over the whole earth?"—Hom. Com.

to reign but this —in the midst of Thine enemies." — Luther.

"Heaven is not imposed upon by coronets and thrones. All mankind have crown rights, and woe to those who injure them. Those who do so must and will be removed. The tyrant must be hurled from his throne before the subject can breathe the free air of liberty. Pharaoh must be engulfed, that Israel may pursue her path of progress."
—Wm. Jones.

[a] Re. vi. 17, xi. 18.

[b] Is. lxvi. 16; Joel iii. 2; Re. xiv. 19, 20.

Jesus Christ is the true centre of gravity; and it is only as the forces of humanity are pivoted on him that they are in balance. —G. D. Boardman.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH.

author unknown date,— after the restoration.

An alphabetical Psalm recounting God's mercies.

1—5. (1) **Praise ye,** Heb. Hallelujah! **whole heart,** involving ideas of sincerity and earnestness. **assembly .. congregation,** Cheyne, "in the council and assembly of the upright," but one congregation is designated. (2) **works,** here those especially wh. concerned His people. **sought out,** Polychr., "worthy of examination," made the objects of devout meditation and study.[a] "Studied as the monuments of God's gracious purposes." (3) **work,** or working. **righteousness,** i. e. His beneficence to man.[b] (4) **made .. remembered,** His wonderful deeds are a perpetual memorial of Him.[c] (5) **meat,** the word is generally used of the "prey" of wild beasts. Chosen here in allusion to feeding in the wilderness.

The psalmist furnishes us with matter for praise from the works of God. 1. The greatness of His works and the glory of them. 2. The

[a] "Searched into (are they) for all their delights." — Jennings and Lowe.

[b] Ps. xix. 9, cxii. 3.

[c] Nu. xvi. 40; Jos. iv. 6, 7; Ps. lxxviii. 3, 4

"The man who has nothing else above him has self, that ug-

liest, most obscene of deities: Belial, and Mammon, and Beelzebub in one. Self is the deity of millions, and its worship is as vile, as brutalising, as ever were the rites of Chemosh, or Milcom, or Ashtoreth. In general, even fallen man has something besides himself above him; even where self presides in the worship, it is rather as priest than idol."—Vaughan.

righteousness of them. 3. The goodness of them. 4. The power of them. 5. The conformity of them to His word of promise. 6. The perpetuity of them.—Matthew Henry.

6—10. (6) **that .. give,** better, "by giving." The Div. power was shown in securing the heritage for God's people. (7) **verity,** absolute truthfulness.[d] **sure,** fixed, established, firm on the foundations of truth. (8) **stand fast,** R. V., "are established," by their own inherent worth; they need no upholding. (9) **redemption,** fr. Egyp. bondage. **covenant,** in Sinai. **reverend,** such as should fill us with awe and holy fear. (10) **beginning,** first and principal part:[e] so "chief part in." **good understanding,** marg. "good success:"[f] "a true prudence." **his commandments,** R. V., "thereafter," i. e. according to the "fear of the Lord."

Religion the Highest Wisdom, Sin the Greatest Folly (vs. 10).—I. Instances of the folly and madness of such as do not make the fear of the Lord the beginning of their wisdom. 1. Men will not take the safest side in religion, which reason and self-love carry them to in other respects; 2. It is a folly to believe the great truths of religion, and yet act contrary to such a belief; 3. To pretend to love God, when their character shows the contrary; 4. To hope for heaven, when they have no good title; 5. To be more concerned about time than eternity.—Pres. Davis.

The Great Redeemer (vs. 9).—"I have taken much pains," says the learned Selden, "to know everything that was esteemed worth knowing among men; but, with all my disquisitions and reading, nothing now remains with me to comfort me, at the close of life, but the passage of St. Paul: 'It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' To this I cleave, and herein I find rest."

[d] Ps. xix. 7; Re. xv.3.

[e] Job xxviii. 28; Pr. i. 7, ix. 10.

[f] Pr. xiii. 15; also De. iv. 6; Ec. xii. 13.

"His seed shall be a warrior in the earth."—Hengstenberg.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH.

author unknown.
date—after the restoration
an acrostic, or alphabetical Ps.
Subj., the excellence of piety, and its reward.

1—3. (1) **Blessed,** etc., Ps. i. 1. **delighteth,** "true fear produces obedience, and this happiness." (2) **mighty,** a word generally used of warlike strength, but sometimes in the more general sense of wealth, substance, etc.[a] **generation,** family, or descendants. (3) **Wealth,** Bishop Butler has well shown how, in God's moral government of the world, virtue tends to accumulate to itself the good things of this life, and vice to disperse and dissipate them.[b] **righteousness,** with chief reference to beneficence, or a liberal regard for the wants of others, vs. 9.[c] **for ever,** or permanently; unaffected by changes of prosperity or adversity: "His righteous deeds will stand forever as a monument of his character."—Cheyne.

[a] Ru. ii. 1; 1 Sa. ix. 1; 2 Ki. xv. 20; Is. v. 22.

[b] Pr. iii. 16. viii. 18.

[c] "What is meant may be that when the God-fearing man thus receives the reward of temporal riches, he is not led astray by them, but continues unswerving in his merciful regard for the wants of others. Or else that he had the long-lived reputation of a beneficent man." — Jennings and Lowe.

"He is the blessed man who is most observant of God's will, and careful to follow it." — David Dickson.

Praise Ye the Lord.—I. Who should be praised? Not man, self, wealth, etc., but God only. II. Who should praise Him? All men, but specially His people, the blessed ones described in this psalm. III. Why should they do it? For all the reasons mentioned in succeeding verses. IV. How should they do it? Chiefly by leading such a life as is here described.—Spurgeon.

God's Blessings.—And there is this peculiarity about God's blessings, that, while they satisfy the present need they create new needs, and stimulate to fresh search and asking. The Arabian story tells of the young prince who, having squandered his patrimony in dissipation, was directed in a vision to dig up the floor of his chamber; and on doing so discovered a subterranean apartment. On exploring this, he found an urn; and on opening the urn discovered a key. This set him looking for the lock to which the key belonged, and having at last discovered a secret door in the wall he opened another chamber containing eleven statues of pure gold, and a pedestal for a twelfth, with an inscription bidding him search for the remaining statue. Even so each blessing of God reveals another on beyond, by revealing the need of another. When you shall receive a gift which leaves you no wish but to sit down and enjoy it, you may seriously question whether that gift is a blessing from God; since God's blessings always point to the goodness that is laid up.—Marvin R. Vincent.

4—6. (4) **light in the darkness,** a fig. for "relief in calamity."[a] Polychr., "To the upright in darkness as a light arises The Merciful, the Compassionate, and the Just." **gracious,** etc., further descriptions of the upright man.[b] (5) **a good man,** R. V., "Well is it with the man that dealeth graciously," etc. **lendeth,** Ps. xli. 1; Pr. xiv. 21. **with discretion,** or judgment; R. V., "He shall maintain his cause in judgment," i. e. in the court of judgment. (6) **everlasting remembrance,** as long as men can remember anything.[c]

The Sowing for the Righteous.—I. Who is the upright man? He is one who—1. Looks upward; 2. Walks upward; 3. Points upward. What is the blessedness promised him? Light in the darkness of—1. Ignorance; 2. Doubt; 3. Perplexity; 4. Affliction; 5. Death.—W. W. Whythe.

Remembrance.—The world has no interest in keeping up the memory of bad men, and, as soon as it can be done, hastens to forget them. Wicked men are remembered only when their deeds are enormous, and then their memory is cherished only to admonish and to warn. The world has no interest in keeping up the memory of Benedict Arnold, or Alexander VI., or Cæsar Borgia, except to warn future generations of the guilt and baseness of treason and profligacy. It has an interest in never suffering the names of Howard, Wilberforce, Henry Martyn to die, for these names excite to noble feelings and to noble efforts wherever they are known.—Barnes. Discretion.—There is a story concerning divers ancient Fathers, that they came to St. Anthony, enquiring of him, what virtue did by a direct line lead to perfection, that so a man might shun the snares of Satan. He bade every one of them speak his opinion; one said, watching and sobriety; another said, fasting and discipline; a third said, humble prayer; a fourth said, poverty and obedience; and another, piety and works of mercy; but when every one had spoken his mind, his answer was, That all these were excellent graces indeed, but discretion was the chief of them all.—John Spencer.

7—10. (7) **evil tidings,** of calamities to himself, or his nation. An assured confidence in God lifts him above all fear.[a] **fixed,** "settled on a sure basis, the one basis that is solid and unmovable."—Pul. Com. Ps. lvii. 7. (8) **until he see,** Polychr., "In the end he beholds the downfall of," etc. (9) **dispersed,**[b] not hoarded for himself, comp. note on vs. 3. "An abundant scattering of good is intimated." **horn,** Ps. lxxv. 4, 5. (10) **grieved,** filled with irritation. **gnash,** etc., Ps. xxxv. 16. **melt away,** the fig. for despair.[c]

The Government of the Heart (vs. 8).—I. Show the need of this government. II. Give some rules for it. 1. Let there be a proper reverence of self; 2. Prayer; 3. Recollect the connection between thought and action; 4. Trace pain and pleasure to their proper source; 5. Wisely employ time; 6. Cherish the love of candor; 7. Encourage a sense of the constant presence of God.—Sydney Smith.

Fearlessness, Fixedness, and Faith.—I. Fearlessness consists in—1. Not being afraid of evil tidings before they come; 2. Not being afraid of evil tidings when they come; 3. Not being afraid of evil tidings after they come. II. Fixedness is—1. A steady preparation to meet all possible fears; 2. A strong determination to resist the shock of evil when it comes. III. No fixedness without faith.—William Jones.

Confidence in God (vs. 7).—When Alexander the Great was suffering from a violent fever, he received a letter denouncing his physician Philip as a traitor who had been bribed to take him off by poison. At that very moment the physician stood by his bedside with a medicinal draught. The king gave the letter to Philip to read, and then unhesitatingly drank off the medicine. Thus should the believer confide in God, without wavering or doubting.

Faith Triumphant.—

Triumphant faith!
Who from the distant earth, looks up to heaven,
Seeing invisibility, suspending
Eternity upon the breath of God.
She can pluck mountains from their rooted thrones,
And hurl them into ocean; and from pain,

[a] Ps. xcvii. 11.

[b] "Some take the three attributes as in apposition with the noun 'light.' God Himself being the Light. They read, 'Here hath arisen a Light, viz. He who is gracious.' The ref. to the upright man is, however, to be preferred."—Perowne.

[c] Pr. x. 7; 2 Pe. i. 5—7, 10.
"But let us ask, Do we also shine
With glory from Christ our Sun? Will aught we do in the world for Him
Be missed when life is done?"—Charlotte Murray.
"Be useful when thou livest, that they may
Both want, and wish thy pleasing presence still." —George Herbert.
"He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend; eternity mourns that."—Sir H. Taylor.

[a] "The epithets 'established.' 'trusting,' 'upheld,' are all strikingly descriptive of the true attitude of faith, as that wh. leans on, and is supported by, God." —Perowne.

[b] 2 Cor. ix. 9.

[c] 2 Sa. xvii. 10.
"Sin is essentially a departure from God."—Luther.
"It is not the quantity of thy faith that shall save thee. A drop of water is as true water as the whole ocean. So a little faith is as true faith as the greatest. A child eight days old is as really a man as one of sixty years; a spark of fire is as true

And prisons, and contempt, extort the palm
Of everlasting triumph. She doth tread
Upon the neck of pride, like the free wind
On angry ocean. Lo! with step erect
She walks o'er whirlpool waves and martyr fires,
And depths of darkness and chaotic voids;
Dissolving worlds, rent heavens, and dying suns;
Yea, and o'er paradises of earth's bliss,
And oceans of earth's gold, and pyramids
And temples of earth's glory: all these pave
Her conquering path to heaven—all these she spurns
With feet fire-shod, because her hand is placed
Immovably in God's; her eye doth rest
Unchangeably on His; nor will she stop
Till, having cross'd the stormy waves of pain
And fiery trial, she may lay her head
Upon her Father's breast and take the crown
From love's rejoicing hand.—Miss Tatham.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH.

fire as a great flame; a sickly man is as true living as a well man. So it is not the measure of thy faith that saves thee—it is the blood that it grips to, that saves thee."—Welsh.

As fences, facing each other on opposite sides of the right path, keep the flock from straying, the terrors and the promises of the Lord are everywhere found not far asunder.

author unknown; date, after the restoration.

Praise to Him who raiseth out of low estate.

"Pss. cxiii—cxviii. The Egyptian Hallel ...the O. T. Magnificat. It was sung at the three great Heb. feasts, at the new moon, and on the eight days of the Feast of Dedication, but it is especially associated with the Passover." — W. E. Barton.

a "A designation of the sacred nation common in the latter part of Isaiah." — Jennings and Lowe.

b Ex. xxxiii. 19.

c "The Rabbins actually speak of a man's wife as his house, and the same form of speech is current at the present day among the Arabs. The similarity of the Gothic words 'heiva, house,' and 'hiva, wife,' may perhaps be noticed in illustration of this usage." — Jennings and Lowe.

"If God gives a wife children He thereby makes her thoroughly at home, and rooted-in in her position." — Delitzsch.

1—4. (1) **servants,** etc.,[a] all faithful Israelites. (2) **name of the Lord,** regarded as summing up His perfections and gracious works.[b] (3) **From .. same,** fig. for from east to west, or throughout the world. **to be praised,** better, "let it be praised." (4) **nations,** Polychr., "heathendom." **above,** etc., Ps. cxlviii. 13.

God is to be praised. 1. All the day. 2. All the world over. 3. Publicly in the light. 4. Amidst daily duties. 5. Always—because it is always day somewhere.—Spurgeon.

Praise.—It is said, that, when the sun is going out of sight, the pious Swiss herdsman of the Alps takes his Alpine horn, and shouts loudly through it, "Praise ye the Lord!" Then a brother herdsman on some distant slope takes up the echo, "Praise ye the Lord!" Soon another answers, still higher up the mountains, till hill shouts to hill, and peak echoes to peak, the sublime anthem of praise to the Lord of all. —Foster's Cyc. of Illus.

5—9. (5) **Who,** etc., in omniscience and condescension enthroned there in heaven and suffering nothing here upon earth, not even that which is most lowly, to be unnoticed by Him.—Delitzsch. Comp. Ex. xv. 11. (6) **humbleth,** Polychr., "Who looks far down from heaven on the earth." (7) **raiseth,** etc., the earth is full of mercy of Jehovah, 1 Sa. ii. 8; Lu. i. 52, 53. (8) **of his people,** Jehovah's people, regarded as more honorable than the ordinary princes of nations. (9) **barren,** or houseless.[c] **children,** "a house in Heb. implies children; without wh. it is cheerless, and without wh. the wife has no secure place."—Spk. Com. The historical allusion is prob. to Hannah.

The Unparalleled Condescension of God.—1. None are so great, and therefore able to stoop so low. 2. None are so good, and therefore so willing to stoop. 3. None are so wise, and therefore so able to "behold" or know the needs of little things. 4. None are infinite, and therefore able to enter into minutiæ and sympathize with the smallest grief: Infinity is seen in the minute as truly as in the immense.—Spurgeon.

The Greatness of God.—"About the time of the invention of the telescope, another instrument was formed which laid open a scene no less wonderful. This was the microscope. The one led me to see a system in every star; the other leads me to see a world in every atom. The one taught me that this mighty globe, with the whole burden of its people, and of its countries, is but a grain of sand on the high field of immensity. The other teaches me that every grain of sand may harbor within it the tribes and the families of a busy population. The one told me of the insignificance of the world I tread on, the other redeems it from all its insignificance; for it tells me that in the leaves of every forest, and in the flowers of every garden, and in the waters of every rivulet, there are worlds teeming with life, and numberless as are the

glories of the firmament. . . . By the one there is the discovery that no magnitude, however vast, is beyond the grasp of the Divinity; but by the other we have also discovered that no minuteness, however shrunk from the notice of the human eye, is beneath the condescension of His regard."—Chalmers. An Unfathomable God.—A God all known and comprehended is no God. That which I fully know and understand, is below, not above me, for I have mastered it. I have not to worship it, it must bow down to me. That which towers immeasurably above me, which I cannot scale and cannot fathom, before which I am as nothing, that and that alone, I fall down to and adore—not ignorance, but knowledge is the mother of devotion. Nevertheless, the sense of ignorance in the created mind, of immeasurable ignorance and infirmity, is preliminary and essential to all true adoration.—J. Young.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH.

1—4. "This is perhaps the most beautiful of all the Psalms which touch on the early history of Israel."—Perowne. (1) **strange language,** lit. a stammering (i. e. unintelligible) people; other than the sacred Hebrew language.[a] (2) **Judah .. Israel,** this distinction shows how the mind had been affected by the separation under Rehoboam. It does not appear whether the tribes or the parts of the country are chiefly in the writer's mind. **sanctuary,** place of his habitation.[b] **dominion,** the whole people came under God's special protection. (3) **sea,** Ex. xiv. 21. **Jordan,** these two miracles "marked respectively the beginning and the end of Israel's long journey."—Cheyne. Jos. iii. 13. (4) **mountains,** etc., poetical ref. to Div. manifestation on Sinai, see Ex. xix. 18.[c]

The Temple and the Kingdom.—I. The Temple. In the sanctuary—1. God dwells. 2. God manifests Himself. 3. God communicates His will. 4. God must be adored. II. The Kingdom. 1. God reigns in His dominion. 2. God reigns over His dominion. 3. God reigns for the good of His subjects. 4. God reigns that His dominion may be universally acknowledged.—Hom. Com. The removal of obstacles—I. Antagonisms are quelled. 1. Sin and Satan have receded. 2. Idolatry has receded. 3. Infidelity has receded. II. Boundaries are removed. 1. Christianity levels all class distinctions. 2. Christianity obliterates all physical barriers. 3. Christianity fills up all intellectual chasms. III. Difficulties are overcome. 1. All difficulties of nature. 2. All difficulties of human prejudice.—William Jones.

Jordan was Driven Back.—The waters know their Maker: that Jordan which flowed with full streams when Christ went into it to be baptized, now gives way when the same God must pass through it in state: then there was use of his water, now of his sand. I hear no more news of any rod to strike the waters; the presence of the ark of the Lord God, Lord of all the world, is sign enough to these waves, which now, as if a sinew were broken, run back to their issues, and dare not so much as wet the feet of the priests that bare it. How subservient are all the creatures to the God that made them! How glorious a God do we serve; whom all the powers of the heavens and elements are willingly subject unto, and gladly take that nature which he pleaseth to give them. —Abraham Wright.

5—8. (5) **ailed thee,** comp. Ps. lxviii. 16; Is. xxiii. 7. **driven back,** R. V. "turnest back." (6) **skipped,** vs. 4. (7) **Tremble,** as the mountains did at the Theophany. (8) **rock,** Ex. xvii. 6. **standing,** R. V. "a pool of." **flint,** better, "the steep cliff."[a] Miracles of mercy, showing at once God's almightiness and his care for Israel.

Tremble, Thou Earth.—The causing of water to gush forth out of the flinty rock is a practical proof of unlimited omnipotence and of the grace which converts death into life. Let the earth then tremble before the Lord, the God of Jacob. It has already trembled before him, and before him let it tremble. For that which he has been he still ever is; and as he came once he will come again.—Franz Delitzsch. Our Hallel. —Our deliverance from under the yoke of sin is strikingly typified in the going up of Israel from Egypt, and so also was the victory of our Lord

Is. liv. 1; Ga. iv. 27.

This feast is spread for you. "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, come.—McCheyne.

Bodies are thoughts precipitated into space. The basis of the British and Foreign Bible Society was a thought in the mind of Rev. Mr. Charles, of Bala; that of the Anti-slavery Society of England a thought of Thomas Clarkson. A thought sent Moffat to Africa, Morrison to China, Williams to the South Sea Islands, and Judson to Burmah.

author,—
prob. same as the preceding.
date,
after the restoration.

"Nature's commotion before the God of the Exodus."

Pss. cxiii. and cxiv were sung before the Passover supper; Pss. cxv.—cxviii., after.

a "The strange language is particularised as the sign of a barbarous, unholy people, contrasted with the holy, separated people."
—Spk. Com.

b Ex. xix. 6; 2 Cor. vi. 16—18.

c Comp. Ps. xxix. 6; Ha. iii. 6.

a "The conclusion, that a look of the God of Jacob did these miracles, and turned the rock not into water, but a pool of water, and the flint into a springing fountain, makes up a picture of sublimity to wh. no parallel can be found." — Herder.

over the powers of death and hell. The Exodus should therefore be earnestly remembered by Christian hearts. Did not Moses on the mount of transfiguration speak to our Lord of "the exodus" which he should shortly accomplish at Jerusalem; and is it not written of the hosts above that they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb? Do we not ourselves expect another coming of the Lord, when before his face heaven and earth shall flee away and there shall be no more sea? We join then with the singers around the Passover table and make their Hallel ours, for we too have been led out of bondage and guided like a flock through a desert land, wherein the Lord supplies our wants with heavenly manna and water from the Rock of Ages. Praise ye the Lord.—Spurgeon.

Inquiry for God.—

What art Thou, mighty One? and where Thy seat?
Thou broodest on the calm that cheers the lands,
And Thou dost bear within Thy awful hands
The rolling thunders and the lightnings fleet;
Stern on Thy dark-wrought car of cloud and wind
Thou guid'st the northern storm at night's dread noon,
Or on the red wing of the fierce monsoon
Disturb'st the sleeping giant of the Ind.
In the drear silence of the polar span,
Dost Thou repose? or in the solitude
Of sultry tracks, where the lone caravan
Hears nightly howl the tiger's hungry brood?
Vain thought! the confines of His throne to trace,
Who glows through all the fields of boundless space.

—H. K. White.

"The God of metaphysics is but an idea. But the God of religion, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sovereign Judge of actions and thoughts, is a power." — Joubert.

"If I make the seven oceans ink, if I make the trees my pen, if I make the earth my paper, the glory of God cannot be written."

—Kabir.

"What is it that engrosses the thoughts of the world? Pleasure, wealth, honor and esteem; in fine, the making ourselves kings, without reflecting what it is to be a king, or to be a man." — Pascal.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH.

author, unknown: date, time of the second temple

"This [i.e. Pss. cxv. — cxviii.] is probably the 'hymn' which our Lord and his disciples sang before going out into the Garden of Gethsemane." — Barton.

Subj., the vanity of idols, and idol-worship.

Matt. xxvi. 30.

1—3. (1) **Not unto us,** the expression of deep humility, and distrust of self. **unto thy name,** i. e. glorify thy covenant-name and promise. **mercy,** or loving-kindness.[a] (2) **Wherefore,** Ps. lxxix. 10. **Where .. God?** Ps. xlii. 3, 10.[b] (3) **But,** or seeing that: "all the while our God is in the heavens,[c] i. e. is invisible, but not impotent like the idols of the heathen, "he doeth whatsoever he desires."

God's Mercy Acknowledged (vs. 1).—I. The duty of gratitude to God for the mercies received from Him in the time of trouble. II. The duty which this mercy in trouble should teach us.—E. Trees.

Non Nobis Domine (Not unto us, O Lord) was the battle-song of the heroic John Sobieski, king of Poland, Sept. 12, 1683, when he marched down from the heights of Kalenberg, and defeated the immense army of the Turks which was besieging Vienna, and had reduced it to the last extremity. It was a turning-point in history, the final great Eastern invasion which has thundered at that gate of Europe; and ever since, the Turkish power and Mahommedan faith have been on the wane. There was indescribable enthusiasm as the psalm was sung, "Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."—Ker. Where is Their God?—Here we have the devil's chain. Each several link is manifest of that awful fetter with which the devil binds his victims ere he casts them into hell. Many of our sceptics give atheism a very proud lineage; its ancestors are thought, logic, love, and righteousness; God's Word declares atheism to be the monstrous child of corruption. Yes; atheism springs not from a clear head, but a disordered heart; it is not the characteristic of a pure and simple age, but of a civilization debauched with luxuries, and mad with pride.—Hom. Com.

4—8. (4) **Their idols,** Ps. cxxxv. 15—18. **work .. hands,** this is the all-sufficient stamp of their worthlessness. A man-made god must be worthless.[a] What can such "nothingness" do against the Almighty? (7) **speak .. throat,** lit. mutter, not even utter articulate sounds. (8) **like .. them,** are becoming, like them, powerless, senseless. "As is a god so is

"This attributes of God would be assailed if the taunt of the heathen should be allowed to pass unsilenced. It is God's glory which is at stake." — Perowne.

c. Is. xlvi. 10; Da. iv. 35; Eph. i. 11.

a Ac. xvii. 29.

"The author might know, how little was the distinction made by the

his worshiper." Ro. i. 21, 22. Polychr., "As dead as they may their carvers become."

Idols.—I. The character of idol gods. Whether our gods are natural objects or riches or worldly pleasures, they have no eye to pity, no ear to hear petitions, no tongue to counsel, no hand to help. II. The character of the true God. He is all eye, all ear, all tongue, all hand, all feet, all mind, all heart. III. The character of the idol worshipers. All become naturally assimilated to the objects of their worship.—Spurgeon.

Idols.—They are metal, stone, and wood. They are generally made in the form of man, but can neither see, hear, smell, feel, walk, nor speak. How brutish to trust in such! and next to them, in stupidity and inanity, must they be who form them, with the expectation of deriving any good from them. So obviously vain was the whole system of idolatry that the more serious heathens ridiculed it, and it was a butt for the jests of their freethinkers and buffoons. How keen are these words of Juvenal! "Dost thou hear, O Jupiter, these things? nor move thy lips when thou oughtest to speak out, whether thou art of marble or of bronze? Or, why do we put the sacred incense on thy altar from the opened paper, and the extracted liver of a calf, and the white caul of a hog? As far as I can discern, there is no difference between thy statue and that of Bathyllus." This irony will appear the keener, when it is known that Bathyllus was a fiddler and player, whose image, by the order of Polycrates, was erected in the temple of Juno at Samos.—Adam Clarke.

9—13. (9) **Israel,** the whole people. Trust in Jehovah placed in contrast beside the trust of the heathen in their idols. **thou .. their,** the change in the pronoun indicates that these sentences were repeated as responses in a liturgical service. (10) **house of Aaron,** the priesthood. (11) **fear the Lord,** the pious ones of the nation, or the proselytes of the gate.[a] (12) **will bless,** the confidence is felt bec. of past blessings. (13) **small and great,** i. e. all, without exception.

Thanksgiving for Harvest (vs. 12).—I. The Lord has been mindful of us in our temporal wants. II. He has been mindful of us in our eternal welfare. III. Let us see how these two great blessings have operated upon us.—R. Jones.

Trust.—Faith is the cable which binds our boat to the shore, and by pulling at it we draw ourselves to the land; faith unites us to God, and then draws us near to him. As long as the anchor of faith holds there is no fear in the worst tempest; if that should fail us there would be no hope left. We must see to it that our faith is sound and strong, for otherwise prayer cannot prevail with God. Woe to the warrior who throws away his shield; what defence can be found for him who finds no defence in his God?—Spurgeon.

14—18. (14) **increase you,** De. i. 11. Perhaps here the idea is, "add blessings to you and your children."—Calvin. (15) **made .. earth,** Ps. cxxi. 2, cxxiv. 8, cxxxiv. 3. (16) **heaven,** etc., better, "The heavens are a dwelling-place for the Lord." But the earth He has given to men. Hence men ought to sing praises continually. (17) **dead,** etc., "Praise is the function only of the living, who receive these blessings."[b]

The Earth for Man (vs. 16).—The earth is given to man for two purposes. I. As affording a strong rebuke to all social monopoly. II. As affording a strong rebuke to religious indifference. The earth should be a scene—1. For man's physical development; 2. A school for man's intellectual culture; 3. A temple for man's religious worship; 4. As a sphere for evangelistic labor.—Thomas.

Praise is the highest function that any creature can discharge. The Rabbis have a beautiful bit of teaching buried among their rubbish about angels. They say that there are two kinds of angels, the angels of service and the angels of praise, of which two orders the latter is the higher, and that no angel in it praises God twice; but having lifted up his voice in the psalm of heaven, then ceases to be. He has perfected his being, he has reached the height of his greatness, he has done what he was made for; let him fade away. The garb of legend is mean enough, but the thought it embodies is that ever true and solemn one, without which life is nought: "Man's chief end is to glorify God."—Maclaren. The Earth Given to Men.—The Astronomer has learned the

heathen worship between the symbol and the thing symbolized. Accordingly, the worship of idols seems to him, to be the extreme of self-stupefaction, and of the destruction of human consciousness."

— Delitzsch.

"It is an observation of Chrysostom, that that very hand which the humble John Baptist thought not worthy to unloose the shoe on our blessed Saviour's feet, that hand our Lord thought worthy to baptize his sacred head."

"It takes a good many shovelfuls of earth to bury the truth."

—Swiss Proverb.

[a] "These are most naturally understood as proselytes, and, in the prominence given to them, we see the increasing consciousness in Israel of its Divine destination to be God's witness to the world."

—Exp. B.

[b] Ps. cxviii. 17; Is. xxxviii. 18, 19.

"A converted sailor, in the gladness of his first love, was heard to exclaim, 'To save such a sinner as I am! He shall never hear the end of it.'" — Foster.

"What change has made the pastures sweet,
And reached the daisies at my feet,
And cloud that wears a golden hem?
This lovely world, the hills, the sward—
They all look fresh, as if the Lord
But yesterday had finished them!" — Jean Ingelow.

thoughts that are written in that starry universe. The Geologist goes down and reads many thoughts in the rocky crust of the earth. The Botanist unveils the structures of flowers, and explains the actions and peculiarities of living plants; but all these things were written before he examined them. So with the Anatomist: he has discovered volumes of thought in this body which is fearfully and wonderfully made; but every thought was there before ever man looked within. This vast universe exhibits thoughts in every leaf and every grain of sand, in every drop of water, in the mountains and in the heavens. Whence came those thoughts?—Alex. Stewart.

"And see the country, far diffused around, one boundless blush, one white impurpled shower of mingled blossoms: where the raptured eye hurries from joy to joy." — Thompson.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH.

author unknown; date, after the restoration.

Thanksgiving.

1—4. (1) **I love,**[a] lit. "I love, because the Lord," etc., the first two words stand alone, as if the full heart needed not to express its object. Polychr., "I love to know that Jehovah hears the call of my supplications." (2) **as .. live,** lit. in my days.[b] (3) **sorrows of death,** "distresses no more to be escaped from than Hades." His case was hopeless. **hell,** Hades, the unseen world of spirits, not the place of punishment for the wicked. (4) **called .. Lord,** comp. prayer of Hezekiah. Is. xxxvii. 2, 3.[c]

Thanksgiving.—The whole psalm is the foundation of a remarkable hymn of thanksgiving by one Burkard Waldis. He was a monk who became a noted evangelist in Germany. After embracing the doctrines of the Reformation, he was seized by night, carried hundreds of miles from his home, and kept in severe imprisonment till rescued by his brothers, John and Bernhard, at cost of great danger and travail; and to them he dedicates this song, with others which he made in his captivity, as he says, To drive away the sad and weary thoughts and Satanic temptations with which he was assailed.—Ker.

a Ps. xviii. 1.

b Is. xxxix. 8.

c A Jewish tradition refers this Ps. to Hezekiah.

"This was a burial song of the early Church, looking through death to life, and in this way a companion to Psalm xvi."
—Ker.

5—8. (5) **Gracious,** etc.,[d] he extols God's mercy to him, and so leaves us to assume that he was healed and recovered. (6) **simple,** inoffensive, guileless, dependent. Comp. our Lord's requirement that His disciples should be as little children.[e] **helped,** R. V. "saved." (7) **rest,** that confidence in God. wh. the Psalmist habitually cherished, but wh. pain and peril had, for a time, disturbed. (8) **death .. tears .. falling,** gathering up all human calamities.[f]

The Soul's Rest (vs. 7).—I. In what sense is God the soul's rest? 1. Repose from doubt; 2. Refuge from fear; 3. Sufficiency in want; 4. The center of affection. II. When ought we to adopt this language? 1. When we feel inclined to depart from God; 2. When we have really backslidden from Him; 3. When we have received special benefits from Him.—M. W. Whythe.

Rest in God.—I say we need to get back to this old Hebrew directness of relation between God and man. But we never can do so through any conception of God which makes Him less than a personal Father in Heaven. If God is merely a law, a settled order, we may as well give up all thought of finding rest in that. The moment the personal God is taken away, and an abstract law substituted, we are robbed of prayer, of worship, of spiritual communion, of heavenly love, of faith, of thanksgiving,—of the whole range of moral affections and acts which must attach to the object of the soul's rest. A law has no wisdom, no foresight, no love. You cannot pray to a law; you cannot bow at the shrine of gravitation, nor sing praises to cohesion. Not until you get a person behind the law, can you look up to the heavens for justice or mercy, or send up petitions and thanksgivings from earth.—M. R. Vincent.

d Ps. ciii. 8. cxi. 4, cxii. 4.

e Mat. v. 5, xi. 25.

"In the Book of Prov. the term 'simple' is otherwise used, denoting the simplicity of one whose moral understanding is dwarfed."— Jennings and Lowe.

f Ps. lvi. 13.

"As he that walketh in the sun careth not whether the moon shine or no, because he hath no need of her light; even so, when a man hath found the heavenly riches, he careth not for earthly riches."—Cawdray.

9—11. (9) **I will walk,** "unhurried and free from care." **land of the living,** to wh. the sick man felt himself restored.[a] (10) **I believed,** I have learned trust in God by painful experience. Polychr., "I was full of reliance," i. e. even while the affliction was going on he felt confident that God would come. **therefore,** etc., better, "For I must speak;" I must confess it; while afflicted I have been hasty, and despairing. (11) **liars,** hypocrites, "disappointing expectations."—Cheyne. **In sense of** failing those who trust in them; deceitful as a **broken reed.**[b]

a Comp. Is. xxxviii. 18, 19; also Ps. xxvii. 13, lii. 5, lvi. 13.

b "He had looked to himself and there had seen nothing but weakness; he had looked to other men, and found them all

A Hasty Speech.—I. There was much truth in it. II. It erred on the right side, for it showed faith in God rather than in the creature. III. It did err in being too sweeping, too severe, too suspicious. IV. It was soon cured. The remedy for all such hasty speeches is—Get to work in the spirit of verse 12.—Spurgeon.

Hasty Thought.—Hasty thought is best kept as thought. It is not always clearly recognized that suggestions made to the mind are not sin. They may be made by circumstances, or made by our fellow-men, or made by the spirit of evil. So far as they only awaken thought in us, no sin has been committed; our will has not been concerned in the matter. There is no more than response to suggestion according to the ordinary working of mental laws. So far there is something which we cannot help. If left alone, it will soon pass away. Only that is kept in memory on which the attention is fixed. Passing thought passes into oblivion. And this is the best fate for such a hasty thought as this of the psalmist. Hasty thought does mischief when it gets into speech. So our Lord taught that the things which come out of a man defile him. It takes an act of will to give expression to a thought. That act of will makes the thought our own. If it is a bad thought, it must do a bad work by getting expression; for that expression starts bad thoughts in others. The psalmist's hasty word sowed the seed of mistrust, which spoils the relations of human society.—R. Tuck.

12—14. (12) **render,** as a fitting expression of gratitude and renewed trust. (13) **cup of salvation,** or deliverances, prob. only a poetical fig. for the portion allotted to man, whether prosperity or adversity. "I will accept the portion which God allots me." "Many see in the word an allusion to the cup passed round at the Paschal meal."[c] **call upon,** in praise and prayer. (14) **I will,** etc.,[d] perhaps this psalm was to be sung before a sacrifice."

A Return Demanded (vs. 2).—I. Consider God's benefits. 1. Creation; 2. Preservation; 3. Redemption. II. Consider the question. 1. His demands; 2. His justice; 3. Our sufficiency; 4. Our gracious ability.—W. W. Whythe.

Services Due to God.—We may use the words of Socrates to his scholar, who saw in the contemplation of nature only a proof of his own insignificance, and concluded "that the gods had no need of him," which drew this answer from the sage—"The greater the munificence they have shown in the care of thee, so much the more honor and service thou owest them."

Thankfulness and Murmuring.—

Some murmur when their sky is clear
And wholly brought to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue;
And some with thankful love are filled
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a dreary task,
And all good things denied?
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How Love has in their aid
(Love that never seems to tire)
Such rich provision made.—Abp. French.

15. Precious, weighty. "It is no light matter to Jehovah that His servants suffer and die."[a] **death,** to his saints, i. e. wh. is sent on His saints. He appoints to each one the day and circumstances of his death.

Anywhere the Place for a Christian to Die.—There is something that touches the imagination of people in the thought of a minister's dropping down dead in the pulpit; but I do not think I should be any nearer heaven if I died in my pulpit than if I died on my farm, or on a railroad car, or on a vessel at sea. Where the soldier is fighting his king's battle

deceitful and treacherous as a broken reed."—Perowne.

Ro. iii. 4.

vs. 11. Commenting on this ver. a preacher once said, "Had David lived in this parish he might have said it at his leisure."

"Give not thy tongue too great a liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken is, like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue."—Quarles.

c Rashi's comment is, "I will bring the drink offerings for the thanksgivings which I vowed, according as it says, 'I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.'"

d Ps. lxvi. 13—15.

"Truth is the most powerful thing in the world, since fiction can only please by its resemblance to it."—Shaftesbury.

"That which we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it; but being lacked and lost,
Why then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not give us
While it was ours."—Shakespeare.

a "Babylas, Bishop of Antioch, in the Decian persecution, advanced cheerfully to death, singing these words."—Delitzsch.

"The apostolical constitutions recommend, among others, this verse to be sung at the funeral of the faithful."—Spk. Com.

Ps. lxxii. 14.

A tear dropped in the silence of a sick chamber often rings in heaven with a sound which belongs not to earthly trumpet or bells.

[b] 2 Ki. xx. 5; Is. xxxviii. 22.

"God! who is the Father of spirits, is the most tolerant. Man! who is the first of animals, is the most oppressive — yet he calls himself the shadow of the Almighty. Man becomes angry, and punishes for every little affront; God bears with all the insults and vices of man. Man pretends to admire the benign nature of the Deity; yet when he sees another imitate His clemency and good-nature, he calls him a fool. So much for man's consistency." — Jerdan.

"Men never make truths; they only recognize the value of this currency of God. They find truths as men sometimes find bills in the street, and only recognize the value of that which other parties have drawn."—Beecher.

—that is the place for him to die. Whatever his posture may be—whether he is standing with uplifted hand to smite the enemy, or is reclining for repose—that is the place. Put on the harness that God has given you, and walk up to your strength, and let the Master call you when He wants you. Work in the spirit of love, and hope, and faith, and trust. Know your immortality, and rejoice in it. Give your hand and your heart to the work which God's providence has appointed for you; and understand that that place is good enough to die in which is good enough to work in, and that that work is good enough to die on that is good enough to live on. I would not take away any sanctity from these higher states, but I would add sanctity to the lower elements of life.—H. W. Beecher.

16—19. (16) **truly,** i. e. "Even so, Lord, for," etc., entitled therefore to Divine favor. **I am,** i. e. I hereby devote myself, my restored life, afresh to Thee. **son .. handmaid,** as it were "a home-born slave." **bonds,** those of affliction. Free, the Psalmist felt longing desire to bind himself for ever to God. (17) **sacrifice,** etc., He. xiii. 15, 16. (18) **pay,** thank-offerings in payment of vows, as vs. 14. (19) **In the courts,** so making public acknowledgment of the Div. goodness; comp. action of Hezekiah.[b]

The Emphatic Profession (vs. 16).—I. The declaration of service. I am Thy servant—1. By election; 2. By choice; 3. By covenant; 4. By obligation. II. The recognition of the Divine claim. III. The celebration of Divine grace. Apply:—1. It is desirable to be a professed servant of God; 2. It is lamentable to be only a professed servant of God.—Stems and Twigs.

Glorious Riches of God.—Suppose your father had more oxen, and horses, and cattle than you could count over in a day, or in a week—would he not be able to take care of his child and give him everything he needs? Yes. But God has "cattle upon ten thousand hills," and "every beast of the forest" is his, and His are "all the fowls of the air." Can He not give you food from all these cattle, and clothe you, and give you beds from the feathers of all these fowls? Yes; He is able to do it all. Suppose your father was so rich that he had ten thousand men to work for him every day, all at work, and all paid to their mind, and all happy in working for him. Would you have any fears that he could not take care of you and do you good? But God has more servants than these. He has all the good people on earth in His employment, and all the angels in heaven. He pays them all. And if you need anything, He can send one or a million of these servants to you to help you.—J. Todd. Servants of God.—No one pretends that every man who is not an avowed servant of God is a defier of all moral obligation. No one denies that such often exhibit the loveliest moral traits; but the question is broader than this, and concerns the moral administration under which each man lives. An American citizen may go and live for years in Paris. He may speak the French language well, dress like those around him, and be, in no outward respect, distinguishable from a native Parisian; and yet he may acknowledge no allegiance to the French government. When a decisive issue arises which compels him to declare himself, you find him at the American minister's, under the protection of his own flag.—M. R. Vincent.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH.

author unknown, date, after the restoration.

A Doxology.

[a] Eph. iii. 5, 6.

[b] "An indication of those wider sympathies wh. appear to have manifested themselves after the exile."

—Perowne.

1, 2. (1) **nations,** or Gentiles, see Ro. xv. 11.[a] **praise him,** R. V., "laud him." (2) **merciful kindness,** the more usual term is "loving-kindness." **toward us,** i. e. Israel.[b] **truth,** i. e. faithfulness to promises. **endureth,** Heb. more simply, "is for ever."

Praise.—There was a beautiful tradition among the Jews. It is to this effect. When God had created the world, He asked the angels what they thought of this work of His hands. One of them replied that it was so vast and so perfect that only one thing was wanting to it, namely, that there should be created a clear, mighty and harmonious voice, which should fill all the quarters of the world incessantly with the sweet sound, thus day and night to offer thanksgiving to its Maker for His

incomparable blessings. Thus our thanksgiving should not be an exercise of devotion practiced now and then. It should be incessant, the voice of a love which is ever living and fresh in our hearts.—F. W. Faber. Manifold Mercy.—As John Bunyan says, all the flowers in God's garden are double; there is no single mercy: nay, they are not only double flowers, but they are manifold flowers. There are many flowers upon one stalk, and many flowers in one flower. You shall think you have but one mercy; but you shall find it to be a whole flock of mercies. When you lay hold upon one golden link of the chain of grace, you pull, pull, pull; but lo! as long as your hand can draw there are fresh "linked sweetnesses" of love still to come. Manifold mercies! Like the drops of a lustre, which reflect a rainbow of colors when the sun is glittering upon them, and each one, when turned in different ways, from its prismatic form, shows all the varieties of color; so the mercy of God is one and yet many; the same, yet ever changing; a combination of all the beauties of love blended harmoniously together.—Spurgeon.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH.

1—4. (1) **Oh give thanks**. the formula adopted on occasion of laying the foundation-stone of the second temple.[a] **mercy,** Heb. chesed, strictly, "gracious goodness." (2) **Israel,** the whole nation. If the Ps. was composed after the Exile, it is remarkable that the restored people should be called by the comprehensive term "Israel." (3) **house of Aaron,** the priestly class, regarded as religious leaders. (4) **fear the Lord,** the more pious among the people,, the proselytes at the gate.[b]

Psalm cxviii.—This is my psalm, my chosen psalm. I love them all; I love all holy Scripture, which is my consolation and my life. But this psalm is nearest my heart, and I have a peculiar right to call it mine. It has saved me from many a pressing danger, from which nor emperor, nor kings, nor sages, nor saints, could have saved me. It is my friend, dearer to me than all the honors and power of the earth. But it may be objected, that this psalm is common to all; no one has a right to call it his own. Yes; but Christ is also common to all, and yet Christ is mine. I am not jealous of my property; I would divide it with the whole world. And would to God that all men would claim the psalm as especially theirs! It would be the most touching quarrel, the most agreeable to God—a quarrel of union and perfect charity.—Luther.

5—9. (5) **in distress,** "from out of the straits into wh. I had come," prob. ref. to Babylonian captivity. **and set me,** or by setting me. This was Jehovah's answer. **large place,** open space in wh. I could breathe freely, contrasting with the "straits" he had been in. (6) **on my side,** Heb. "for me."[c] (7) **help me,** i. e. "as my helper:" as a helper Jehovah outweighs the greatest multitude of helpers.[d] (8) **trust in,** Polychr. "to flee to."[e] (9) **princes,** of other nations,[f] Ps. cxlvi. 3.

God for Us More than All against Us (vs. 6).—I. What is implied? 1. A sense of His care; 2. The enjoyment of His protection; 3. The feeling of His love. II. Why need we not fear? 1. He is wise; 2. He is mighty; 3. He is good; 4. He is faithful.—W. W. Whythe.

A Kingdom Shaken by a Miner's Son.—It is the 15th of April, 1521. On a day of spring the potentates of Europe are assembled in the great hall of a German town; bishops are there, and knights, and lords, and dukes, and ambassadors, and princes, in all their dignity and state, and there is the representative of the guilty splendor of the Papacy, and there above all is the still youthful emperor of all the world, the mighty autocrat of Germany, and Spain, and Italy, and of the Indies. Into the midst of them all is ushered a poor monk, son of a German miner. He has been reminded of the fate of John Huss, the great reformer of Bohemia. "Huss," he answers, "was burnt, but the truth was not burnt with him." He has been warned of his extreme peril. "The devil saw in my heart," he wrote, "that if there should be as many devils at Worms as tiles upon the house roofs, I should joyfully have plunged among them." In his poor mean garb of serge he enters the august

"The praise-times of religious life are precisely similar to those resting and refreshing times which we all value so much as relief from business strain."

Psalm 118.

author unknown.

date, later restoration.

A liturgical Psalm for a festival day.

[a] Ezr. iii. 11; comp. also 1 Chr. xvi. 34; 2 Chr. v. 13, vii. 3; Jer. xxxiii. 10, 11.

[b] Comp. Ps. cxv. 9—11.

"The Psalm falls into two divisions. The first half, vs. 1-19, is sung by the festive procession, which is led up by priests and Levites, and which goes up to the temple with sacrificial animals. With vs. 19 it stands at the entrance. The second half, vs. 20-27, is sung by the company of Levites, who receive the festive procession. Then vs. 28 is the answer of those who have arrived, and vs. 29 is the concluding song sung by them all."

—Delitzsch.

[c] Ps. lvi. 4—11.

[d] Ps. cxii. 8. Ps. liv. 4, 7.

[e] Ps. xxxiii. 16—19.

[f] The Jews had learnt by painful experience how little they could trust in princes, for the work which had been begun under Cyrus had been threatened under Cambyses, and had been suspended under the pseudo-Smerdis, and it was not till Darius came to the throne that they were allowed to resume it." —Perowne.

We lie to God in prayer if we do not rely upon him after prayer.—Swinnock.

"Great men's words, saith one, are like dead men's shoes; he may go barefoot that waiteth for them." — John Trapp.

"Faith is the true antidote against fear. Much fear, little faith: little faith, much fear."

and glittering assembly. A blunt old soldier, celebrated in the wars of that day, pats him on the back as he enters, and says, "Little monk, little monk, you need more courage for your battle to-day than any soldier of us all; but if you have God on your side, go on and fear not." That monk was Martin Luther, a name never to be mentioned without honor by all true sons of the Reformed Church. Pale and emaciated, he fronts them all; they may bend on him their sternest frowns; they may threaten him if they will with the dagger or the stake. "I may not and will not recant," he says, "because to act against conscience is unholy and unsafe; here I stand, I can do no other; God help me!" So, with a burst of tears, he ends. But what came of it? At that moment the Reformation was secured. "It is," says a modern writer, "the greatest moment in the modern history of man. Had Luther at that moment done other, it had all been otherwise." Yes, at that moment again goodness triumphed over evil, truth over falsehood, right over might.—Farrar.

10—13. (10) **All nations,** the surrounding tribes, wh. sadly harrassed the returned exiles.[a] **compassed,** "the repetition of this word four times marked their close and pertinacious hostility." **destroy them,** R. V., "cut them off." (11) **yea,** this repetition expresses deep and anxious feeling. (12) **like bees,** "in vast numbers and with intense energy, and furious desire to injure."—Pul. Com. De. i. 44. **fire of thorns,** wh. blazes furiously, but is easily and suddenly extinguished.[b] (13) **Thou,** "an apostrophe to the enemy here addressed as an individual."

Attacked by Bees.—Now, as the northeast wind was of course adverse to any northeast progress, it was necessary that the boat should be towed by the crew. As the rope was being drawn along through the grass on the banks it happened that it disturbed a swarm of bees. In a moment, like a great cloud, they burst upon the men who were dragging; everyone of them threw himself headlong into the water and hurried to regain the boat. The swarm followed at their heels, and in a few seconds filled every nook and cranny of the deck. What a scene of confusion ensued may readily be imagined. Without any foreboding of ill, I heard all around me a scampering which I took at first to be merely the frolics of my people. I called out to enquire the meaning of the noise, but only got excited gestures and reproachful looks in answer. The cry of "Bees! bees!" soon broke upon my ear, and I proceeded to light a pipe. My attempt was entirely in vain; in an instant bees in thousands are about me, and I am mercilessly stung all over my face and hands. To no purpose do I try to protect my face with a handkerchief, and the more violently I fling my hands about, so much the more violent becomes the impetuosity of the irritated insects. The maddening pain is now on my cheek, now in my eye, now in my hair. Losing well nigh all control over myself, I fling myself into the river; I dive down, but all in vain, for the stings rain down still upon my head. I am compelled to go back on board, and flight is not to be thought of. . . . I felt ready, in the evening, for an encounter with half a score of buffaloes or a brace of lions rather than have anything more to do with bees; and this was a sentiment in which all the ship's company heartily concurred.—George Schweinfurth.

14—17. (14) **strength . . salvation,** Ex. xv. 2. (15) **tabernacles,** R. V., "tents," or private dwellings.[a] **valiantly,** lit, "achieves strength." (16) **right,** etc., this repetition was prob. a response from the people. (17) **I shall not die,** the outbreak of personal feeling in a liturgical Psalm leads us to suppose there was a solo-leader and recurring chorus. Or prechance "the psalmist speaks not in his own person, but in the name of his nation."—Pul. Com.

Wicliffe and the Friars.—Wicliffe was now getting old, but the Reformer was worn out rather by harassing attacks of his foes, and his incessant and ever-growing labors, than with the weight of years, for he was not yet sixty. He fell sick. With unbounded joy the friars heard that their great enemy was dying. Of course he was overwhelmed with horror and remorse for the evil he had done them, and they would hasten to his bedside and receive the expression of his penitence and sorrow. In a trice a little crowd of shaven crowns assembled round the couch of the sick man—delegates from the four orders of the friars.

[a] "Comp. Ezr. iv. 10, where, after a long list of hostile tribes environing Jerusalem, the historian adds, 'the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper,' etc." —Wordsworth.

[b] "Thorn bushes, in the East, are destroyed in the cultivated fields by fire in the heat of summer. The fire quickly spreads everywhere, but soon dies out, and the bushes are reduced to ashes."

—Knapp.

"The great Spanish poet, Calderon, tells of one who wore a heavy suit of armor for a whole year, and laid it by for one hour, and in that hour the enemy came, and the man paid for his negligence with his life."—John Neale.

[a] "We can imagine with what special force the words would come to those who then were, or had but recently been, keeping their feast of tabernacles, and rejoicing in the great deliverance wh. God had given them." — Plumptre.

"Verse 15, used to be quoted by Philip Henry in

"They began fair," wishing him "health and restoration from his distemper;" but speedily changing their tone, they exhorted him, as one on the brink of the grave, to make full confession, and express his unfeigned grief for the injuries he had inflicted on their order. Wicliffe lay silent till they should have made an end, then, making his servant raise him a little on his pillow, and fixing his keen eyes upon them, he said, with a loud voice, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars." The monks rushed in astonishment and confusion from the chamber.—J. A. Wylie.

18—21. (18) **chastened,** for correction.[a] By the sufferings of the Exile. (19) **Open .. gates,** Ps. xxiv. 7. The gates of the temple are referred to, which the delivered and restored desire to enter, that they might praise the Lord. (20) **This gate,**[b] Polychr. "This is the gate .. wherethrough," etc., before wh. the procession was standing, waiting for its opening. (21) **thee,** bec. fully recognizing the Div. hand in deliverance.

Unchanging Gratitude.—When the Caliph Haroun al Raschid had put to death his Vizier, Jaffier Bermekee, he ordered that none should speak in praise of the latter under pain of death. One old Arab continued to declare the merits of the late minister. He was summoned into the monarch's presence, and asked how he dared to transgress. "I should have been a monster of ingratitude had I not," said the Arab, and then proceeded to relate how Jaffier had taken notice of him, and at length raised him from poverty and obscurity to position and affluence, "I owe it all to him," he continued, "and was it possible for me to be deterred by death itself from doing justice to his memory?" Struck with the courage and fidelity of the man the Caliph sought to gain his admiration by more splendid generosity than that of the Vizier, and presented him with his golden sceptre, studded with precious jewels. "I take it," cried the grateful but undaunted Arab, "but this also, Commander of the Faithful, is from Bermekee!"—Foster Cyc. of Illus.

22, 23. (22) **stone,** etc.,[c] "an emblem of the might and dignity, to which Israel, now gathered again round the temple as its national centre, has attained out of its deep humiliation among the peoples of the world." Delitzsch. (23) **This,** viz., the exaltation of the Jewish nation.

The Corner-Stone.—I. Christ rejected. II. Christ exalted. III. His exaltation is due to God alone. IV. His exaltation commences a new era. V. His exaltation suggests a new prayer.—Spurgeon.

The Corner-Stone.—The idea of the corner-stone, repeatedly alluded to in the Scriptures, is not to be taken from the science of modern or of classical architecture, but from the practice of building in remote and ruder ages. Imagine a massive stone, like those at Stonehenge or Abury, cut to a right angle, and laid in the building so that its two sides should lie along the two walls, which meet at a corner, and thus binding them together in such a way that neither force nor weather could dissever them. The term does not necessarily signify that it would be put at the top of the building; it only necessitates the idea of a very important position, which it would have if it lay a few courses above the lowest, so as to act by its weight on those below, and to serve as a renewed basis to those above. "The stone which the builders have thrown away is made to be the corner-stone."—Smith. The Stone Which the Builders Refused.—The primary and literal meaning seems to be—"Israel, which the great of the world, those who think to arrange the world according to their own ideas, have rejected and would fain have cast aside, has, nevertheless, despite their rejection, attained to eminence, and been advanced, by the course of events, into such a position, that it may be regarded as the head corner-stone—the most important of all the nations of the world." Any Messianic reference is secondary and subordinate.—Pul. Com.

24, 25. (24) **made,** or brought about. "Referring to the happier times which Israel, through God's grace was permitted to enjoy. There is no direct allusion to the weekly Sabbath."—Alexander. (25) **Save,** Heb. Hosanna, i. e. "Save, I pray." **prosperity,** Israel feels its constant dependence upon God, and that if the Divine care were remitted for a day all would be lost. As Prof. Cheyne observes—Tears continually mingle with Israel's laughter.

commendation of family worship, with the remark that 'it is a way to hold forth godliness, like Rahab's scarlet thread, to such as pass by our windows."

—Ker.

Is. xxxviii. 19; Ro. xiv. 8.

[a] He. xii. 5—8.

[b] "The gate of the Israelites was upon the east side of the outer vestibule." —Spk. Com.

"With an immovable fidelity to conscience, Donald Cargill had a tender nature, and gave himself to comfort his fellow-sufferers. In a letter to one before execution, he says, 'Farewell, dearest friend, never to see one another any more till at the right hand of Christ. Fear not, and the God of mercies grant a full gale, and a fair entry into his kingdom, which may carry sweetly and swiftly over the bar, that you find not the rub of death.' "

—Ker.

[c] "The fig. is borrowed from the lately completed work of building. The head corner-stone is important, as that wh. unites two walls and supports the roof. It may poss. have been the custom to render this stone conspicuous with carving and decorations."—Jennings and Lowe. "Christ Jesus is a stone: no firmness, but in him. A fundamental stone: no building, but on him. A corner stone; no piecing nor reconciliation, but in him." —James Ford.

Mat. xxi. 42; Mk. xii. 10; Lu. xx. 17; Ac. iv. 11; Eph. ii. 20; 1 Pe. ii. 4, 7.

"If Sunday had not been observed as a day of rest during the last three centuries, I have not the smallest doubt that we should have been at this moment a poorer and less civilized people than we are."—Lord Macaulay.

"The Lord's-day. Stations on the line of your journey are not your journey's end, but each one brings you nearer. Such are our Lord's-days." — Pulsford.

Joy in the Sabbath.—There, for instance, is the question of Sabbath observance. You find persons who challenge its claim to be a day of religious worship and instruction. "It is a day of rest," they say. "Why should we mew ourselves up in church? Why should our thoughts be forced into religious channels? Why should we not spend the day in amusement?" A Sabbath thus observed under protest could scarcely be profitable; but that matter apart, the question is settled for a prepared heart by never being raised. When you have a holiday, you generally spend it in doing the thing most congenial to you. You hunt, or fish, or read, as you please. And similarly if God is a man's best friend, if his heart is charged with love to God, the day which relieves him from the distracting cares of business, will find him not only ready but eager to meet the Lord in the sanctuary. The opportunity of dwelling on the congenial truths of revelation will be eagerly embraced. It will not be a question of duty at all, but a leaping of the heart for very joy as it moves into the green pastures of the word. Such an one will rest, but he will rest in the Lord. A friend once said to me, "When I was a boy in my father's house, and we were singing at family worship or at other times, the chords of the piano, though no one struck the keys, would often vibrate so strongly as to startle us all. Only, if we happened to sing a little off the key—a little too high or too low—the instrument would be mute." And the ordinances of God's house—worship, praise, preaching, sacraments—are a good deal like that piano. If the heart is prepared, if the life is set in the key of love and faith, these things will respond most harmoniously and mightily.—M. R. Vincent.

26—29. (26) **cometh .. Lord,** "Blessed is he who enters into his sanctuary under the guardianship of Jehovah."[a] Thus the priests and Levites upon the temple-hill greet the advancing procession of worshipers. **we have blessed,** poss. the priestly response. (27) **shewed us light,** of grace, freedom and joy; Ps. iv. 6. **bind,** etc., Polychr., "Bind the festival with ropes;" the sacrifices appear on the occasion to have been so many that they were tied up all over the priests' court, right up to the horns of the altar.—Delitzsch. (28) **my God,** made the object of personal trust. Comp. Ex. xv. 2. (29) **give thanks,** as vs. 1.

[a] See the Hosanna to Jesus, Mat. xxi. 9.

"The altar in Herod's temple had, according to the Mishna, a number of brazen rings on the north side, to wh. the animals were secured." —Jennings and Lowe.

"Decorate the festival with leafy boughs, even up to the horns of the altar." — So trans. Luther, Tholuck, etc.

"Unto the hornes, i.e. all the court over until you come even to the hornes of the altar, intending hereby many sacrifices or boughs." —Ainsworth.

The Song and the Sacrifice of Gratitude (vs. 27).—I. The blessings acknowledged. 1. Saving knowledge is light; 2. Joy, comfort, happiness, are light; 3. Providential mercies are light; 4. Prospects of future glory are light. II. The consecration required. 1. There is a call to personal dedication; 2. An appeal for self-denying offerings to the cause of God.

Extolling the Lord.—This "extolling the Lord" will accomplish one of the great ends of praise, viz., his exaltation. It is true that God both can and will exalt himself, but it is at once the duty and the privilege of his people to exalt him. His name should be upborne and magnified by them; the glory of that name is now, as it were, committed to them; what use are we making of the opportunity and the privilege?—Philip Bennet Power.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND NINETEENTH.

author,— unknown: date, prob. late after the restoration.

Praise of the law of God.

An alphabetical Psalm.

1—4. (1) **undefiled,** perfect, in the sense of sincere.[a] **way,** of the revealed will of God. **walk,** order their conduct and conversation. **law,** Heb. thorah, the whole code of God's revealed will. (2) **testimonies,** Ps. lxxviii. 5. "God's commands, considered as witnesses of his character and as attesting his will." **whole heart,** "an expression characteristic of this Ps., vss. 10, 34, 58, 69, 145." (3) **no iniquity,** they do not wilfully wander aside from His ways. (4) **precepts,**[b] "instructions given to men to direct their conduct;" Ne. ix. 14. **diligently,** with strict attention and constancy.

[a] Re. iii. 4.

[b] Fr. Lat. prace i pere, to take beforehand, to instruct. Applied esp. to a command respecting moral conduct.

The Best Pursuit (vs. 2).—I. The pursuit specified. 1. The object proposed; 2. The conduct described. II. The obedience required. 1. It must be regulated by His Word; 2. It must be conformable to His will. III. The happiness enjoyed. 1. They have enjoyments; 2. They have blessed anticipations.—Eta .in 400 Sks.

A Precious Psalm.—It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible

which my mother taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was to my child's mind most repulsive, the 119th Psalm, has now become, of all, the most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the law of God.—Ruskin.

The Blessed.—

In this dim world of clouding cares
We rarely know, till 'wildered eyes
See white wings lessening up the skies,
The angels with us unawares.—Gerald Massey.

5—8. (5) **O that,** the fervent expression of the heart's desire. "The goal towards which the poet is directing his steps." **directed,** or firmly fixed, R. V. "established."[c] **statutes,** properly applied to public law. (6) **ashamed,** by being disappointed of Thy promises to the upright and obedient.[d] (7) **learned,** by sanctified experiences. **judgments,**[e] "judicial decisions by act or word against particular lines of conduct." (8) **utterly,** "lest losing Divine strength I fall."

Laziness in Bible Reading.—The following confession and prayer, by Rev. Dr. Thomas Fuller, it is to be feared covers the case of many others besides himself: "Lord, I discover an arrant laziness in my soul. For when I am to read a chapter in the Bible, before I begin it, I look where it endeth; and if it endeth not on the same side, I cannot keep my hand from turning over the leaf, to measure the length thereof on the other side; if it swell to many verses I begin to grudge. Surely my heart is not rightly affected. Were I truly hungry after heavenly food, I would not complain of meat. Scourge, Lord, this laziness of soul. Make the reading of Thy Word not a penance but a pleasure upon me. Teach me, that as among heaps of gold, all equally pure, that is best which is the biggest, so I may esteem that chapter in Thy Word the best which is the longest."

9—12. (9) **young man,** who is specially exposed to temptation, and in whom principle is scarcely established. "Youthful purity can only be preserved by those who from early years take God's word for their guide." **taking heed,** or keeping watch on himself.[a] (10) **wander,** stray, step aside, either in ignorance, or in wilfulness. Man's watchfulness is insufficient, it must be embraced in a Div. watchfulness of him, and for Him. (11) **word,** Polychr. "bidding." God's actual spoken or written utterances. **hid,** so as to make a personal and jealously guarded treasure, "no merely outward rule of conduct, but a power and a life within." —Perowne. (12) **Blessed,** etc., the glowing desire to obey filling the soul of the Psalmist with holy joy in God.[b] **statutes,** "enactments of God as legislator, but not confined to the written Law."

Cleansing.—In the word of God, when applied to the heart by the Spirit of God, there is, I. A sufficiency of light to discover to men the need of cleansing their way. II. Sufficiency of energy for the cleansing their way. III. A sufficiency of pleasure to encourage them to choose to cleanse their way. IV. A sufficiency of support to sustain them in their cleansed way.—Theophilus Jones.

The Way.—A way has a direction, and leads some whither. A way is continuous, and if we are in it we are advancing in it. A way differs in its direction from other ways, and diverges more and more from them the farther one travels upon it. There are in our lives no isolated acts, but only ways. Every present has its closely affiliated future. We are moving on in character as in years. The wrong of which you say, "Only this once," provokes its own repetition and starts you in its own direction. The violation of truth, etc., involves you in a labyrinth of mole paths. You meant an act, you have found it a way; a precipitous way, too, in which you gain momentum at every step.—Peabody. Dr. Franklin.—At the time when the celebrated Dr. Franklin lay upon his death-bed, he was visited by a young man who had a great respect for his judgment in all things; and having entertained doubts as to the truth of the Scriptures, he thought that this awful period afforded a suitable opportunity of consulting the doctor on this important subject. Accordingly, he introduced it in a solemn and weighty manner, inquiring of Franklin what were his sentiments as to the truth of the Scriptures. On the question being put, although he was in a very weak state, and near his decease, he

"They are blessed who are in the way, not a way, any chance or uncertain road, but 'the King's Highway;' that path which the Lord himself has declared to us, saying, 'I am the way.' "—Hilary and Theodoret.

c Ro. vii. 19—23.

d "Put to shame, my hope being frustrated. This is the shame meant, not shame of conscience in comparing a man's life with the requirements of the law." — Perowne.

e Utterances, beyond the written law, made by a judge or lawgiver. See Ex. xxi. 1, xxiv. 3; Le. xviii. 4, 5. "A page digested is better than a volume hurriedly read." — Macaulay.

a "By keeping his eye fixed on Thy Word, and by framing his life according to it; as a careful pilot, 'his eye to heaven, his hand on the helm.' " —Wordsworth.

b Comp. Ps. xxv. 8.

"A poor prisoner, being confined in a dark dungeon, had no light, except for a few moments when his food was brought him; he used to take his Bible and read a chapter, saying he could find his mouth in the dark, when he could not read."

"Galen, the celebrated physician of Rome, when studying anatomy, was so struck with the perfection and exquisite mechanism of the human hand and arm, that he composed a hymn to the Deity, express-

ing his admiration of so excellent a work, and his adoration of the God who made it."

c De. vi. 7.

d Pr. ii. 4, iii. 13, 15, viii. 10, 11, 19, xvi. 16, xxii. 1.

"For solitude sometimes is best society."—Milton.

"Reflection is a flower of the mind, giving out wholesome fragrance; but reverie is the same flower when rank and running to seed."—Tupper.

a Re. iii. 18.

b "Things hidden, it may be, under the letter, and concealed, except from those whose eyes are opened of God."
—Spk. Com.

c "Bp. Taylor speaks somewhere of 'the violence of the desire bursting itself with its fulness into dissolution."
—Perowne.

"The man who has studied the Bible for fifty years, the wise men and the scholars, the great theologians, have never got down to the depths of it yet. There are truths that the Church of God has been searching out for the last 1800 years, but has not yet fathomed the depths of that ever-living stream."
—D. L. Moody.

a Da. vi. 4, 11. "As year by year the tree adds another ring to its circumference, so every age has added to the testimony of the truth of the Bible."
—Guthrie.

replied, "Young man, my advice to you is, that you cultivate an acquaintance with, and a firm belief in, the Holy Scriptures: this is your certain interest."

13—16. (13) **my lips,** Polychr. "With my lips I recount all the injunctions of," etc., medium for commending God's law to others.[c] (14) **all riches,** all manner of riches.[d] (15) **meditate,** Ps. civ. 34. **ways,** "the paths of life marked out by Thy law." (16) **delight myself,** actually find my chief pleasure in.

Religious Meditation (vs. 15).—I. We ought to meditate on the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them. II. We are not supported physically by merely taking food into our mouth, but by processes of digestion. III. The reason many make so little progress in Divine things is because they neglect this.—Spurgeon.

The Uses of Meditation (vs. 15).—Meditation: it is in this way one of the greatest of English engineers, a man uncouth and unaccustomed to regular discipline of mind, is said to have accomplished his most marvellous triumphs. He threw bridges over almost impracticable torrents, and pierced the eternal mountains for his viaduct. Sometimes a difficulty brought all the work to a pause; then he would shut himself up in his room, eat nothing, speak to no one, abandon himself intensely to the contemplation of that on which his heart was set; and at the end of two or three days would come forth serene and calm, walk to the spot, and quietly give orders which seemed the result of superhuman intuition. This was meditation.—F. W. Robertson.

17—20. (17) **may live,** "give me the blessing of a long life, that so my keeping of thy Word may be long." **and keep,** or, so will I keep; if I live, I will. (18) **Open,** etc.,[a] the Psalmist evidently realizes that the best things in the Div. Word are only "spiritually discerned."[b] (19) **stranger,** R. V. "sojourner," having no experience, or knowledge of the world, so needing the constant guidance of Div. law. (20) **breaketh,** with vehement desire, lit. "is broken small, is crushed."[c]

Wondrous Things.—There are promises in God's word that no man has ever tried to find. There are treasures of gold and silver in it that no man has taken the pains to dig for. There are medicines in it for the want of a knowledge of which hundreds have died. It seems to me like some old baronial estate that has descended to a man who lives in a modern house, and thinks it scarcely worth while to go and look into the venerable mansion. Year after year passes away and he pays no attention to it, since he has no suspicion of the valuable treasures it contains, till, at last, some man says to him, "Have you been up in the country to look at that estate?" He makes up his mind that he will take a look at it. As he goes through the porch he is surprised to see the skill that has been displayed in its construction: he is more and more surprised as he goes through the halls. He enters a large room, and is astonished as he beholds the wealth of pictures on the walls, among which are portraits of many of his revered ancestors. He stands in amazement before them. There is a Titian, there a Raphael, there is a Correggio, and there is a Giorgione. He says, "I never had any idea of these before." "Ah," says the steward, "there is many another thing that you know nothing about in the castle," and he takes him from room to room and shows carved plate, and wonderful statues, and the man exclaims, "Here I have been for a score of years the owner of this estate, and have never before known what things were in it." But no architect ever conceived of such an estate as God's word, and no artist, or carver, or sculptor, ever conceived of such pictures, and carved dishes, and statues as adorn its apartments. It contains treasures that silver, and gold, and precious stones are not to be mentioned with.—H. W. Beecher.

21—24. (21) **rebuked,** by judgments, Polychr. "Thou threatenest .. arrogant." Rend. the second clause, "They that do err from Thy commandments are accursed." **the proud,** opponents of the strict worship of Jehovah are meant—those who calumniate (vss. 69, 78) and (vs. 122) oppress the speaker, and both transgress and mock at God's law (vss. 21, 51, 85). Some of the expressions used point especially to apostate Jews. —Cheyne. (22) **reproach,** etc., these came to the man steadfast in obeying God's law, then as now. Shame is treated as a cloak or mantle covering the person; or a burden to be rolled away. (23) **sit and speak,**

taking counsel together against him. (24) **my counsellors,** Heb. "men of my counsel;" hence there is no perplexity, be the way ever so trying or dangerous.

Hints as to the Author of the 119th Psalm.—The vss. that seem to afford autobiographical material are 51, 61, 69, 85, 110, 150, 157, 158, which show that he was an adherent of the strict party in Jerusalem; 53 and 139 which show his violent hostility to those who forsook God's law. That he was not young is seen from vss. 9, 84—87, and the temper of the psalm; that he was tried and apparently imprisoned, and even forsaken by those whom he had thought faithful appears from 23, 24, 46, [78], 161, [169], and 176.—W. E. Barton.

25—28. (25) **cleaveth,** Ps. xlv. 25. The grovelling posture was taken in extreme affliction. Job sat in ashes. In grief dust was thrown on the head. **quicken,** i. e. restore to vigorous life and health. (26) **declared,**[b] I have opened my griefs to thee and thou didst listen to me. (27) **understand,**[c] comp. vs. 18. **talk,** R. V. "meditate." (28) **melteth,**[d] Heb. droppeth; so to speak, "weeps itself away." **according,** etc., i. e. thy promise to help thy faithful ones.

Cleaveth.—Our soul is a polypus: as a polypus readily adheres to the rocks, so does the soul cleave to the earth; and hardly can it be torn from the place to which it has once strongly attached itself. Though thy soul be now more perfect, and escaping from the waters of sin has become a bird of heaven, be not careless; earthly things are birdlime and glue; if thou rubbest the wings against these thou wilt be held, and joined to the earth.—Thomas Le Blanc.

29—32. (29) **way of lying,** of every kind of error and deception, or strictly of "unfaithfulness" to God's law and covenant. God's way is "the way of truth." **thy law,** i. e. "graciously impart thy law unto me," by a divine illumination. (30) **chosen,** indicating the set purpose of the heart. **truth,** R. V. "faithfulness." (31) **stuck,** in orig. same word as in vs. 25 trans. "cleaveth," ref. not to perfectness, but to sincerity of intention. (32) **run,**[a] indicating more earnestness than the "walk" of vs. 1. **enlarge my heart,** expand it with a sense of freedom and holy joy. Polychr. "For Thou givest me a heart that is willing."

33—36. (33) **the end,** of my life, or "to the uttermost." Polychr. "steadfastly." (34) **and I shall,** better, "that I may," i. e. failure to keep the law is in his case fr. lack of wisdom, not of will. **observe it,**[b] another word for keep it, or obey it. (35) **Make me to go,** for with the inward purpose, we still need also inward strength, and renewed gracious Div. impulses. (36) **covetousness,** or robbery: possibly some special temptation had assailed the Psalmist. Perhaps used in the more general sense of "sensuality," often accompanying idolatry. Polychr. "lucre."

Teach Me, O Lord.—"He who is his own pupil," remarks S. Bernard, "has a fool for his master." A soldier who enters on a march does not settle for himself the order of his going, nor begin the journey at his own will, nor yet choose pleasant short-cuts, lest he should fall out of rank, away from the standards, but gets the route from his general, and keeps to it; advances in a prescribed order, walks armed, and goes straight on to the end of his march, to find there the supplies provided by the commissariat. If he goes by any other road, he gets no rations, and finds no quarters ready, because the general's orders are that all things of this kind shall be prepared for those who follow him, and turn not aside to the right hand or the left. And thus he who follows his general does not break down, and that for good reasons; for the general consults not for his own convenience, but for the capability of his whole army. And this, too, is Christ's order of march, as he leads his great host out of the spiritual Egypt to the eternal Land of Paradise.—Ambrose.

37—40. (37) **Turn away,** or aid me to turn aside from.[a] **vanity,** the usual term for idols, and idolatry. (38) **Stablish,** fulfill thy promise. **who,** R. V. "Which belongeth unto the fear of thee."[b] (39) **reproach,** of having sinned against Thee, and fallen fr. Thy commandments. **for thy judgments are good,** right in themselves, and conducive to man's happiness. (40) **in thy righteousness,** better, according to Thy righteousness, wh. surely leads to the answering of prayer.

"Proud men never have friends not in prosperity, because they know nobody; not in adversity, because then nobody knows them."[a]
—Whitecross.

[b] Ps. xxxiii. 3, 5.

[c] Ps. lxxi. 17, 18, cxlv. 5, 6.

[d] Ps. xxii. 14.

"The more faithfully I apply myself to the duties of the Lord's-day, the more happy and successful is my business during the week."—Sir Matthew Hale.

[a] 1 Cor. ix. 24.

Let us see that eating Him, and drinking Him, coming to Him, and believing on Him, are all the same thing."
—Allestry.

"Narrow is the way unto life, but no man can run in it save with widened heart." — Prosper, of Aquitaine.

It was the remark of Cowper that "the color of our whole life is generally such as the three or four first years in which we are our own masters make it." A very important thought for those just starting in the race of life.

[b] De. v. 32.

[c] "Why there is mention of this sin one cannot tell; poss. the afflicted writer had been tempted by bribes to act contrary to his principles."
—Jennings and Lowe.

[a] Job xxxi. 26, 27; Is. xxxiii. 15.

[b] "Stablish Thy word in Thy servant, that I may fear Thee."—Pr. Bk. Vers.

"Stablish Thy word, . . . which tends to the fearing of Thee."—So apparently LXX.

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien, as to be hated, needs but to be seen; yet seen too oft, familiar with her face, we first endure, then pity, then embrace."—Pope. But Dryden says, "For truth has such a face and such a mien, as to be loved needs only to be seen."

"We never, in the whole course of our recollections, met with a Christian friend who bore upon his character every other evidence of the Spirit's influence who did not remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy."—Chalmers.

"It is related of Beza, one of the Reformers, that when he was old, and could not recollect the names of persons and things he had heard but a few minutes before, he could remember and repeat the Epistles of St. Paul, which he had committed to memory when he was young."

[a] "Where there is nothing to check or hinder freedom of action."
—Perowne.

[b] Ps. xxviii. 2, lxiii. 4, cxxxiv. 2, cxli. 2.

"Literature is the immortality of speech."
—Shlegel.

"An apt quotation is as good as an original remark."
—Proverb.

"I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed,'

Spiritual Quickening.—I was questioning my spiritual life, I who have so long been a preacher to others. I entered a little rustic assembly. An unlettered man preached the gospel, he preached it heartily; my tears began to flow; my soul leaped at the very sound of the Word of the Lord. What a comfort it was to me! How frequently have I thought of it since! The Word did revive me; my heart was not dead to its influence; I was one of those happy people who know the joyful sound. Assurance was bright in my soul,—the Word had quickened me.—Spurgeon. Relapsing Into Sin (vs. 37).—St. Augustine tells of a young man who had been for some time under his own instruction. The youth had been extravagantly addicted to attendance on the Circensian games. An allusion to the impropriety of these amusements occurring one day in Augustine's expositions, he was convinced of his sinful propensity, and abandoned these pleasures. After some time he proceeded to Rome, and having been invited by his friends to come and see the shows of the gladiators, he declined. His friends rallied him, but still he would not come. Then they took him by force to the amphitheatre; but the young man, still resolute and determined, would not suffer himself thus to be brought into bondage. They might compel his body, but could not compel his spirit; so he sat with closed eyes, that he should not be tempted by the scenes before him. Suddenly the whole house rang again with plaudits loud and long. Thereupon, as it were by an instinct, or being overcome by curiosity, he opened his eyes. The whole scene filled his mind with admiration. There he beheld the relative position of the gladiators: one bleeding on the dust of the arena, the other waving his uplifted hand in the joyful enthusiasm of a conqueror, and receiving the applause of every voice and hand. The young man became interested in the scene; he looked, and gazed, and shouted; he grew warm in his enthusiasm, became inflamed; his pulse beat high with feverish excitement, and he went away enamored of the sport, and worse than his seducers; and afterwards inclined the feet of others to like sinful pleasures.

41—44. (41) **salvation,** needed as deliverance from the daily power of sin, and the forgiveness of daily failures. **word,** lit. "promise." (42) **have wherewith,** even the assurance of Thy mercies to me. (43) **word of truth,** i. e. "of testimony for the truth." Give me the ability loyally to testify for thy truth. **utterly,** or far off; vs. 8. **hoped,** etc., trusted God to vindicate his character. (44) **ever and ever,** limited only by life.

Heaven Begun Below.—I. The present life of the believer—keeping God's law. II. The continual care of the believer—to keep God's law. III. The eternal prospect of the believer—keeping God's law for ever and ever.—C. A. Davis.

The Bible.—When Naimbana, a black prince, arrived in England from the neighborhood of Sierra Leone, the gentleman to whose care he was entrusted, took great pains to convince him that the Bible was the Word of God, and he received it as such with great reverence and simplicity. When asked what it was that satisfied him on this subject, he replied: "When I found all good men minding the Bible, and calling it the Word of God, and all bad men disregarding it, I then was sure that the Bible must be what good men call it, the Word of God."—Moister.

45—48. (45) **at liberty,** Heb. "in a broad place;" free from constraint and intimidation.[a] God's service is perfect freedom. (46) **before kings,** words suitable to Ezra or Nehemiah. "The viceroys of the Persian kings may be alluded to." (47) **delight myself,** as vs. 16. (48) **hands .. lift up,** in the attitude of fervent supplication.[b]

Commandments.—I. God's commandments loved. We love the law when we love the Lawgiver. We love his will only when our hearts are reconciled and renewed. Hence the need of spiritual renewal. II. God's commandments the subject of prayer: "My hands also will I lift up." Perowne says, "The expression denotes the act of prayer." We may pray for a fuller knowledge, a deeper experience, a readier and more perfect obedience. III. A theme for meditation. Amidst the hurry of outward activities we must not forget the need of quiet meditation.—H. Wilkins.

True Religion.—There is no true religion without that longing for unbroken conformity with the manifest will of God. Whoever makes that his deepest desire, and seeks after God's precepts, will "walk at

liberty," or at large, for restraints that are loved are not bonds, and freedom consists not in doing as I would, but in willing to do as I ought. Strong in such emancipation from the hindrances of one's own passions, and triumphant over external circumstances which may mould, but not dominate, a God-obeying life, the psalmist would fain open his mouth unabashed before rulers.—Exp. B.

49—52. (49) **the word,** some special promise seems to be referred to. This promise had roused him to new courage and hope. **upon . . caused,** R. V. "Because thou hast made." (50) **comfort,**[c] Heb. nechamah, whence the name Nehemiah is derived. (51) **proud,** or those who scoff at me.[d] Comp. for connection of pride and irreligious scoffing, Pr. xxi. 24. Polychr. "The arrogant one flouting me sore; yet do I not swerve from Thy Law. (52) **judgments,** vs. 7.[e] God's revealed law, wh. is ever true, and ever in force.

Fidelity in the Face of Contempt. I. The proud deride the believer's subjection to God's law. II. They ridicule the believer's delight in God's service. III. They are met by the believer's resolution to cleave to God. 2 Sam. vi. 20, 22.—C. A. Davis.

The Quickening of the Word.—What energy a text will breathe into a man! There is more in one divine sentence than in huge folios of human composition. There are tinctures of which one drop is more powerful than large doses of the common dilutions. The Bible is the essence of truth; it is the mind of God, the wisdom of the Eternal. By every word of God men are made to live, and are kept in life. "Speak to me now in Scripture language alone," said a dying Christian. "I can trust the words of God; but when they are the words of man, it costs me an effort to think whether I may trust to them."—Spurgeon.

53—56. (53) **Horror,** LXX. renders, depression.[a] Better, "burning indignation." (54) **my songs,**[b] giving such satisfaction and peace that they inspired songs; were the theme of songs. **pilgrimage,** or sojourning, as vs. 9. "In the house of his pilgrimage God's statutes refresh him spiritually, sweeten the toils of his wandering life, and measure and quicken his steps."—Delitzsch. (55) **in the night,** both the actual night, and the night-time of doubting and fear. (56) **this,** "this has been (vouchsafed) to me, this has been my reward, that I have kept thy precepts," i. e. such has been the gift of thy grace.—Perowne.

Songs on the March (vs.54).—I. This world is to the Christian the house of his pilgrimage. 1. It is not his home; 2. While in it liable to change; 3. Will soon quit it. II. In the house of his pilgrimage the Christian has songs. They may be—1. Festive; 2. Social; 3. Patriotic; 4. Martial; 5. Plaintive. III. The Christian's songs in the house of his pilgrimage are drawn from the Bible. 1. Their matter; 2. Their music; melody in the heart. Apply:—(1) Be pilgrims; (2) Be cheerful pilgrims; (3) Prize the Bible; (4) We shall presently sing the new song.—G. Brooks.

Songs.—When the Eastern traveler takes shelter from the scorching heat or halts for the night at some caravansary which is for the time the house of his pilgrimage, he soothes his rest with a song—a song it may be of war, romance, or love. But the poet of Israel finds his theme in the statutes of Jehovah. These have been my pastime, with these I have refreshed myself onward through the wearisome journey, and across the scorching deserts of life. Not songs of old tradition, etc., have supported me, but these have been the solace of my weary hours and the comfort of my rest.—Bushnell.

57—60. (57) **Thou,** etc., Heb. is Jehovah (is) my portion; or inheritance.[c] **I have said,** Cheyne, "I have resolved." (58) **favour,**[d] Heb. face. Ps. xlv. 12. **be merciful,** Polychr. "quicken." (59) **thought on,** seriously pondered. (60) **made haste,** the signs of hearty earnestness. Men are apt to procrastinate about their salvation.

The Soul's Sunshine. I. God's favor the one thing needful. II. Whole-heartedness the one mode of entreating it. III. Covenant mercy the one plea for obtaining it.—C. A. Davis.

61—64. (61) **bands,** better, "the snares of wicked men entangled

is the motto prefixed to the Augsburg Confession — the charter of the German Lutheran Church."
—Ker.

[c] Job vi. 10.

[d] Comp. Neh. iv. 4.

[e] "God's laws, righteous and true, rewarding the good, punishing the evil, the recollection of these fills the mind of the Psalmist with consolation."
—Spk. Com.

"There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets, and no politics like those which the Scriptures teach."
—Milton.

[a] Terror.—Calvin. Sadness. — Arab, and Syr. Allusion may be to the burning wind or simoom.

[b] "Delightful advertisements to me."
—Spk. Com.

"We are told that the late authoress Juliana Horatia Ewing had hung over her hearth the motto: 'Ut migraturus habita' (As one about to migrate), to temper her joys in the comforts of home, and to remind her that 'here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' "— Anec. Ill. of O. T. Texts.

[c] Ps. xvi. 5.

[d] "Challoth panim, lit. 'to stroke the face,' is an expression of caressing flattering entreaty."
—Jennings and Lowe.

Thus we ought to believe, and watch with expectation for answers to our prayer. Do not say, "Lord, turn

my darkness into light," and then go out with your candle as though you expected to find it dark. After asking the Lord to appear for you, expect Him to do so, for according to your faith so be it unto you.

a Illus. in Ne. vi. 2—14.

b Ps. xxxiii. 5.

"God gives us always strength enough and sense enough for what he wants us to do; if we either tire ourselves or puzzle ourselves, it is our own own fault. And we may always be sure, whatever we are doing, that we cannot be pleasing him if we are not happy ourselves." — Ruskin.

c Comp. Paul's prayer for the Philippians. Ph. i. 9.

"That fine taste and delicate feeling wh. are like a new sense."
—Perowne.

"Why should I start at the plough of my Lord, that maketh deep furrows on my soul? I know He is no idle husbandman, He purposeth a crop."—
S. Rutherford.

"There is truth in the teaching that purification comes through sorrow, and self-sacrifice, and fiery trial."
—White.

a "Have sewn together a lie; as they did against Nehemiah. Ne. vi. 6-13." — Wordsworth.

b See the fig. illus. in Ps. xvii. 10, lxxiii. 7; Is. vi. 10.

c Ps. xix. 10; Pr. viii. 11.

"Afflictions are blessings to us when we can

me."[a] (62) **At midnight,** said to show his constant thought of God. (63) **a companion,** i. e. I choose such, and only such, for companions. (64) **earth .. is full,**[b] so the man whose eyes and heart are opened can find occasion to praise God wherever he may look. **teach me,** i. e. "he beseeches for himself inward enlightenment as to His word."

The Mercy of God in nature and his mercy as revealed in the word. I. The one excellent; the other super-excellent. II. The one easily given; the other coming through a great sacrifice. III. The one may be enjoyed, and even increase condemnation; the other, if enjoyed, is sure salvation. IV. The one should lead to repentance; the other is specially adapted for the penitent's restoration to holiness.—J. Field.

God is Love.—
Why bursts such melody from tree and bush,
The overflowing of each songster's heart,
So filling mine that it can scarcely hush
Awhile to listen, but would take its part?
'Tis but one song I hear where'er I rove,
Though countless be the notes, that God is Love.
—Thomas Davis.

65—68. (65) **dealt well,** in the past times. (66) **good judgment,**[c] wise and right discernment, a fine sense of God's words. **believed,** etc., God's commandments being the only sources of wisdom and Divine instruction. (67) **Before .. afflicted,** "Sweet are the uses of adversity." The psalmist feels and confesses that the afflictions, which he has suffered have been good for him. (68) **good,** in sense of "kind."

The Value of Affliction.—At first sight we are startled by the apparent contradiction, good to be afflicted. Good to be afflicted because driven to the painstaking study of a book whose revelations humble us and imposes further hardships? Good because driven from having our own way to walking in God's? Even so a storm drives a vessel into harbor when she should be nearing her destination, and the sailors deem that storm a calamity. Not so; they find while in the harbor a leak that would have given them a watery grave, and there they repair the leak, and then proceed on their way. It was good for them to be afflicted. So God tosses us in a sea of trouble to drive us to the harbor of His Word, where our defects may be ascertained and remedied. A traveler bent upon a given destination, through forgetfulness, or self-conceit, or indolence, neglects to consult either wayfarers or charts. He resumes his way, but still blindly pushes on. He meets with an accident, and can go no further for the time. Was that a calamity? No. It brought him to his senses. Now he examines his chart, makes inquiries, and finds that he is on the wrong road, and can never that way reach his journey's end. It was good for him to be afflicted. So a man errs from the way of happiness, the way of truth, the way of his true destiny, the way of God. The Bible is too dry for him, how can he with his sublime genius condescend to examine its tedious details? Ah! that book is the only itinerary to heaven. He goes madly on till he comes to disaster and to ruin. Then he is glad to consult that book, and then he finds how far he has gone wrong and how he may get right. Truly may such use these words, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Before that I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word."—Hom. Com.

69—72. (69) **proud,** vss. 51, 61. **forged,** or patched up.[a] (70) **fat as grease,** dull and brutal.[b] "A figure of obduracy and insensibility." (71) **good,** etc., as vs. 67. (72) **law .. mouth,**[c] i. e. which Thou speakest. "The psalmist values the Law more than any amount of earthly riches."

The Purpose of God's Afflictive Providences:—I once went with my brother to extract a crystal from the rock. With a mighty sledge-hammer he vigorously dealt blow after blow upon the rock, and chipped off piece after piece. At last the top of the crystal appeared. Then one might see what he was after, for it had not shown upon the outer surface of the rock. When the crystal appeared, then the whole strife became how so to break the rock away from it, and how so to strike the rock as to extract the crystal. The rock was good for nothing; the crystal was everything. The soul is man's crystal, and the body is but the incasing rock that holds it. God's providences are smiting upon the

rock, and breaking and cutting it away, and extracting the precious crystal, which is worth incomparably more than its setting in the rock.—Bib. Ill.—The Necessity of Tribulation:—In some of the most delicate manufactures of the country, the web in a rude and unsightly state enters a vessel filled with a certain liquid, passes slowly through, and emerges continuously at the opposite side. As it enters the cloth seems all of one color, and that dim; as it emerges it glitters in a variety of brilliant hues arranged in cunning figures. The liquid is composed of biting acids; and the reason why the fabric is strained through it is that all the deforming and defiling things which have adhered to it in preceding processes may be discharged, and the figures already secretly imprinted may shine out in their beauty. If it were allowed to remain one minute too long in the bath the fabric would be destroyed; but the manufacturer has so tempered the ingredients and timed the passage that while the impurities are thoroughly discharged the fabric comes out uninjured. In wisdom and love the Lord has mingled the ingredients of our tribulation, and determined its duration, so that none of his should be lost, and so that every grace of the Spirit should be brought out in all its beauty.—W. Arnot.

73, 74. (73) **made .. fashioned me,**[a] better, "Thy hands have cunningly made me." **give,** etc,, i. e. if God fashioned the body will He not also give mankind wisdom? (74) **see me,** as a recovered man, sanctified by affliction.[b] **hoped in,** Polychr.' "tarry for."

The Right Attitude of Man in Relation to God (vs. 73).—Here we have man in a threefold attitude. I. Recognizing God as the author of his existence. II. Looking to God as the educator of his spirit. III. Imploring God as the perfecter of his being.—Thomas.

Give Me Understanding.—The book of God is like the apothecary's shop, there is no wound but therein is a remedy; but if a stranger come unto the apothecary's shop, though all these things be there, yet he cannot tell where they are, but the apothecary himself knoweth; so in the Scriptures, there are cures for any infirmities; there is comfort against any sorrows, and by conferring chapter with chapter, we shall understand them. The Scriptures are not wanting to us, but we to ourselves; let us be conversant in them, and we shall understand them, when great clerks who are negligent remain in darkness.—Richard Stock.

75—77. (75) **faithfulness,** that will not let failings pass into sins, but will wisely and mercifully chastise and correct. (76) **merciful kindness,** as a comfort in the midst of affliction; Ps. cxvii. 2. (77) **live,** prolong that restored health so graciously given.

The Surgeon's Reply.—M. Boudon, an eminent surgeon, was one day sent for by the Cardinal Du Bois, Prime Minister of France, to perform a very serious operation upon him. The cardinal, on seeing him enter the room, said to him, "You must not expect to treat me in the same rough manner as you treat your poor miserable wretches at your hospital of the Hotel Dieu." "My lord," replied M. Boudon with great dignity, "every one of those miserable wretches, as your eminence is pleased to call them, is a prime minister in my eyes."—Cheever.

78—80. (78) **dealt perversely,**[c] R. V., "have overthrown me wrongfully." (79) **turn unto me,** for companionship, and that I may establish them in their confidence in God. **and .. known,** R. V., "And they shall know," i. e. let their knowl. be enriched out of my experience; or by their own. (80) **sound,** R. V., "perfect," comp. vs. 2; sincerity, wholeness, is a great Old Test. idea.

A Sound Heart.—I. David's prayer for sincerity—that his heart might be brought to God's statutes, and that it might be sound in them, not rotten or deceitful. II. His dread of the consequences of hypocrisy: "that I be not ashamed." Shame is the portion of hypocrites, here or hereafter.—M. Henry.

Sound-hearted.—

True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful and loyal,
King of our lives, by thy grace will we be!
Under thy standard, exalted and royal,
Strong in thy strength, we will battle for thee!

bless God for afflictions. Suffering has kept many from sinning. God had one Son without sin, but He never had any without sorrow. Fiery trials make golden Christians; sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotion."
—Dyer.

"They trim up lies with shadows of truth and neat language; they have mints to frame their lies curiously in, and presses to print their lies withal." — William Greenhill.

[a] Ps. c. 3, cxxxviii. 8.

[b] Ps. xxxiv. 2, lxvi. 16.

"Men's works have an age, like themselves; and though they outlive their authors, yet have they a stint and period to their duration. This only (the Bible) is a work too hard for the teeth of time, and cannot perish." — Sir Thomas Browne.

"Truth is so great a perfection as to have led Pythagoras to say, that if God were to render Himself visible to men, He would choose light for His body, and truth for His soul."
—Palmer.

[c] "Shame and discomfiture seem the fitting recompense of the proud, who see, by the providence of God, their plans fail, and prosperity, instead of calamity, result to him whom they persecute."
—Spk. Com.

"The Bible should be to you not a book only, but a speaking-trumpet, through which God speaks from afar to you, so that you may catch the

True-hearted, whole-hearted! Fullest allegiance
Yielding henceforth to our glorious King;
Valiant endeavor and loving obedience
Freely and joyously now would we bring.

True-hearted, Saviour, thou knowest our story;
Weak are the hearts that we lay at thy feet,
Sinful and treacherous! yet for thy glory,
Heal them, and cleanse them from sin and deceit.

Whole-hearted! Saviour, beloved and glorious,
Take thy great power, and reign thou alone,
Over our wills and affections victorious,
Freely surrendered, and wholly thine own.

Peal out the watchword, and silence it never,
Song of our spirits, rejoicing and free!
"True-hearted, whole-hearted, now and for ever,
King of our lives, by thy grace we will be!"

Frances R. Havergal.

81—84. (81) **fainteth,** with long and eager watching, Ps. lxxxiv. 2. (82) **word,** i. e. the fulfillment of thy promise. (83) **bottle in the smoke,** a wine-skin shrivelled and blackened by the smoke in wh. it hangs.[a] The effect of smoke on the exterior of a wine-skin resembles the withering, darkening influences of grief. Or according to Galen the fig. would denote the "mellowing and ripening of the character by affliction." (84) **many .. days,** the days of suffering and waiting. "How few of my days are left!"—Cheyne.

85—88. (85) **digged pits,** such as were dug to ensnare animals.[b] **not .. law,** i. e. they act in defiance of Thy law. (86) **faithful,** Heb. faithfulness. (87) **almost consumed,** their plottings were nearly successful. (88) **Quicken me,** as vs. 25; he stands constantly in need of new grace lest he ultimately succumb.

89—92. (89) **in heaven,** indicating its everlasting, unchanging character.[c] Polychr., "stands as firm as the heavens." Heaven is the image of unchangeableness. (90) **all generations,** lit. to generation and generation. **abideth,** "the constancy of God in his works is an argument for the faithfulness of God in his Word."—Chalmers. (91) **all,** or all things, the whole universe. (92) **have perished,** by giving way to despair, and so forsaking God.[d]

The Word of God a Pillow.—A missionary in New Zealand, while visiting the sick, went to the hut of a poor cripple. He found him with a New Testament lying by his side, and asked if he could read. He replied that he could. He was asked, "How did you learn to read?" as he had never attended a school. He said, "I used to creep about, and after raking the rubbish thrown out of my neighbors' houses, pick up all the bits of printed paper I could find. Sometimes I got half a leaf of a New Testament, and sometimes a bit of a leaf of the Prayer Book. These pieces, which I got from time to time, I used to sew together. Then, to learn to read, I pointed to a word, and asked my brother to tell me its meaning. This I often did, till at last I could manage to read a whole verse, and then a chapter. Now I can read any chapter." The missionary then asked, "Do you esteem the Word of God?" He replied, in his expressive language, "It is my pillow."—Youth's Dayspring.

93—96. (93) **I will never,** a firm and earnest resolve, but made in full dependence on Divine quickening. (94) **thine,** by full and hearty devotement of myself to Thee. Full trust in God is a plea on which we may urge the bestowment of His saving grace on us. (95) **waited,** watching for the opportunity of a slip, of wh. they might take advantage. (96) **end .. perfection,** some rend. "I have seen an end to the whole range of things,"[a] Polychr., "that all perfection has an end." **broad,** "has no limits whilst all other things are bounded by a narrow compass." Job. xi. 7—9.

Divine Relationship (vs. 94).—I. The Christian's relationship to God. He is God's—1. By purchase; 2. By conquest; 3. By adoption; 4. By

very tones of his voice."
—Spurgeon.

"It is certain that in the main, the vessels which the Spirit used were sanctified vessels. 'Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' But as they were all corrupt at first, so there were diversities in the operation whereby they were called and qualified for their work." — Arnot.

a "As wine-skin in the smoke, my heart is sere and dried."
—Keble.

"Wine in Asia is stored in upper chambers, underneath wh. large fires are commonly burning. The warmth communicates to it, quickly, properties and excellences, which a long time only could otherwise impart." — Galen, thro' Spk. Com.

b Ex. xxi. 33; 2 Sa. xxiii. 20; Je. xviii. 20, 22.

"God has given us four books: the book of grace, the book of nature, the book of the world, and the book of providence. Every occurrence is a leaf in one of these books; it does not become us to be negligent in the use of any of them." — Cecil.

c Ps. lxxxix. 2.

d "'If my delight had not been in Thy law, so excellent and eternal, I should have perished long ago in my misery.' A verse of price inestimable."
—Spk. Com.

a "To every finite thing there is an end or limit, but Thy commandments have no end or

dedication; 5. By likeness. II. His prayer. 1. Save me from sin; 2. From carelessness; 3. From my enemies; 4. From despondency. III. The reasons he assigns. I have sought to—1. Read them; 2. Understand them; 3. To be governed by them.—W. W. Whythe.

Independence of the Bible.—In relation to other books the Bible occupies a peculiar and solitary position. It is independent of all others; it imitates no other book; it copies none; it hardly alludes to any other, whether in praise or blame; and this is nearly as true of its latter portions, when books were common, as of its earlier, when books were scarce. It proves, thus, its originality and power. John never speaks of Plato, nor Paul of Demosthenes, nor Jesus of any writer, save Moses and the Prophets. In those great heights you feel blowing round your temples, and stirring your hair, the free, original, ancient breath of the upper world, unconventional, unmixed, and irresistible as the mountain tempest. It is a book unlike all others—the points of difference being these among many others:—There is a certain grand unconsciousness, as in Niagara, speaking now in the same tone to the tourists of a world, as when she spoke to the empty wilderness and the silent sun; as in the Himalayan Hills, which cast the same look of still sovereignty over an India unpeopled after the deluge, as over an India the hive of swelteringing nations.—C. Gilfillan.

97—100. (97) **all the day,**[a] a strong fig. for "constantly." (98) **Thou .. made,** R. V., "Thy commandments make." **wiser,** bec. he has the "practical wisdom wh. consists in the fear of the Lord, and leads him to eschew all evil."[b] **they,** Heb. it. The commandments of God being regarded as one whole. (99) **thy testimonies,** they are the teachings of One greater than all human teachers, so in his teachings the Psalmist feels that he surpasses all earthly masters. (100) **ancients,**[c] R. V., "aged," who are wise by the fruitage of long experience.

Love to God's Law (vs. 97).—I. God's people have a great love for the Word of God. 1. The Word of God deserves this love; 2. The saints readily yield this love to the Word. II. They that love the Word will be meditating therein continually. 1. Love causeth this; 2. Meditation cherisheth love.—Manton.

Love for the Bible.—I happened to be standing in a grocer's shop one day in a large manufacturing town in the west of Scotland, when a poor, old, frail widow came in to make a few purchases. There never was, perhaps, in that town a more severe time of distress. Nearly every loom was stopped. Decent and respectable tradesmen, who had seen better days, were obliged to subsist on public charity. So much money per day (but a trifle at most) was allowed to the really poor and deserving. The poor widow had received her daily pittance, and she had now come into the shop of the grocer to lay it out to the best advantage. She had but a few coppers in her withered hands. Carefully did she expend her little stock—a pennyworth of this and the other necessary of life nearly exhausted all she had. She came to the last penny, and with a singular expression of heroic contentment and cheerful resignation on her wrinkled face, she said, "Now I must buy oil with this, that I may see to read my Bible during these long dark nights, for it is my only comfort now when every other comfort has gone away."—Alexander Wallace.

101—104. (101) **refrained .. way,** man's watchfulness of himself, and of his conduct, ought always to match the bestowments of God's grace and help to him.[a] (102) **thou hast taught,** emphasis is laid on Thou: "even Thou, the all-wise God."[b] This is the source of his wisdom. (103) **sweet,** comp. Ps. xix. 10. **taste,** Heb. palate, as the seat of the sense of taste.[c] **honey,** first mentioned in Ge. xliii. 11. (104) **understanding,** in sense of discrimination bet. good and evil. **false way,** "All the heterodox tendencies that suited the spirit of the age."—Delitzsch. vs. 29.

Reading the Bible.—I have for years made it a practice to read through the Bible once a year. My custom is to read four or five chapters every morning immediately after rising from my bed. It employs about an hour of my time, and seems to me the most suitable manner of beginning the day. In what light soever we regard the Bible, whether with reference to revelation, to history, or to morality, it is an invaluable and inexhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue.—J. Q. Adams.

limit to their perfection."
—Rashi.

"Of everything that is striven after and wrought out I have seen an end." — Jewish Targum.

"Notwithstanding many things do show the way of life to be narrow, yet unto the godly man it is a way of great breadth; though not for sin, yet for duty and delight. He makes haste and progress in it."
—Robert Trail.

[a] Ps. i. 2, 3; 1 Ti iv. 15.

[b] Comp. Ps. cxix. 99, 100.

[c] Job xxxii. 8, 9.

"The Bible itself is like an old Cremona; it has been played upon by the devotion of thousands of years, until every word and particle is public and tunable."
—Emerson.

"We account the Scriptures of God to be the most sublime philosophy."—Sir Isaac Newton.

The celebrated Witsius was able to recite almost any passage of Scripture, in its proper language, together with its context, and the criticisms of the best commentators."

[a] Is. i. 16, 17; He. xii. 3, 4.

"Avoidance of sinful courses is both the effect and means of increasing in Divine knowledge." — Fausset.

[b] "Thou, and not man whose teaching is vain; Thou, whose teaching, as Thyself, is indescribably excellent." — Spk. Com.

[c] Comp. Job xxiii 12.

From the time that, at my mother's feet, or on my father's knee, I first learned to lisp verses from the sacred writings, they have been my daily study and vigilant contemplation. If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents in instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures.—Daniel Webster. I must confess to you that the majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me; the holiness of the evangelists speaks to my heart, and has such strong and striking characters of truth, and is, moreover, so perfectly inimitable, that, if it had been the invention of men, the inventions would be greater than the greatest heroes.—Rousseau.

105. **lamp,**[a] marg. candle. With reference to the perils of traveling in the darkness and the night. The lamp, or lantern, was held low, so as to throw its light on the steps to be taken. **light .. path,** or a sun by day.

The Bible the Lamp of God (vs. 105).—I. In the path of duty: precipices; pitfalls; perils. Give examples. II. In the night of sorrow: sickness, adversity, spiritual darkness. III. To the throne of grace: pillar of fire; golden candlestick; perpetual lamp; communion with God. IV. Through the valley of the shadow of death. V. To heaven. Not reason or conscience, but the Word of God as applied by the Holy Spirit. This lamp—1. A test of faith; 2. A test of practice.—G. Brooks.

Our Lamp.—Going two miles into a neighborhood where very few could read, to spend an evening in reading to a company who were assembled to listen, and about to return by a narrow path through the woods, where paths diverged, I was provided with a torch of light wood, or "pitch pine." I objected, it was too small, weighing not over half a pound. "It will light you home," answered my host. I said, "The wind may blow it out." He said, "It will light you home." "But if it should rain?" I again objected. "It will light you home," he insisted. Contrary to my fears, it gave abundant light to my path all the way home, furnishing an apt illustration, I often think, of the way in which doubting hearts would be led safely along the "narrow way." If they would take the Bible as their guide, it would be a lamp to their feet, leading to the heavenly home. One man had five objections to the Bible. If he would take it as a lamp to his feet, it would "light him home." Another told me he had two faults to find with the Bible. I answered him in the words of my good friend who furnished the torch, "It will light you home."—American Messenger.—Follow the Light.—On one occasion a Sabbath school teacher neglected to follow the light, held by one of the scholars, but, crossing the road, sank in a pile of filth. "Ah!" said the old superintendent, "that is the consequence of not following the light. What is the use of a light if your footsteps are not directed by it?" The scholar said, later in life, "I have never forgotten this remark; and it has been worth more than gold to me. Whenever I behold the light of God's truth, while I am thankful for the light, I do not forget that it will be of no value to me unless I follow it."

106—108. (106) **sworn,** made solemn resolve, and publicly announced it. **I .. it,** R. V., "have confirmed it." (107) **very much,**[b] the recurring reference to his present condition of affliction explains his earnest wrestling to keep hold of his faith in God. (108) **freewill offerings,**[a] presented as sacrifice of gratitude, beyond any requirements of the ceremonial law.

Afflicted.—I. The "very much" afflicted. 1. The world has such—widows, orphans, etc., etc. 2. Most take their turn. II. But there is "very much" grace. 1. God's word promises the needed quickening. 2. Himself very much greater than all our needs. 3. Christ tried "in all points" has all help. III. Therefore bring "very much" faith, as the Psalmist here. 1. Keen-eyed for promises. 2. Fervent in pleading them. 3. Strong in expectation.—W. B. Haynes.

Psalm cxix.—In the German Psalters it is styled, probably on account of its alphabetical character, Der Christen Goldenes A, B, C,—the Golden Alphabet of Christians; but it is also an advanced lesson for mature believers. We have here a sacred acrostic. One reason for such a method probably was to aid the memory. In conformity with that design, Philip Henry used to give this advice to his children: "Take a verse of Psalm one hundred and nineteen every morning to meditate upon, and so go over the Psalm twice a year, and that will bring you to be in

"The Bible resembles an extensive and highly cultivated flower garden, where there is a vast variety and profusion of fruits and flowers; some of which are more essential or more splendid than others; but there is not a blade suffered to grow in it which has not its use and beauty in the system. — Cecil.

[a] "Reference prob. is to the lamps and torches carried at night before an Eastern caravan." — Fausset.

"As, when you examine that intensely brilliant light which now and then illumines sections of our streets, you find behind it nothing but a lump of common lime, played upon by a flame of different gases, — so the Bible is the record of our crude humanity passing under the various forces of God's discipline and punishment; and for that very reason is 'a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path.' " —M. R. Vincent.

[b] Ps. lxvi. 20; Ro. v. 3—5.

[a] "His impulsive confessions and supplications." — Jennings and Lowe.

"This vs. is a fit petition with wh. to commence any service of prayer and praise to God." — Canon Hawkins.

" Theodoricus, Archbishop of Cologne, when the Emperor Sigismund demanded of him the directest and most com-

love with all the rest of the Scriptures." Agreeably to that recommendation, we find his godly daughter, Mrs. Savage, writing thus in her diary (1687-8, March 9), "Friday morning: I have been of late taking some pains to learn by heart Psalm one hundred and nineteen, and have made some progress therein."

109—112. (109) **in my hand,** a Heb. fig. for extreme peril.[b] (110) **laid a snare,** a peril to wh. the Psalmist refers more than once in the course of the Ps. See vss. 23, 51, 61, 69, 85, 95, etc. (111) **for ever,** or my most valuable, as well as permanent heritage. (112) **inclined my heart,** urged it with all holy resolves and persuasions.

God's Word the Heritage of His People.—I. God's Word is a heritage. II. God's Word is a valuable heritage. 1. It is an undeserved heritage. 2. It is a full heritage. 3. It is a sure heritage. 4. It is an abiding heritage. III. It is a responsible heritage. 1. It is offered to our choice. It is not forced upon us. We may reject it. 2. That choice is the result of a preparation. 3. That choice involves the agent in grand and eternal responsibilities.—Hom. Com.

Our Heritage.—This heritage of the word grows richer with time. The preacher who thinks he has exhausted a text will find another sermon in it when he goes to it again. The man who goes through his Bible for the fiftieth time, finds it richest in fresh treasures.—M. R. Vincent.

113—115. (113) **vain thoughts,**[c] R. V., "them that are of a double mind;" i. e. "the undecided in religion." (114) **hiding place,** Ps. cxliii. 9. **shield,** Ge. xv. 1. (115) **Depart,** etc., comp. Matt. vii. 23. The Psalmist here means, "Go away, it is quite useless to tempt me." **keep,** etc. Association with the wicked hinders men from keeping God's Law. Not only is there the danger of corruption (1 Cor. xv. 33); but, at the best, attention is distracted, and energies weakened.—Pul. Com.

Thou Art My Hiding Place.—I. In thy grace, from condemnation. II. In thy compassion, from sorrow. III. In thy succor, from temptation. IV. In thy power, from opposition. V. In thy fullness, from want.—W. Jackson.

Vain Thoughts.—A godly man may have roving thoughts in duty. Sad experience proves this; the thoughts will be dancing up and down in prayer. The saints are called stars; but many times in duty they are wandering stars. The heart is like quicksilver which will not fix. It is hard to tie two good thoughts together; we cannot lock our hearts so close, but that distracting thoughts, like wind, will get in. Hierom complains of himself; "Sometimes," said he, "when I am about God's service, I am walking in the galleries, or casting up accounts." But these wandering thoughts are not allowed: "I hate vain thoughts," they come as unwelcome guests, which are no sooner spied, but turned out of doors.—Thomas Watson.

116—120. (116) **according .. word,** Polychr., "as Thou hast promised." **may live,** comp. vs. 77. (117) **Hold thou,** his firm resolves were quite consistent with an entire leaning on God for the necessary strength. (118) **trodden down,** the figure of "conquered and humbled."[a] R. V., "set at nought." **falsehood,** self-deception.[b] Their vain reliance upon their deceitful artifices leads to certain confusion. (119) **puttest,** etc., out of sight. **like dross,**[c] by the fire of Thy judgment.[d] (120) **trembleth,** or shuddereth.[e]

Up, up above the littlenesses in which I have lived too long,—above the snares which have so often caught me,—above the stumbling-blocks upon which I have so often fallen,—above the world,—above myself,—higher than I have ever reached yet,—above the level of my own mortality: worthy of thee,—worthy of the blood, with which I have been bought,—nearer to heaven,—nearer to thee,—"hold thou me up."—J. Vaughan.

121—124. (121) **justice,** better, "righteousness." "As I have not oppressed any, so wilt thou not suffer me to be crushed by oppression."—Pul. Com. (122) **Be surety,** i. e. "grant me a guarantee of eventual deliverance and prosperity."[a] (123) **eyes fail,** Polychr., "Are pining." Comp. vs. 82. (124) **thy mercy,**[b] wh. gives tone to God's judgments. **teach me,** this is the fundamental thought of the poet, he craves for an ever deepening knowl. of the law and character of God.

pendious way how to attain true happiness, made answer in brief, thus: 'Perform when thou art well what thou promisedst when thou wast sick.' "

[b] Comp. Ju. xii. 3; 1 Sa. xix. 5, xxviii. 21; Job xiii. 14.

"It is not the laying the bait hurts the fish, if the fish do not bite." — Thomas Watson.

[c] Heb. seeph, one who is wavering or inconstant, one whose heart is not wholly with God.

Comp. 1 Ki. xviii. 21; Ja. i. 6.

"A malicious thought and a malicious deed are from the same spring, and have the same nature; only the deed is the riper serpent and can sting another; while the thought is as the younger serpent, that hath only the venomous nature in itself.

—Baxter.

[a] Is. lxiii. 3.

[b] Is. xliv. 20.

[c] Eze. xxii. 18, 20.

[d] Je. vi. 28—30; Mal. iii. 2, 3.

[e] "Strictly used of the hair as standing erect in terror (see Job iv. 15)." — Jennings and Lowe.

"Familiarity with men breeds contempt; familiarity with God, not so: none reverence the Lord more than they who know Him best and are most familiar with Him." — William Cowper.

[a] Job xvii. 3; Is. xxxviii. 14.

[b] Ps. ciii. 10.

"The poetry of the Bible has been the forming power of the greatest modern poems; for Tas-

so, Milton, and Cowper present in high relief the features of its moving hand. And its high and aspiring spirit, its heavenward tendencies, its ethereal sanctities, its judicial grandeur, have given birth to those sublime creations in architecture and painting which are seen in the works of Michael Angelo and may be designated the school of Christian art."—Beard.

"The Bible contains, independently of a Divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and of eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass from all other books that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom." — Sir W. Jones.

a "The verse seems appropriate in a time of some great falling away from Jehovah." — Spk. Com.

Je. xviii. 23; Eze. xxxv. 11.

"If Satan get a grip of thee by any one sin, is it not enough to carry thee to damnation? Though thou be not a slave to all sin; if thou be a slave to one, the grip Satan hath of thee, by that one sinful affection, is sufficient to captive thee."—William Cowper.

"All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming, more and more strongly, the truths contained in the sacred Scriptures." — Sir John Herschel.

The Bible the Theme of Psalm cxix.—This is the longest portion of Holy Writ devoted so exclusively to one theme. Only two of the verses (122, 132) do not expressly mention the great topic running through the whole. At least ten different words are employed to designate the holy volume as it existed in the time of the Psalmist,—word, way, law, statute, commandment, precept, testimony, faithfulness, truth, and righteousness; which, for the sake of variety, appear to be used promiscuously and with interchangeable signification. The Psalm consists of twenty-two equal divisons, arranged in accordance with the number and succession of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each division contains eight verses, and in the original each verse of the several divisions begins with the same Hebrew letter as stands for its heading in our English Bible. Thus the first eight verses begin each with a word whose initial letter is Aleph; the second division with words whose first letter is Beth; and so through the Psalm and through the alphabet. In accordance too, with that subdivision, the name Jehovah occurs in the Hebrew twenty-two times.—God's Promise.—A promise of God seems a very simple thing at first view. So does an acorn. No one who did not know the facts of vegetable life would dream that there is an oak tree enfolded in it. In a single promise are folded an infinite variety of provisions and adaptations, laid up, and not manifesting themselves until they are wanted. It is very much like the tent about which we used to read in the fairy story, which could be shut up in the hand, and yet could be spread out on occasion so as to cover a whole army. When a man takes a promise into his life, he finds it continually developing unsuspected resources. It comes in to help and to comfort him at points where he never dreamed it could be of any service to him . It is something as when an inexperienced traveler goes out for an excursion among the Alps, and is bidden to take a rope with him. He does not exactly see what he is going to want with it, but when he gets upon a snow slope, the guide ties him to himself with the rope; and when he slips into a crevasse, he finds that the rope is all there is between him and death. They come to a steep ledge, and the rope is in demand again. They set up their mountain tent for the night, the ropes come into play. That traveler finds out how many uses are laid up in a rope before he gets back to his lodging. He never will think of going into the mountains again without one.—M. R. Vincent.

125—128. (125) **am thy servant,** and so have claim upon Thy help. (126) **time .. work,** i. e. to interpose with His Divine judgments.[a] Delitzsch trans. "It is time to work for Jehovah." **made void thy law,** comp. Ezr. x. 18; Ne. xiii. 4—7. (127) **above gold,** he prizes his attachment to God's commandments higher than the gold wh. he might gain if he renounced God's service; Ps. xix. 10; Pr. viii. 11. (128) **all thy precepts,** "I do not pick and choose among thy commandments which I will neglect and which I will obey, but esteem them all as perfect, and obey them all." **false way,** "all psendo-Judaism"; vss. 29, 104.

Love of Gold.—An emigrant ship was once wrecked on a desert island. The people were saved, but they had few provisions, and it was necessary to make haste to clear and till the ground and sow seed. Before this could be done they discovered gold on the island, and every one gave himself up to the search for wealth. Meantime, the season slipped by, the fields were left untilled, and the people found themselves starving in the midst of useless treasure. There are people now who starve their soul and conscience that they may acquire a little more gold and silver.—H. J. W. Buxton.—"M. Foscue, the French millionaire miser, in order to make sure of his treasures, dug a cave in his wine-cellar, so large and deep that he could go down with a ladder. At the entrance was a door with a spring lock, which, on shutting, would fasten of itself. After a time, he was missing. Search was made for him, but to no purpose. At last, his house was sold. The purchaser, beginning to rebuild it, discovered a door in this cellar, and, going down, found him lying dead on the ground, with a candlestick near him; and, on searching farther, discovered the vast wealth which he had amassed. He went into the cave; and the door, by some accident, shutting after him, he perished for want of food.—Dictionary of Illus.

Supremacy of the Bible.—Ah, Philosophy! thou hast never yet, as this book, taught a man how to die! Reason! with thy flickering torch thou hast never yet guided to such sublime mysteries, such comforting truths as these. Science! thou hast penetrated the arcana of nature, sunk thy shafts into earth's recesses, unburied its stores, counted its strata, measured the height of its massive pillars down to the very pedestals of primeval granite. Thou hast tracked the lightning, traced the path of the tornado, uncurtained the distant planet, foretold the coming of the comet, and the return of the eclipse. But thou hast never been able to gauge the depth of man's soul, or to answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" No, no! this antiquated volume is still the "Book of books," the oracle of oracles, the beacon of beacons, the poor man's treasury, the child's companion, the sick man's health, the dying man's life, shallows for the infant to walk in, depths for giant intellect to explore and adore! Philosophy, if she would own it, is indebted here for the noblest of her maxims: Poetry, for the loftiest of her themes. Painting has gathered here her noblest inspiration. Music has ransacked these golden stores for the grandest of her strains. And if there be life in the Church of Christ—if her ministers and missionaries are carrying the torch of salvation through the world—where is that torch lighted but at these same undying altar-fires? When a philosophy, "falsely so called," shall become dominant, and seek with its proud dogmas to supersede this Divine philosophy; when the old Bible of David, and Timothy, and Paul, is clasped and closed, the only morality and philosophy worth speaking of will have perished from the earth. Dagon will have taken the place of God's ark—the world's funeral pile may be kindled!—J. A. Macduff.

129—132. (129) **wonderful,** "prodigies of moral excellence," vss. 18, 27.[a] (130) **entrance,** R. V., "opening," or revelation of;[b] or declaration. (131) **panted,** fig. for earnest eager desire; comp. Ps. xlii. 1.[c] (132) **Look,** etc., Polychr., "Turn thyself to me." **usest to do,** according to Thy wonted custom: or "as is just to them." Polychr., "As is befitting the friends," etc.

Charms of the Bible.—A little boy was born blind. An operation was performed; the light was let in slowly. When, one day, his mother led him out of doors and uncovered his eyes, and for the first time he saw the sky and earth, "Oh, mother!" he cried, "why didn't you tell me it was so beautiful?" She burst into tears and said, "I tried to tell you, dear, but you could not understand me." So it is when we try to tell what is in the Bible. Unless the spiritual sight is opened, we cannot understand.—Anon.—The Power of Truth (vs. 130).—The celebrated Gilbert West and Lord Lyttleton, both men of acknowledged talent, had received the principles of infidelity from a superficial view of the Scriptures. They agreed together to expose what they termed the imposture of the Bible; and Mr. West chose the resurrection of Christ, and Lord Lyttleton the conversion of St. Paul, as the subject of their criticism. Both sat down to their respective tasks full of prejudice and a contempt for Christianity. But what was the result? They were both converted by their endeavor to overthrow the truth of Scripture. They came together not, as they expected, to exult over an imposture exposed to ridicule, but to lament their former unbelief, and to congratulate each other that they had discovered the truth of revelation. They published their inquiries, which form two of the most valuable treatises now existing in favor of the truth of God's Word; one entitled, Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul, and the other, Observations on the Resurrection of Christ.

133—136. (133) **Order my steps,**[d] take the rule and management of them. **in thy word,** "by means of thy word." **iniquity,** wandering wilfulness, applied to steps. (134) **Deliver,** R. V., "redeem." **oppression,** Psalmist asks deliverance in his fear that by it he might yet be overborne. (135) **face to shine,**[e] with the smiles of gracious acceptance. (136) **Rivers of waters,** a strong poetical expression.[f] **they,** i. e. the apostates who seek to oppress him. Ex. of disinterested sympathy.

Sin's Sway in the Soul.—I. Fervently deprecated. 1. Realization of the horrors of its rule. 2. Recognition of the better power. 3. Thor-

"That there are difficulties in the Bible no one need deny; but these difficulties do not affect its Divine origin any more than the difficulties in nature affect the truth of its Divine origin. Because a man cannot comprehend all the difficulties which meet him in very many of the pages of the book of nature, would he be wise in saying that God was not the Creator of it? How, then, can he be wise who, for a similar reason, denounces the Bible as the book of God?"—John Bate.

[a] "Miraculous, far exceeding aught conceived by man, supplying ever new instructions." — Spk. Com.

[b] Lu. xxiv. 27, 32.

[c] "Like one oppressed with burning heat, and longing for some cool spring of water, or some fresh breeze to fan his brow." — Perowne.

"In the Bible there is more that finds me than I have experienced in all other books put together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being, and whatsoever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of having proceeded from the Holy Spirit." — Coleridge.

[d] Ps. xvii. 5, xix,, 13, 14; He. xii. 13.

[e] Nu. vi. 25, 26.

[f] Most of the Easterns shed tears much more copiously than the people of Europe. I have myself seen

Arabs shed tears like streams."—Gadsby.

"The psalmist did not merely wish for outward prosperity or inward cheer and comfort, but that these might contribute to fulfilling his deepest wish of learning better what God would have him to do." — Exp. B.

"The ancient Greeks had one sentence which they believed to have descended from Heaven; and to evince their gratitude and veneration for this gift, they caused it to be engraved in letters of gold on the front of their most sacred and magnificent temple. We, more favored, have not one sentence only, but a volume, which really descended from Heaven; and which, whether we consider its contents or its Author, ought to be indelibly impressed on the heart of every child of Adam." — Payson.

"Truth is truth, though from an enemy, and spoken in malice." —Lillo.

"I have seldom known any one who deserted truth in trifles that could be trusted in matters of importance." — Paley.

"Were temptations never so black, faith will not hearken to an ill word spoken against God, but will justify God always." — David Dickson.

[a] "Tried to the utterm ost." — Pr. Bk. Vers.

[b] Ps. xii. 6.

"I use the Scriptures not as an arsenal to be resorted to only for arms and weapons . . . ough exclusion sought. II. Wisely combated. 1. Practicalness as well as prayerfulness. 2. Regard had to little "steps." 3. Steps to be governed by divine rule. 4. System not trusted apart from God.—W. B. Haynes.

A Japanese Convert.—Six Japanese girls were sent over to America to be educated. One of them took a situation as governess in a family, where she read the English Bible. She wrote under deep conviction to her father, urging him to procure a copy of the Bible and read it. He, thinking it was a whim of his child, dismissed the subject from his mind, and destroyed the letter. Some seven years later he went as Commissioner for Japan to the Austrian Exhibition. There he saw the Bible Stand, and was impressed with wonder that so much should be made of any single book, that it should be thought worth translating into so many languages. He purchased a copy in Chinese, and read it with curiosity. Curiosity deepened into interest, and by degrees he became convinced of the truth of all the Book taught. In his journey through Europe he made his own observations of the three prevailing forms of Christianity—the Romish, Greek, and Protestant faiths. He was satisfied that the last of these came nearest to the teaching and spirit of the Book itself. On his return to Yeddo he applied to the American missionaries for baptism. Hearing of the step he had taken, his daughter wrote to him from America to suggest that, as he had the means at his disposal, he should purchase a heathen temple for purposes of Christian worship. He did so, and in the temple thus purchased the Christian missionaries now meet for worship.—Anec. Illus. of O. T. Texts.—An Oracle.—It is written of Boleslaus, one of the kings of Poland, that he carried about him the picture of his father, and when he was to do any great work or set upon any design extraordinary, he would look on the picture and pray that he might do nothing unworthy of such a father's name. Thus it is that the Scriptures are the picture of God's will, therein drawn out to the very life. Before a man enter upon or engage himself in any business whatsoever, let him look there, and read there what is to be done; what to be undone; and what God commands, let that be done; what he forbids, let that be undone; let the balance of the sanctuary weigh all, the oracles of God decide all, the rule of God's word be the square of all, and his glory the ultimate of all intendments whatsoever.—Spencer.

137—139. (137) **upright .. judgments,** or all expressions of Thy will. (138) **very faithful,** or exceeding faithfulness, all designed in spite of their seeming harshness to promote man's highest welfare. (139) **zeal,** etc., i. e. in opposing those who despise God's laws, brings him very near the brink of destruction at their hands.—Delitzsch. Ps. lxix. 9.

Zeal.—I. Flourishing in an unpromising atmosphere. II. Attaining an astonishing growth. III. Accomplishing a blessed work—the consumption of self.—C. A. Davis.

God is Righteous.—The hundred and thirty-seventh verse, like the twenty-fifth, is associated with the sorrows of an Imperial penitent. When the deposed and captive Emperor Maurice was led out for execution by the usurper Phocas, his five sons were previously murdered one by one in his presence; and at each fatal blow he patiently exclaimed, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments."—Neale and Littledale.

140—144. (140) **very pure,** i. e. tried; well refined;[a] fire-proved, as smelted metal.[b] (141) **small,** insignificant: held in little esteem. (142) **everlasting righteousness,** i. e. an absolute, perfect righteousness. **truth,** an embodiment of that immutable morality which rests upon a basis of absolute eternal truth. (143) **taken hold,** Heb. found. (144) **righteousness,** etc., Polychr., "Thy decrees are binding to eternity." Comp. vss. 137, 138.

Man's Greatness and Littleness.—I. The source of man's littleness is in himself. II. The source of his greatness is in the Divine word. Hence the greatest philosopher is a small man compared with the most uneducated whose delight is in the law of God, and who meditates, etc.—G. Rogers.

The Truth of God's Word.—A society of learned men caused a ship to be built, and resolved to make a voyage to discover the wonder-

ful nature and properties of the magnetic needle. When the ship was ready to sail, they went on board, taking with them a great number of books, and all kinds of instruments, then they set a magnetic needle in the midst, and examined and observed it. Thus they sailed to and fro, looking at the needle, and each had his own opinion concerning the hidden power which moved the needle. So a violent contest arose among the learned men, and they sailed to and fro on the ocean, quarreling with each other. Suddenly they felt a rude shock, and a violent crash was heard. The ship had struck on a rock and split, and the waters were rushing impetuously in. Then the learned men were all seized with great terror and confusion; they left the needle, jumped overboard, and saved themselves on the rocks. The ship was buried in the waves. Now, as they sat on the barren rocks, wet through with salt water, they cried out to one another that there was no dependence to be placed in the magnetic needle.—Krummacher.

Permanence of the Bible.—There are men that are all the time afraid that something will happen to the Bible. I should be, if I had no more faith than they have in it. There is a mountain not far from my dwelling in the country, and I never got up in the night to see if it had not been stolen by somebody. Near by rolls the old Hudson, and I never said to myself on going to bed, "How do I know that before morning somebody will not run down with a quart pot and carry off that river!" Now, to me, the Bible stands as firm as mountains stand, and it is in as little danger of being overthrown as mighty rivers are of being carried off in a quart pot. I am never afraid that the Bible will be laid aside. I am never afraid of its being superseded. I feel a certainty that it belongs to God, that it is indispensable to man, and that, however much it may be neglected or run against, it will take care of itself, and maintain its rightful place.—Beecher.

145—148. (145) **cried,** with the prayer of the anxious heart. **hear,** R. V., "answer." (146) **and I shall,** better, that I may. (147) **prevented the dawning,** notice the older use of the word prevent.[a] "I anticipated the dawning." He could not wait for morning light before he began his prayers. (148) **Mine .. watches,**[b] i. e. none of these night-watches, at their commencement, find him asleep. Polych., "I am awake before the cry of the watchman."

Childlike Prayer.—I. In its ring: "I cried." II. In its directness: "to thee." III. In its outburst: "whole heart." IV. In its outcries: "hear me"; "save me." V. In its promise of better behavior: "I will keep thy statutes."—W. B. Haynes.

The Bible.—Here is a servant of God, who, from his youth upward, has been diligent in the study of the Bible. Year after year he has devoted to that study, and yet the Bible is but a single volume, and that not a large volume. "Well, then," you might be inclined to say, "the study must surely by this time have exhausted the book! There can be nothing new for him to bring out; nothing which he has not investigated and fathomed." Ah, how you mistake the Bible! What a much larger book it must be than it seems! In place of having exhausted it, the royal student speaks as though there were more work before him than he knew how to compass. "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word."—Henry Melvill.—Tryst With God.—"The morning is the time fixed for my meeting with God. What meaning there is in time as well as place! In the morning—then God means me to be at my best in strength and hope. In the night I have buried yesterday's fatigue, and in the morning I take a new lease of energy. Give God all thy strength. In the morning—then He may mean to keep me long that He may make me rich."—J. Parker.

Stories of the Bible.—I might show you the first load of Bibles taken to Wales, the people going out to meet the cart that carried them, as if it had been Israel's ark, drawing it in triumph into the town, bearing away the blessed volume with overflowing heart, young people sitting up all night to read it, and laborers taking it with them to the fields and loving it as I cannot describe. I might show you the Tahitians, when France took possession of their island not many years ago, hurrying to the mountains and leaving their Bibles with the missionaries till they should come back, to save them carrying them so far; and ere long they

but as a matchless temple, where I delight to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry, and the magnificence of the structure; and to increase my awe and excite my devotion to the Deity there preached and adored." — Robert Boyle.

"Sin is Satan's ladder. It has its top on earth, its foot in hell. God's ladder has its foot on earth and its top in Heaven. Such a ladder is the Bible. And it is impossible for any human being with understanding, heart and soul, to place foot upon it and traverse it step by step, either to reach hell or even to remain a wicked or worldly-minded man. It must, of inevitable necessity, land him in Heaven." — R. B. Nichol.

[a] To anticipate; to go to meet.

[b] "The night in early times was divided into 3 watches, the first La. ii. 19; the second, Ju. vii. 19; the third, Ex. xiv. 24; 1 Sa. xi. 11." — Spk. Com.

"It has been subjected, along with many other books, to the fire of the keenest investigation — a fire which has contemptuously burned up the husbandry of the Georgics, the historical truth of Livy, the artistic merit of many a popular poem, the authority of many a book of philosophy and science. And yet there this artless, loosely-piled book lies unhurt, untouched, with not one page signed and not even the smell of fire has passed upon it." — G. Gilfillan.

were back in the face of all danger, to say they could not live without their Bibles, and must have them whatever should befall. There is an Irish peasant copying with his own hand the entire Scriptures. There is a Hindoo dying, and under his head lies his treasure. What is it? Some dirty scraps of paper, worn and tattered, which he had got years ago—texts of the Bible translated and written by a missionary, before Bibles in the language were to be had. There is a soldier hiding in his bosom as he goes to the wars, and a sailor tying it round his waist as the most precious thing on board, ere the vessel goes down. There is one calling it his best earthly friend; and another, his book of bank-notes; and another, sweeter than honey, better than gold.—J. H. Wilson.

149—152. (149) **judgment**, or righteous decree. (150) **draw nigh,** as with hostile intent. **Mischief,** R. V., "wickedness." (151) **near,** nearer than my foes." (152) **known of old,** R. V., "Of old have I known from thy testimonies," or, for a long time, therefore it is a thoroughly established conviction.

The Nearness of God (vs. 151).—I. God is near us in the hour of human desertion. II. God is near us in the hour of temptation. III. The nearness of God is seen in the various experiences of our life and growth.—W. H. H. Murray.

Influence of God's Word.—A writer in the Sunday at Home says, "When I was at Calcutta in 1844, it happened that a Christian gentleman of high rank, and a great Oriental scholar, had engaged the rabbi of the synagogue to translate the New Testament into Hindee. Much intercourse necessarily followed. Months rolled on in this way, until the seed of the Word had taken root in a heart prepared to receive it. Silently did the Holy Spirit bring home saving truth to the mind of this Jewish priest, as from day to day he continued to search the Scriptures. Gradually light broke in upon an awakened soul, which was now fully prepared to appreciate the perfection and beauty of Gospel lore, until the Sun of Righteousness arose in full splendor, chasing away mists and darkness, constraining him to declare to several of his brethren that he had found the Messiah. Thou Art Near, O Lord.—How sweetly and how often has this thought been brought home to some forsaken and forgotten one! "When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up," was the comfort of one in that deep affliction. And in the first outbreaking of the heart, how sweetly has the conviction come, like some whisper of peace, "I am with thee!" And I have no doubt that many and many a time in those hours of solitary prayer, when before the dawning of the morning, and before the night watches, or the Psalmist arose at midnight to commune with God, when no voice broke on the stillness, and every sound was hushed save the beating of his own heart, then had David heard the whisper of God's holy spirit, "I am near." Fear not, I am with thee."—Barton Bouchier.—Natural Law Without God.—There is something awful, cruel, in the inexorableness of natural law, if one cannot discern a Father back of it. Niagara leaves on the mind an impression of terror which sometimes well nigh swallows up the sense of its beauty, because of this suggestion of pitiless, remorseless power. To stand and see that current moving straight towards the precipice, with its tremendous volume, its resistless sweep, and then to think of it as mere brute force, obeying a fixed law, no pity in that boiling flood, compelled by the very law of its being to destroy you if you fall into its grasp—that is a picture of the order of the world without God.—M. R. Vincent.

153—156. (153) **Consider,** etc., the "affliction" intended is that which the psalmist suffers at the hands of his enemies, see vs. 107. (154) **Plead,** etc., Ps. xxxv. 1. **deliver me,** Polychr., "Avenge me." (155) **far from,** they are not at all in the way of receiving it. Only penitent souls ever even care for God's salvation. (156) **Great,**[a] marg. many.

The Spirit of the Bible (vs. 156).—This quickening according to the judgments, or Word of God, I consider the same thing as having the spirit of the Bible within us. I. Inquire what is that spirit? It is its moral peculiarity—the temper and spirit it breathes, and with which it imbues the mind that receives it. It is a spirit of truth, love, purity, humility, confidence, obedience. II. How may it be transferred? By frequent reading, true-hearted prayer, walking by its rules, depending on

"In the fabulous records of pagan antiquity we read of a mirror endowed with properties so rare that by looking into it its possessor could discover any object which he wished to see, however remote; and discover with equal ease persons and things above, below, behind, and before him. Such a mirror, but infinitely more valuable than this fictitious glass, do we possess in the Bible; by employing it in a proper manner we may discern objects and events, past, present, and to come. Here we may contemplate the all-enfolding circle of the eternal mind, and behold a perfect portrait of Him whom no mortal eye hath seen, drawn by His own unerring hand." —Payson.

"There is but one object greater than the soul, and that one is its Creator." —Augustine.

[a] Eph. ii. 4—6.

"Before I knew the Word of God in spirit and in truth, for its great antiquity, its interesting narratives, its impartial biography, its pure morality, its sublime poetry, in a word, for its beautiful and wonderful vari-

the Holy Spirit. III. The importance of being imbued with this spirit: it constitutes true nobility of soul, correct moral decisions, tranquility of mind, prepares for religious service, influences for good in the world, preparation for death, assurance of final acceptance.—R. Robbins.

Prayer for Help.—We must pray that God will help and deliver us, not after the device of our own brains, but after such wise as seemeth best unto his tender wisdom, or else that he will mitigate our pain, that our weakness may not utterly faint. Like as a sick person, although he doubt nothing of the faithfulness and tenderness of his physician, yet, for all that, desireth him to handle his wound as tenderly as possible, even so may we call upon God, that, if it be not against his honor and glory, he will vouchsafe to give some mitigation of the pain.—Otto Wermuellerus. Value of Sympathy.—We know that in afflictions it is some comfort to us to have our crosses known to those of whom we are assured that they love us: it mitigates our dolor when they mourn with us, albeit they be not able to help us. But the Christian hath a more solid comfort; to-wit. that in all his troubles the Lord beholds him; like a king, rejoicing to see his own servant wrestle with the enemy. He looks on with a merciful eye, pitying the infirmity of his own, when he sees it; and with a powerful hand ready to help them. But because many a time the cloud of our corruption cometh between the Lord and us, and lets us not see his helping hand, nor his loving face looking upon us, we have need to pray at such times with David, "Behold mine affliction."—William Cooper.

157—160. (157) **Many,** etc., Ps. iii. 1, 2, 3. (158) **transgressors,** R. V., "treacherous dealers." **grieved,** lit. felt loathing.[a] (159) **Consider,** etc., see vs. 153.[b] (160) **Thy word,** i. e. the "sum total" of Thy Word; "the aggregate of all the individual precepts of God's Word."

The Saint's Love.—I. Avowed. "Thou knowest all things," etc. II. Submitted. In humble insistance on its sincerity. In sense of its insufficiency. In prayer to God not to overlook it. III. Lost sight of in the sudden glory of God's loving-kindness. Where is my love now? IV. Recovered and humbly brought for quickening. Lord, I'll say no more about it: "Quicken me."—W. B. Haynes.

Study the Word.—Brethren, get acquainted with God's word and promise as soon as you can, and maintain that acquaintance everlastingly; and your knowledge of it shall not either go before, or go beyond its truth. Know it as soon and as long as you will or can, and you shall never find it tripping or failing; but you may after long experience of God say of it, "I have known of old that thou hast founded it for ever."—Anthony Tuckney.—Patrick Henry.—This distinguished man was a native of Virginia, of which state he became governor. He was eminent through life as a statesman and an orator. A little before his death, he remarked to a friend, who found him reading his Bible, "Here is a book worth more than all the other books which ever were printed; yet it is my misfortune never to have, till lately, found time to read it with proper attention and feeling."

161—164. (161) **princes,** prob. native rather than foreign princes are meant, vs. 23. **standeth in awe,** "dreads any violation of Thy law far above the force of prince or potentate."—Spk. Com. (162) **thy word,** i. e. the Scriptures as a whole; not limited to "thy promise." **findeth .. spoil,** Ju. v. 30; Is. ix. 3. (163) **lying,** wh. represents all kinds of falseness and deception.[c] (164) **Seven times,** a fig. of speech for "constantly, throughout the day."

Constant Praise.—I. Constant praise is demanded, because of the constancy of the divine judgment. II. Constant praise is due to God for the beneficence of His judgments. III. Constant praise is due to God for the clearness of His divine judgments. IV. Constant praise is due to God for the help He vouchsafes to keep His righteous judgments. V. Constant praise is due to God for the forgiveness He offers when we have broken His righteous judgments.—J. W. Burn.

The Bible.—

The Bible! hast thou ever heard
Of such a book? the author, God Himself;
The subject, God and man, salvation, life

ety, I preferred it to all other books; but since I have entered into its spirit, like the Psalmist, I love it above all things for its purity; and desire whatever else I read, it may tend to increase my knowledge of the Bible, and strengthen my affection for its Divine and Holy truths." — Sir W. Jones.

"His thoughts vibrate between his needs and God's compassions, between his own cleaving to the Law and its grand comprehensiveness and perpetuity."—Exp. B.

[a] P. cxxxix. 21. "The recreants I survey, and loathing turn away." — Keble.

[b] Job i. 1. 8. "Celerinus in Cyprian's Epistles, acquaints a friend with his great grief for the apostacy of a woman through fear of persecution; which afflicted him so much, that at the feast of Easter he wept night and day, and resolved never to know a moment's delight, till through the mercy of God she should be recovered. — Charles Bridges.

[c] "What is specially meant is 'false faiths,' deviations fr. that religion wh. the Psalmist so constantly declares to be 'truth.' "—Jennings and Lowe.

"The most learned, acute, and diligent student cannot, in the longest life, obtain an entire knowledge of this one volume. The more deeply he works the mine, the richer and more abun-

dant he finds the ore; and he will at least leave the world confessing that the more he studied the Scriptures, the fuller conviction he had of his own ignorance, and of their inestimable value." — Sir Walter Scott.

a "When God's law is loved, instead of being struggled against, the conscience is at peace, and the inward eye is clear; a man sees his duty and does it, free from those stumbling-blocks wh. are ever occasion of falling to others." —Perowne.

b Ge. xlix. 18.

"Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord! Star of Eternity! The only star by which the bark of man can navigate the sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss securely." — Pollok.

"You have stood at the fountain head of a stream of water, and admired while it bubbled up, and ran down in a clear little rivulet, till at length it swelled the mighty river. Such is the allusion here. The heart taught of God, cannot contain itself, but breaks out in praise and singing." — John Stephen.

And death—eternal life—eternal death—
Dread words! whose meaning has no end, no bounds!
Most wondrous book; bright candle of the Lord!—
This book—this holy book, on every line
Mark'd with the seal of high Divinity,
On every leaf bedew'd with drops of love
Divine; and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stamp'd
From first to last; this ray of sacred light,
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow,
And evermore beseeching men, with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live.—R. Pollok.

165—168. (165) **nothing,** R. V., "they have none occasion of stumbling."[a] (166) **hoped,** waiting anxiously.[b] (167) **hath kept,** in will and intention I have been faithful unto thee. (168) **before thee,** i. e. fully known to Thee.

Perfect Peace.—I. The law of God should be regarded with love. II. Love to the law is productive of great peace. Peace with God through the blood of reconciliation: peace with self by good conscience and suppression of evil desires: peace with men by charity. III. The peace which springs from love to the law is a security against stumbling: "nothing shall offend them"; neither the daily cross (Mark x. 21, 22); nor the fiery trial (Mark iv. 7); nor the humbling doctrine (John vi. 60, 66, etc.).—C. A. Davis.

Peace With God.—I reverence hundreds and hundreds of men who don't hold my opinion; but when I lie dying I don't want their speculations to rest upon. I want that Book for a pillow, for that Book rests on the nature of things. That is the only honest Book in the world. That tells me what I am; that tells me how to get into the mood of peace with God; that is what I wanted on a cold winter's night as I rolled forty feet down a precipice, expecting instant death; and if that is what I wanted then, it's what I want any time, isn't it? What is true in our highest moments is true in all moments. And what we see only by flashes is true the whole day long, the whole year long, life through, eternity through. If there is any certainty, it is certainty for all time and places. Now it is certain that when I lie dying I want that Book for a pillow, and, among other things in a pillow, I want a certainty that I have attained similarity of feeling with God, and love what He loves, and hate what He hates. That will be enough to give me peace. What! What! I am depending on my own righteousness when I make this my pillow! I beg your pardon, that is not what I say. If my life is to be my pillow, I must put my whole life into the pillow. There would be more than one thorn in the pillow if I were to put my whole life in it. Is there anybody here who can put his whole life in his pillow and rest in peace? You are going to depend on your own righteousness? Put your whole life into the pillow, and then put your head on it, and it will not be the softest kind of a support for a dying hour. You may do as you please, but I, for one, feel very sure I am going hence, that I want to go hence in peace, that I cannot go in peace unless I love what God loves, and hate what God hates.—Joseph Cook.

169—172. (169) **cry,** a mournful, supplicatory cry, as vs. 170. (170) **word,** of assurance and promise. (171) **praise,** of thankfulness and renewed trust. **hast taught,** better, "dost teach." (172) **tongue,** i. e. return praise for the fulfillment of God's promises.

An Interview.—If you wish for an interview with a man of very high rank, first you come near his house, then you ask for information and instruction as to his intentions, then you ask permission to enter, lest you should be driven away and refused admittance. Knock therefore at the door of the heavenly palace: knock, not with your bodily hand, but with the right hand of prayer. For the voice can knock as well as the hand. And when you have knocked, see how you go in, lest after entering you should not get the sight of the King. For there are many who make their way into palaces, and do not at once get an

audience of an earthly sovereign, but have to watch constantly to obtain an interview at last. Nor have they the choice of the opportunity, they come when they are sent for, and then present their petition, if they wish to be favorably received.—Ambrose.

173—176. (173) **help me,** R. V., "be ready to help," out of present distress. (174) **have longed,** and do still long. (175) **judgments,** let the course of thy providence be such as to help me to praise thee. (176) **gone astray,** it would not be consistent with the rest of the Ps. to interpret this of wilful wanderings.[a] Alexander, "I wander like a lost sheep."

Thy Hand.—I. Thy reconciling hand: "stretched out." II. Thy comforting hand; like that which touched Daniel and John. III. Thy supplying hand. "Thou openest thy hand," etc. IV. Thy protecting hand: "all his saints are in thy hand": Deut. xxxiii. 3. "Great Shepherd of the sheep." V. Thy supporting hand: "I will uphold thee." VI. Thy governing hand: "all my times are in thy hand." VII. Thy chastening hand: "Thy hand was heavy upon me." VIII. Thy prospering hand: "the hand of the Lord was with," etc.—W. Jackson.

Seek Thy Servant.—I do not think that there could possibly be a more appropriate conclusion of such a Psalm as this, so full of the varied experience and the ever-changing frames and feelings even of a child of God, in the sunshine and the cloud, in the calm and in the storm, than this ever-clinging sense of his propensity to wander, and the expression of his utter inability to find his way back without the Lord's guiding hand to restore him; and at the same time with it all, his fixed and abiding determination never to forget the Lord's commandments. What an insight into our poor wayward hearts does this verse give us—not merely liable to wander, but ever wandering, ever losing our way, ever stumbling on the dark mountains, even while cleaving to God's commandments! But at the same time what a prayer does it put into our mouths, "Seek thy servant,"—"I am thine, save me." Yes, blessed be God! there is One mighty to save. "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."—Barton Bouchier.

[a] "The fig. seems in this place to denote the helpless condition of the Psalmist, without protectors, exposed to enemies, in the midst of whom he wanders, not knowing where to find rest and shelter." —Perowne.

"Liveliness of soul is the Spirit's gift, and it will show itself in abounding praises." —Henry Law.

"Our sense of having wandered should ever be accompanied with the tender thought that the lost sheep is a sheep, beloved and sought for by the great Shepherd, in whose search, not in our own docile following of His footsteps, lies our firmest hope." — Exp. B.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH.

author unknown date. — Late exile.

The first of the "Songs of Ascents."

A cry of distress because of oppressive neighbors.

1—4. "prob. intended to be sung by the caravans of pilgrims 'going up' to keep the yearly feasts at Jerusalem."—Perowne. (1) **I cried,** i.e. I have cried in the past, and do now cry still. The past and the present experiences are combined. (2) **lying lips,**[a] this may refer to some personal enemy; or "the Psalmist may here personify his nation, and deal with the malicious slanders of surrounding nationalities." (3) **given,** or added; "What calamities shall be heaped upon thee?" What punishment will God inflict upon thee for thy false speaking? (4) **Sharp arrows,** such as a warrior uses. These figures borrowed from nomad life answer the question of vs. 3. God's wrath is to be poured out upon these treacherous neighbors. **coals of juniper,** the broom, or retem. Still used by the Arabs as charcoal, and said to retain their heat an unusual time.[b]

Slander.—In the drop of venom which distils from the sting of the smallest insect, or the spike of the nettle-leaf, there is concentrated the quintessence of a poison so subtle that the microscope cannot distinguish it, and yet so virulent that it can inflame the blood, irritate the whole constitution, and convert day and night into restless misery; so it is sometimes with the words of the slanderer.—F. W. Robertson.—Slander.—The special point to be drawn out in the mention of "coals of juniper," is the unextinguishableness of such fuel. There is a marvelous story in the Midrash which illustrates this very well. Two men in the desert sat down under a juniper tree, and gathered sticks of it wherewith they cooked their food. After a year they passed over the same spot where was the dust of what they had burned; and, remarking that it was now twelve months since they had the fire, they walked fearlessly upon the dust, and their feet were burned by the "coals" beneath it, which were still unextinguished.—H. T. Armfield.

5—7. (5) **Mesech,**[c] the country bet. the Black Sea and the Caspian.

[a] Ne. vi. 1—19.

[b] 1 Ki. xix. 4; Job xxx. 4.

The punishment of the slanderous tongue is appropriate; for itself is a sharp sword." — Spk. Com.

"A lie," says Carlyle, "should be trampled on and extinguished wherever found. I am for fumigating the atmosphere when I suspect that falsehood, like pestilence, breathes around me."

[c] Ge. x. 2; Eze. xxvii. 13.

Kedar, one of the predatory hordes roaming the Arabian desert.[d] Mesech and Kedar as notoriously barbarous people are prob. used to represent the hostile tribes that surrounded Israel, the Samaritans, Ammonites, etc. (6) **My soul**, or life. **hath long**, etc., i. e. "too long." The psalmist is tired of the effort required to live peacably among such rude barbarians. (7) **for peace**, lit. I am peace: his peaceful counsels are overruled.

The Christian in the World (vs. 5).—I. It is of little use to cry "Woe is me," better meet the difficulty and glorify God in the midst of it. II. Be holy, and so rebut the charge of inconsistency. III. Seek to be useful as well as consistent.—Spurgeon.

Peace.—What holy and gentle delight is associated with the very name of peace! Peace resting upon our bosom, and soothing all its cares: peace resting upon our households, and folding all the members in one loving embrace: peace resting upon our country, and pouring abundance from her golden horn: peace resting upon all nations, and binding them together with the threefold cord of a common humanity, a common interest, and a common religion! The man who hates peace is a dishonor to the race, an enemy to his brother, and a traitor to his God. He hates Christ, who is the Prince of peace. He hates Christians, who are men of peace.—N. McMichael.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIRST.

1—4. (1) **hills**, better, "mountains"; the district round about Jerusalem, of which Mounts Zion and Moriah were sacred peaks. So it figures the protection of Jehovah, who dwelt there. **from whence**, better treated as a question, whence, etc.? (2) **made .. earth**,[a] i. e. which is omnipotent, so contrasts with local gods, and man-made idols. (3) **He will not, a** description of "the joyous prospects wrapped up in the poet's hope in Jehovah."—Delitzsch. (4) **neither slumber nor sleep**, the language of firm and unquestioning confidence. God's delayings are never His slumberings.[b]

Our Keeper.—I. The Lord's care is personal in its objects. The keeper of Israel is the keeper of the individual. God deals with us individually. 1. This is implied in his care of the church, which is composed of individuals. 2. It is involved in the nature of our religion, which is a personal thing. 3. It is affirmed in Scripture. Examples; promises; experiences. "He loved me," etc., etc. 4. It is confirmed by experience. II. The Lord's care is unwearied in its exercise: "Will not slumber." 1. He is never unacquainted with our condition. 2. He is never indifferent to it. 3. He is never weary of helping us. We sometimes think he sleeps, but this is our folly.—Frederick J. Benskin.

Trust in Our Keeper.—A poor woman, as the Eastern story has it, came to the Sultan one day, and asked compensation for the loss of some property. "How did you lose it?" said the monarch. "I fell asleep," was the reply, "and a robber entered my dwelling." "Why did you fall asleep?" "I fell asleep because I believed that you were awake." The Sultan was so much delighted with the answer of the woman, that he ordered her loss to be made up. But what is true, only by a legal fiction, of human governments, that they never sleep, is true in the most absolute sense with reference to the divine government. We can sleep in safety because our God is ever awake. We are safe because he never slumbers. Jacob had a beautiful picture of the ceaseless care of Divine Providence on the night when he fled from his father's house. The lonely traveler slept on the ground, with the stones for his pillow, and the sky for his canopy. He had a wondrous vision of a ladder stretching from earth to Heaven, and on which angels were seen ascending and descending. And he heard Jehovah saying to him, "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest."—N. McMichael.

5—8. (5) **shade**,[c] a very forcible figure in that burning climate. **right hand**, the position taken by the friend, or advocate. Protection was especially needed on the right hand, as the side which no shield guarded. (6) **not smite**, as with fatal sunstroke.[d] **moon by night**, this may be a

d "The two names denote the rude and brutal neighbors, fr. whose molestations the Psalmist was suffering." — Jennings and Lowe.

Cicero speaks of war, "contention by violence, as belonging to the brutes." "All our noble studies, all our reputation at the bar, all our professional assiduities are stricken from our hands as soon as the alarm of war is sounded. Wisdom itself, the mistress of affairs, is driven from the field."

author,— unknown, date,— after the restoration.

Subject, the consolation of Divine protection.

a Ps. cxv. 15, cxxiv. 8, cxxxiv. 3, cxlvi. 6.

b "Possibly allusion is made to the nightly encampment, and the sentries of the caravan."— Perowne.

"The natives of India used to say that when Sir Henry Laurence looked twice to heaven and then to earth he knew what to do."

"Sleep without or fear or fright
Our Father wakes! Goodnight! goodnight!"
—Korner.

c Ps. xci. 1; Is. xxv. 4, xxxii. 2.

d 2 Ki. iv. 18—20; Jonah iv.

poetical extension of the fig., but poss. reference may be intended to the baneful influence of sleeping in the moon's rays.[e] (7) **all evil,** evil of all kinds. (8) **going .. in,** "all thy business and intercourse with men." "God protects all that the man is and that he does." See De. xxiii. 6.

God's Protection.—A celebrated traveler—after an absence of three years, during which he had walked across the continent of Africa from east to west, through vast regions never before trodden by the foot of the white man—recently received an enthusiastic welcome home. As he approached the quiet Kentish village where he had spent his boyish days, his first act, before entering his much-loved home, was to pass through the portals of the church where his aged father ministered, and, humbly kneeling, offer his devout thanksgiving to that God who had watched over and preserved him in all his wanderings. Among other appropriate Scriptures, this Psalm was read. It was a touching scene! Many hearts heaved with emotion, and many tears were shed, as the reader, in trembling accents, uttered the words, "The Lord is thy keeper. The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore." It was a graceful and fitting acknowledgment of that Divine Goodness which had safely conducted the weary, sun-burnt traveler through all the perils of his great and adventurous journey.—Geo. Barlow.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SECOND.

author unknown
date,—
soon after the restoration.

The song of a pilgrim just returned from Babylon to Jerusalem.

1—5. (1) **house of the Lord,** the term is suited to the temple rather than the tabernacle. (2) **shall stand,** lit. have stood, and are still standing; mentions where the persons were standing who exhorted the psalmist in vs. 1 to accompany them to the temple. They had all "come up" to Jerusalem, and were now standing within one of the roomy city-gates, when from one to another the word was passed, "Let us go at once to the temple."—Cheyne. (3) **builded,** etc., perhaps with reference to its being rebuilt after the exile. **compact,** with allusion to the conformation of the ground.[a] Jerusalem had risen again out of its ruined and dismembered condition, the breaches and gaps are done away with (Isa. lviii. 12), it stands there as a city closely mortised together, a city in which house joins on to house. Thus the poet has seen it, and the recollection fills him with delight.—Delitzsch. (4) **go up,** to festival. **unto the testimony,** or as a testimony, i. e. a custom or law. (5) **thrones of judgment,** in this fig. the fact is indicated that Jerusalem was the center of government, and of worship, for the whole land.[b] **house of David,** the Davidic dynasty.

Joy in Worship.—I. Joy in prospect of religious worship. 1. Because of the instruction we receive. 2. Because of the exercises in which we engage. 3. Because of the society in which we mingle. 4. Because of the sacred interests we promote. II. Joy in the invitation to religious worship. 1. Because it shows others are interested in the service of God. 2. Because it shows their interest in us. 3. Because it furthers the interest of Zion.—F. J. Benskin.

View of Jerusalem.—Dr. Clarke, in his travels, speaking of the companies that were traveling from the East to Jerusalem, represents the procession as being very long, and, after climbing over the extended and heavy ranges of hills that bounded the way, some of the foremost at length reached the top of the last hill, and, stretching up their hands in gestures of joy, cried out, "The Holy City! The Holy City!"—and fell down and worshiped; while those who were behind pressed forward to see. So the dying Christian, when he gets on the last summit of life, and stretches his vision to catch a glimpse of the heavenly city, may cry out of its glories, and incite those who are behind to press forward to the sight.—Edward Payson.

Jerusalem.—
Lo, towered Jerusalem salutes the eyes!
A thousand pointing fingers tell the tale;

[e] "Even the moon's rays may become insupportable, may affect the eyes injuriously, and produce inflammation of the brain."
—Delitzsch.
"God has not led me so tenderly thus far to forsake me at the very gate of heaven."—Adoniram Judson.
"The name given to persons of disordered intellect, lunatics, arose fr. the widespread belief in the effects of the moon on those who were exposed to its influence." — Perowne.

[a] "Those deep ravines wh. separate Jerus. fr. the rocky plateau of wh. it forms a part, acted as its natural defence, but must also have determined its natural boundaries. The expression of compactness was still more appropriate to the original city if, as seems probable, the valley of Tyropean formed in earlier times a fosse within a fosse, shutting in Zion and Moriah into one compact mass, not more than half a mile in breadth."—Dean Stanley.

[b] De. xvii. 8, 9.
"Jerusalem was compactly built; every rood of ground, every foot of frontage, was valuable; house was joined to house; those who had gardens had them be-

yond the city walls, among the 'paradises,' of the valley of Jehoshaphat."
—Samuel Cox.

a "The alliteration and play upon the words peace, Jerusalem, prosperity, cannot be preserved."
—Spk. Com.

"To wish and struggle for the growth of an external organization called a Church, disregarding the Presence which gives it all its sanctity, is no uncommon fault in some who think that they are actuated by 'zeal for the Lord,' when it is a much more earthly flame that burns in them."
—Maclaren.

"Jerusalem!" a thousand voices cry,
"All hail, Jerusalem!" hill, down, and dale
Catch the glad sounds, and shout "Jerusalem, all hail."
—Torquato Tasso.

6—9. (6) **peace,** the sign of prosperity; or, "Give hearty salutation to Jerusalem." There may be a designed reference to Jerusalem, as containing in its name the word Salem, or peace.[a] Jerusalem is the heart of all Israel as surely as Jehovah who has placed His name there is the God of all Israel. **they shall,** better rendered as a prayer—May they prosper. (7) **walls,** thy vallum; thy wall and trench round it—thy bulwarks. **palaces,** comp. Ps. xlviii. 13. (8) **brethren and companions,** the people at large. (9) **house,** or temple.

The Church a Palace.—1. Intended for the great King. 2. Inhabited by the royal family. 3. Adorned with regal splendor. 4. Guarded by special power. 5. Known as the court of the blessed and only potentate.—Spurgeon.

The Song of Ascents.—The fifteen Psalms (cxx.—cxxxiv.) have a common heading, which is translated "Songs of Degrees," "Songs of Ascents," or "Songs of Steps." They constitute together "a Little Psalter," which contains indications of a formal arrangement. Of the title itself different explanations are given. Some regard the degrees (ma'alôth) as "steps," and accept a rabbinical explanation, that the Psalms were written for chanting upon fifteen steps, which led from the Court of the Women in the temple to the Court of the Men. But there is no sufficient evidence of the existence of these steps. Others, translating ma'alôth by "ascents," suggest that they are Psalms composed for the Jews to chant on their ascent from Babylon to Jerusalem at the return from the Captivity. But the plural form is thus unaccounted for. Under these circumstances, recent critics mostly acquiesce in the view that the Psalms were written for the pilgrims, who annually went up to Jerusalem at the three great feasts, to chant upon their journeys.—Pul. Com.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THIRD.

author,—unknown: date, poss. that indicated in Nehemiah ii. 19, iv. 1—4.

Prayer for Divine aid in distress.

1—4. (1) **lift .. eyes,** as Ps. cxxi. 1.[a] **in the heavens,** and so art unmoved by the excitements and troubles of men. Thou art above all and dost control. (2) **unto the hand,** the Orientals prefer silence, and often indicate their wishes merely by movements of the hand. (3) **exceedingly filled,** or "have long been filled."[b] (4) **proud,** or arrogant ones, "irresponsible tyrants." Self-complacent ones, who disregard God's law.

a "This is a deep sigh of a pained heart, wh. looks round on all sides, and seeks friends, protectors, and comforters, but can find none. Therefore it says, I come to Thee, O my God."—Luther.

b Ne. ii. 19, iv. 4.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH.

author,—unknown: date, prob. post-exilic.

Praise to the Deliverer from peril.

1—5. (1) **the Lord,** or Jehovah. **on our side,** so ready to help us in a time of exceeding need. (2) **rose up,** in active efforts to destroy us. (3) **swallowed,** see Ps. lv. 15; Pr. i. 12.[a] **quick,** R. V., "alive." (4) **waters,** comp. fig. in Ps. cxliv. 7. **stream,** swollen mountain stream. **over our soul,** Polychr. "gone over our head." (5) **proud waters,** i. e. "proudly swelling;" the added epithet denotes the insolence of the enemies.[b]

a Comp. Nu. xvi. 32, 33.

"Here, however, the poet rather compares the enemy to a furious beast whose jaws are opened wide to swallow his prey." — Jennings and Lowe.

b Ps. xciii. 3.

Durie's Psalm.—In the year 1582, this Psalm was sung on a remarkable occasion in Edinburgh. An imprisoned minister, John Durie, had been set free, and was met and welcomed on entering the town by two hundred of his friends. The number increased till he found himself in the midst of a company of two thousand, who began to sing as they moved up the long High Street, "Now Israel may say," etc. They sang in four parts with deep solemnity, all joining in the well-known tune and Psalm. They were much moved themselves, and so were all who heard; and one of the chief persecutors is said to have been more alarmed at this sight and song than at anything he had seen in Scotland.—Andrew A. Bonar.

6—8. (6) **prey,** recurring to the fig. of the wild beast, as vs. 3.[c] (7) **as a bird,** Ps. lxxxiv. 3; Pr. i. 17, vi. 5. **we are escaped,**[d] the original expresses the deep joy felt at the escape. (8) **name of,** the power and majesty due to the character of Jehovah.[e] **made .. earth,** Ps. cxxi. 2, cxxxiv. 3.

Help in God.—The Romans in a great distress were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temples of their gods to fight with them; and so they overcame. And this ought to be the course of every good Christian, in times of public distress, to fly to the weapons of the church, prayers and tears. The Spartans' walls were their spears, the Christian's walls are his prayers. His help standeth in the name of the Lord who hath made both heaven and earth.—Edmund Calamy. The Spanish Armada.—When the Spaniards, on the defeat of their Invincible Armada, stung with disappointment and wishing to detract from the honor which our brave defenders had acquired, exclaimed that the English had little resaon to boast—for if the elements had not fought against them, they would certainly have conquered us—the enlarged and vivid mind of Queen Elizabeth improved by the hint. She commanded a medal to be struck, representing the armada scattered and sinking in the background, and in the front the British fleet riding triumphant, with the following passage as a motto round the medal: "Thou didst blow thy wind and the sea covered them." It becomes us to say in reference to this, as well as many other national deliverances, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth."—Cheever.

c Illus. by Nehemiah's experiences. Ne. iv. 1—23, vi. 1—19.

d "Complete escape is indicated by the breaking of the net."—Fausset.

e With this verse the French Protestant Church always begins its public worship — words which well become the children of the Huguenots.—Ker.

"By desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the Divine power against evil — widening the skirts of light, and making the struggle with darkness narrow-." — Middlemarch.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH.

author,— unknown: date, as prev. Ps.

Jehovah the defence of His people.

1—5. (1) **mount Zion,** the emblem of permanency. The mountain itself stands firm, bec. Jehovah sits enthroned there; and it is girdled by a wall of mountains. **removed,** R. V., "moved." **abideth,** standeth fast: lit. sitteth.[a] (2) **round about,** not strictly true that Jerus. is encircled by higher hills, but poetically true that mountains form a bulwark about her.[b] Jerusalem is actually shut in by mountains only on the eastern side. (3) **rod,** etc., Polychr., "He lets not the sceptre of outrage;" reference may be to "the Persian rule under favor of wh. the Samaritans and others annoyed the Jews."[c] **rest,** i. e. remain. **lot,** etc., the possession of the nation. "Godless domination over the land of Israel shall not be permitted to last." **lest .. iniquity,** be tempted to apostasy. (4) **Do good,** i. e. do it quickly. (5) **turn aside,** lit. bend their crooked paths. Not those who go away into heathenism, but those who fall away into apostasy; Neh. vi. 10—14; xiii. 28—31. **peace .. Israel,** rend. as expression of a wish and prayer.

Safety of Believers in Seeming Perils.—A British subject may be safe although surrounded by enemies in a distant land—not that he has strength to contend alone against armed thousands, but because he is a subject of our Queen. A despot on his throne, a horde of savages in their desert, have permitted a helpless traveler to pass unharmed, like a lamb among lions—although, like lions looking on a lamb, they thirsted for his blood—because they knew his sovereign's watchfulness, and feared his sovereign's power. The feeble stranger has a charmed life in the midst of his enemies, because a royal arm unseen encompasses him as with a shield. The power thus wielded by an earthly throne may suggest and symbolize the perfect protection of Omnipotence. A British subject's confidence in his Queen may rebuke the feeble faith of a Christian.—W. Arnot. This Psalm was frequently sung in the hours of danger during the Scottish Reformation period. It was in frequent use also with the French Protestants, when hiding from the dragonnades of Louis XIV., and fleeing to the frontiers for escape. Every verse and word seemed made for such emergencies.—Ker.

a Ps. xciii. 1, civ. 5.

b Dean Stanley thinks the reference may be to the more distant hills of Nebi Samwil, El Ram, and Tel el Fulil.

c "The Sam. contrived to gain over a considerable part, and that the most influential part, of the Jews to their side. The fear was, as the next clause shows, lest in this state of things the defection should spread still more widely."
—Perowne.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH.

author,— unknown: date, as prev. Ps.

Thanksgiving for return fr. captivity.

1—3. (1) **turned,** etc., i. e. changed the captivity of Zion to freedom. **dream,** could not at once receive such joyful news as true.[d] "New-born

joy cannot realize its own existence." (2) **singing,** Heb. rinnâh, a joyful cry. **they .. heathen,** i. e. some of the heathen. **done great things,** as prophesied, Joel ii. 21. **them,** lit. "these." (3) **whereof,** etc., better omit "whereof," and read "We are joyful."

A Comparison and a Contrast.—I. The saved like them that dream. 1. In the strangeness of their experience. 2. In the ecstasy of their joy. II. The saved unlike them that dream. 1. In the reality of their experience. Dreams are unsubstantial things, but "the Lord turned"—an actual fact. 2. In their freedom from disappointment. No awakening to find it "but a dream:" see Isaiah xxix. 8. 3. In the endurance of their joy. The joy of dreams is soon forgotten, but this is "everlasting joy." —W. H. J. Page.

Deliverance.—The deliverance was so unlooked for, and came upon them with such a surprise that it seemed more an illusion than a reality. But when the full meaning of the event dawned upon them, their joy knew no bounds. A similar incident is recorded by Livy, when the Romans, having conquered Philip of Macedon, restored liberty to all the Grecian cities. The proclamation was made by the herald in the midst of the circus when a vast multitude of the Greeks were assembled to witness the Isthmian games. The people were so stunned with the news that they could scarcely believe their own ears. They were "like them that dream." But when, at their request, the proclamation was repeated, and the glad tidings thus confirmed, they shouted and clapped their hands with such vigor as showed how heartily they appreciated the blessing of liberty. The Lord often surprises and gladdens His people with His marvelous deliverances.—George Barlow.

4—6. (4) **Turn .. captivity,** restore those of us who are still captives. "The poet prays for those who have not yet returned to their country." **as the streams,** wh. are restored and filled with the heavy rains. Polychr., "like channels in the dry land." **south,** i. e. the Negeb, or southern part of the country.[a] (5) **sow in tears,** "the work of establishing the new Israel may be full of pain and grief, but future generations will enjoy the blessed results."—Cheyne. **in joy,** or with shoutings of a joyous harvest home.[b] (6) **weepeth,** at every step, because he must cast in all the store. **precious seed,** better, "a handful of seed."[c] "The quantity of the seed a sower draws, or trails along,[d] at one time."

Sowing and Reaping.—All human life as related to the larger life of eternity is a sowing-time; and largely a sowing-time of tears. Life is a season of preparatory discipline for immortality; and the experience through which this discipline is perfected is often severe. And we may lay it down as a general law that the sowing-time, whether it be in agriculture, or in learning, or in morals, or in experience, is a hard, painful, uncomfortable time; often a time of risk and danger. The thought of the Psalm is rich in suggestions to us. In our own life, in the condition of society, in the aspects of the times, both civil and religious, there is much that savors of the tearful sowing-time. There is but one thing for us to do; and that is to take up our seed, and in God's strength and with God's good cheer in our hearts, go forth to the sowing, be the ground good or stony, be the prospect of harvest never so remote. The way to the harvest lies straight through the thickest of these trials and discouragements. We shall reap, only as we shall resolutely take up our lot, make the most and best of our position, squarely face our responsibilities, let the full pressure of our burdens come down on our shoulders, and work on for Christ's sake, whether men will hear or forbear. Not in spite of these, but by means of these the harvest is to come; and if we shun the weeping we shall miss the reaping.—Marvin R. Vincent.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH.

1—5. (1) **build the house,** or found the family,[a] and state. **waketh,** i. e. keepeth awake to watch.[b] Without the blessing of God the sleepless anxiety of statesmen is in vain. (2) **sit up late,** R. V., "and so late take rest," so artificially lengthening the natural day, in order to do more work. **bread of sorrows,** R. V., "toil," i. e. of wearisome and exhausting labors, due to feverish anxiety and undue straining. **so,** just as cer-

[a] "When the edict of Cyrus went forth allowing the captives to return, it was so unexpected, so miraculous, that we deemed the accomplishment of ancient prophecy (Jer. xxv. 12, xxix. 10) a dream."
—Spk. Com. "It is more prob. that the poet means to say that the incredible joy of release made the restored captives feel as if they were in blissful dream." — Jennings and Lowe.

[a] "The streams of the returning population of Israel, wh. had been frozen up in the north, and were thawed by the genial ray of God's mercy, and flowed back in vernal joy, to replenish the dry channels of their ancient homes, and to refresh the whole region with prosperity." — Wordsworth.

[b] For contrast of sowing and reaping, see Hag. ii. 3—9, 17—19.

[c] "The rhythm of the original in vs. 6 is noticeable. The slow, sad motion of the sower going forth to his work of sorrowful anticipation, is contrasted with his quick glad return, bearing his sheaves."
—Spk. Com.

[d] Am. ix. 13.

author,—
unknown:
date,—
time of the rebuilt temple.

God's blessing alone brings prosperity.

[a] De. xxv. 9; 1 Sa. ii. 35.

[b] Ps. cxxi. 3, 4.

tainly; nay, more surely. "Thus giveth He to His beloved, even in sleep."—Delitzsch. God's "beloved" are not exempted from the great law of labor which lies upon all, but the sting is taken from it when they can leave all results in a Father's hand, witih absolute trust in His wisdom and goodness.—Perowne. (3) **heritage,** etc.; His special gift, a possession.[c] (4) **children of the youth,** i. e. born in his early manhood.[d] (5) **quiver full,** the symbol of abundant resources for the battle-field of life. **speak .. gate,** nobly defending their father when he has a controversy. "Girt with a phalanx of lusty sons, a father can defy all dangers abroad and at home."—Cheyne.

Labor and Rest (vss. 1, 2).—Two subjects for meditation. I. Labor without God. 1. The possibility of working without God; 2. The fruitlessness of working without God. II. Repose from God. 1. Repose is a generally recognized blessing; 2. The repose of the true worker is a special blessing.—Thomas.

Psalm 127.—It is a Psalm that needs to be read very often in our feverish, over-organized age, when we are all president or secretary of something or other, and forget sometimes how important is the home, and how many are God's gifts to His beloved "while they sleep."—W. E. Barton. God Acknowledged.—It is the custom, in the valleys of the canton of Berne, whenever the father of a family builds a house, and the walls are raised to their full height, to request the minister of the parish to pray to God inside. The workmen and such as are to assist in finishing the house, meet together and unite in thanking the Lord for His care hitherto, and entreat a continuance of it through the more dangerous part that remains. "This prayer," observes M. Paulet, the pastor of Coutelary, "when made in faith, redoubles one's strength, and removes all fear of danger." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" observed an old carpenter to this same minister, when he advised him not to expose himself too incautiously. A blessing terminates this pious ceremony; the pastor retires, the workmen return to their labors, and the noise of hammers begins to be heard again.

c "It must be remembered that by Orientals abundant offspring, and esp. male offspring, is regarded as the chief of blessings." — Jennings and Lowe.

d "Such would naturally grow up a comfort and protection to their father in his old age." —Perowne.

"Along with Psalms vi. and cxlii, this was chosen for herself by Catherine de Medici. She could scarcely have selected any more unsuitable."

"No cheating nor bargaining will ever get a single thing out of nature's 'establishment' at half-price." —Ruskin.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHTH.

author.— unknown: date, as prev. Ps.

1—3. (1) **Blessed is,** as Ps. i. 1. **feareth .. walketh,** "abstains fr. breaches of the prohibitory commandments of the Decalogue, and performs the positive ones."[e] (2) **labour,** i. e. the fruit of thy labor.[f] **happy,** etc., better, "happy thou, and well is it with thee." (3) **by the sides,** R. V., "in the innermost parts." Women's apartments in the Eastern house are separate and secluded. The vine is the usual emblem of fruitfulness, and suggests also the idea of dependence, support. **olive plants,** the emblem of vigorous, healthy, joyous life.[g]

The domestic blessings of the true worshiper of God.

By the Sides of the House.—She keeps to the house: she is a home bird. Some imagine that she is like a vine which is nailed up to the house-wall; but they have no such custom in Palestine, neither is it pleasant to think of a wife as growing up by a wall, and as bound to the very bricks and mortar of her husband's dwelling. No, she is a fruitful vine, and a faithful housekeeper; if you wish to find her, she is within the house: she is to be found both inside and outside the home, but her chief usefulness is in the inner side of the dwelling, which she adorns. Eastern houses usually have an open square in the center, and the various rooms are ranged around the sides,—there shall the wife be found, busy in one room or another, as the hour of the day demands. She keeps at home, and so keeps the home. It is her husband's house, and she is her husband's; as the text puts it—"thy wife," and "thy house;" but by her loving care her husband is made so happy that he is glad to own her as an equal proprietor with himself, for he is hers, and the house is hers too.—Spurgeon.

e So the Rabbis, Ab. Ezra and Kimchi explain the passage.

f Le. xxvi. 16; De. xxviii. 33; see also Hag. i. 11, ii. 17.

g "The similitude in the text is taken fr. a multitude of young olive shoots clustering round the parent tree." — Spk. Com., Thomson.

4—6. (4) **thus,** i. e. thus variously and abundantly, in labor and in home. (5) **out of Zion,** regarded as the earthly dwelling-place and throne of God.[a] **thou shalt see,** better rend. as a wish, "Mayest thou look upon." "The welfare of the family and the welfare of the State are indissolubly connected." (6) **children's children,** sometimes even to

a Ps. iii. 4, xiv. 7, xx. 2, cxxxiv. 3.

"Long life crowns all other temporal favors." — Fausset.

"This is the pride, the glory of a man,
To train obedient children in his house,
Prompt on his enemies t' avenge his wrongs,
And with the father's zeal in honor high
To hold his friends.
—Sophocles.

author,—unknown: date, early restoration.

The cry of the persecuted nation.

[c] Is. xlvii. 12—15; Je. ii. 2, iii. 25; Ho. ii. 15, xi. 1.

[d] "The enemies having tried all ways, still never accomplished their purposes, bec. God disappointed their hopes, and baffled their attempts."
—Calvin.

[e] "The lashes inflicted upon the back of the writhing slave by a cruel master are compared to the long furrows."

"As the man of pleasure is often more miserable than most men are; so the sceptic, in a vain attempt to be wise beyond what is permitted to man, plunges into a darkness more deplorable than the common herd whom he would fain instruct."
—Colton.

author,—unknown: date,—late in the exile.

A cry to God for the forgiveness of sin.

[a] Ps. lxix. 2, 14.

[b] Job x. 14, xiv. 16, 17; Ps. xc. 8.

[c] "The image seems, in the first instance, drawn from a flight in battle before a too-powerful foe."—Spk. Com.

the fourth generation. **peace,** etc., as close of Ps. cxxv. As the legitimate result of such domestic life the whole nation would be prosperous.

Two Priceless Mercies.—I. The house of God a blessing to our house. It is connected with our own salvation, edification, consolation, etc. It is our hope for the conversion of our children and servants, etc. It is the place of their education, and for the formation of helpful friendships, etc. II. Our house a blessing to God's house. Personal interest in the church, hospitality, generosity, service, etc. Children aiding holy work. Wife useful, etc.—Spurgeon.

The Warrior Playing with His Children.—The warlike Agesilaus was, within the walls of his own house, one of the most tender and playful of men. He used to join with his children in all their innocent gambols, and was once discovered by a friend showing them how to ride upon a hobby-horse. When his friend expressed some surprise at beholding the great Agesilaus so employed, "Wait," said the hero, "till you are yourself a father, and if you then blame me, I will give you liberty to proclaim this act of mine to all the world."—Cheever.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH.

1—4. (1) **Many a time,** marg. much, or grievously. **afflicted me,** or have been adversaries to me. **youth,** the period spent in Egyptian bondage was so regarded.[c] (2) **not prevailed,** Polychr., "not proved my master;" this is the point of the Ps.,[d] comp. 2 Cor. iv. 8—10. (3) **plowers,** etc., ploughing is made a fig. of scourging.[e] See another use of the fig. in Mi. iii. 12; Je. xxvi. 18. **long their furrows,** i. e. lengthened out their tortures. (4) **cords,** by wh. the wearied steer was yoked to the plough. Cord is general image of slavery.

Israel's Song of Triumph.—I. The Lord is righteous in permitting these afflictions to come upon His people. II. He is righteous in keeping His promise of deliverance to His people. III. He is righteous in visiting the enemies of His people with judgment.—W. H. J. Page.

Long Furrows.—Well did Latimer say that there was no busier ploughman in all the world than the devil: whoever makes short furrows, he does not. Whoever baulks and shirks, he is thorough in all that he does. Whoever stops work at sundown, he never does. He and his children plough like practiced ploughmen; but they prefer to carry on their pernicious work upon the saints behind their backs, for they are as cowardly as they are cruel.—Spurgeon.

5—8. (5) **Let them,** or prophetically, they will be. **Zion,** the seat of Jehovah. (6) **grass .. housetops,** "on ill-compacted flat Eastern roofs grass is often found springing into a short-lived existence." Such grass withers prematurely for lack of root. (7) **mower,** etc., R. V., "reaper;" no harvest of such growths is too be gathered. (8) **go by say,** using the customary salute to the reapers—"The Lord be with you:" as Ru. ii. 4; to wh. the reapers reply, "We bless you in the name of Jehovah."

The Wicked Flourishing and Perishing.—I. Eminent in position. II. Envied in prosperity. III. Evanescent in duration. IV. Empty as to solidity. V. Excepted from blessing.—Spurgeon.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH.

1—4. (1) **depths,** of the misery and sorrow,[a] wh. has come upon me through my sins; deep waters of overwhelming affliction. (2) **Lord,** Heb. Adonai or Sovereign Lord. (3) **mark,**[b] strictly watch, and keep in memory in order to punish. **shall stand,** i. e. to endure Thy presence.[c] (4) **But,** etc., before this vs. we require such a sentence as, "But thou dost not mark them, for." **forgiveness,** lit. the forgiveness, or just that wh. man needs. **feared,** with thankful, loving fear. Milton makes his Satan say, "Then farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear!" And certainly the true fear of God—a reverential, loving fear—could not exist, unless we had a confident hope in God's mercy and willingness to for give us our trespasses, if we turn to Him.—Pul. Com.

Not Justice, but Pardon.—In the days when the first Napoleon was Consul of France, a well-dressed girl of fourteen years of age presented herself, alone, at the gate of the palace. By tears and entreaties she moved the kind-hearted porter to allow her to enter. Passing from one room to another, she found her way to the hall through which Napoleon and his officers were to pass. When he appeared, she cast herself at his feet, and in the most earnest and moving manner cried, "Pardon, sire! pardon for my father!" "And who is your father?" asked Napoleon. "And who are you?" "My name is Lajolia," she said; and with flowing tears added, "but, sire, my father is doomed to die." "Ah! young lady," replied Napoleon, "I can do nothing for you. It is the second time your father has been found guilty of treason against the State." "Alas!" exclaimed the poor girl, "I know it, sire; but I do not ask for justice, I implore pardon. I beseech you, forgive, oh, forgive my father!" Napoleon's lips trembled, and his eyes filled with tears. After a momentary struggle of feeling, he gently took the hand of the young maiden, and said, "Well, my child, for your sake I will pardon your father. That is enough. Now leave me."—Wayside Books.

5—8. (5) **in .. hope,** better, "for His word do I tarry;" i. e. for the fulfillment of it. **his word,** of gracious promise.[a] (6) **watch .. morning,** as do sentinels and sleepless sufferers. (7) **mercy,** lit. the mercy, that wh. is so characteristic of God. **plenteous redemption,** i. e. an abundance of ways and means of salvation. (8) **he,** on this word emphasis lies. **his iniquities,** which are the cause of his sufferings.

More Than They.—I. For the darker sorrow his absence causes. II. For the richer splendor His coming must bring. III. For the greater might of our indwelling love.—W. B. Haynes.

Watching.—

"As those that watch for the day,
Through the restless night of pain,
When the first faint streaks of gray
Bring rest and ease again—
As they turn their sleepless eyes
The Eastern sky to see,
Long hours before sunrise—
So waiteth my soul for Thee!"

[a] "There are some who, instead of waiting for God, take upon themselves to decide for Him, how, when, and in what degree, He shall aid. This is not to wait for Him; it is to make God wait upon them, and aid them as they define the way." — Luther.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST.

author,—unknown: date,—late exile.

A Ps. of child-like resignation to God.

1—3. (1) **not haughty,** humility is properly regarded as the crown of the virtues. **lofty,** lifted up.[b] Pride, being in the heart, finds expression in the uplifted attitude. **in great matters,** i. e. has not sought for positions involving duties and responsibilities too heavy for him. **things too high,** R. V., "wonderful," involving powers beyond any I possessed. (2) **behaved,** etc., R. V., "stilled .. soul." **child .. weaned,** one that has ceased fretting after its mother's milk, and lies beside her peaceful and satisfied. He has at least achieved one hard thing—he has quieted the restless longings of a strong human nature. He compares his acquired gentleness to that of a weaned child.—Cheyne. (3) **Let Israel,** better, "O Israel, hope thou."[c]

[b] Ps. xviii. 27, ci. 5.

Hope in the Lord.—Remember that he is Jehovah. 1. Wise to plan. 2. Good to purpose. 3. Strong to execute, and that He will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly. 4. Trust "from henceforth." If you have not begun before, begin now. 5. And do not be weary; trust "for ever." Your case can never be out of the reach of God's power and mercy.—Adam Clarke.

A Religious Repose.—Shaking off such ambitions and loftiness of spirit, he has found repose, as all do who clear our hearts of that perilous stuff. But it is to be noted that the calm which he enjoys is the fruit of his own self-control, by which his dominant self has smoothed and stilled the sensitive nature with its desires and passions. It is not the tranquility of a calm nature which speaks here, but that into which the speaker has entered, by vigorous mastery of disturbing elements. How hard the struggle had been, how much bitter crying and petulant

[c] "The poet sets before them the example of a pattern Israelite, and appeals to them generally to attain conformity to that pattern by grasping supermundane hopes." —Jennings and Lowe.

"To how many hearts this psalm has brought comfort and hope God only can tell, but seldom do four such names as Luther, Owen, Wesley, and Edwards surround one portion of the word of God. It reminds us of the ancient fourfold encampment of the tribes of Israel round the tabernacle, or the city that lieth foursquare, with a herald at each central gate."—Ker.

"When a man fully realizes life as service to God, he rests assured that his Divine Master appoints his sphere and provides his work; and his Master will be absolutely sure to provide sphere and work for every servant who jealously keeps the attitude of obedience. —Pul. Com.

author,—unknown: date, time of the rebuilt temple.

Prayer for the house of God and house of David.

[a] 1 Chr. xxii. 14.

[b] Only found in three other passages. Is. i. 24, xlix. 26, lx. 16.

[c] "A good instance of the way in wh. the associations of the old patriarchal tent-life fixed themselves in the language of the people." —Perowne.

[d] Comp. Ge. xlix. 4.

[e] "Neither the temples of my head to take any rest." —Pr. Bk. Vers.

[f] Ge. xxxv. 19; Ru. iv. 11; Mi. v. 2.

"We heard where the ark was; we went to fetch it, saying one to another as we brought it to its new abode, 'Let us come into his dwelling,' etc. And now, by the memory of David, by the memory of thy covenant with him reject not the prayer of our king, who is David's son."—Perowne.

[g] Ps. xcix. 5.

[h] Nu. x. 35, 36; Ps. lxviii. 1.

[a] Ps. xlviii. 1, 2.

"The promises which God hath made are a full storehouse of all kinds of blessings — they include in them both the upper and nether springs, the mercies of this life and of that which is to come; there is no good that can present itself as an object to our desires or thoughts, of

resistance there had been before the calm was won, is told by the lovely image of the weaned child. While being weaned it sobs and struggles, and all its little life is perturbed. So no man comes to have a quiet heart without much resolute self-suppression.—Exp. B.

Psalm 131.—There is one sweetest, tenderest song that gives up the whole question of the exile as a theological inquiry and trusts God.—Barton.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND.

1—5. (1) **remember,** with a view to fulfilling Thy promise to him. **afflictions,** here especially his solicitude concerning building of God's house.[a] (2) **sware,** this prob, refers to something not recorded in the historical books: but see 2 Sa. vii. 1—3. **mighty .. Jacob,** comp. Ge. xlix. 24.[b] (3) **tabernacle .. house,** lit. my tent-dwelling:[c] used figuratively for his house, wh. was of cedar. **my bed,** more precisely, "into the bed, (wh. is) my couch."[d] (4) **sleep,** etc., Ps. vi. 4.[e] (5) **habitation,** R. V., "a tabernacle," settled resting-place.

State Beds in the East.—From the expression of the Psalmist it would seem that a lofty bed was not only a necessary luxury, but a sign of superior rank. This idea was very prevalent in the period of the revival of the arts on the Continent, where the state bed, often six feet high, always stood on a dias in an alcove, richly curtained off from the saloon. In the East the same custom still continues, and a verse in the Koran declares it to be one of the delights of the faithful in paradise that "they shall repose themselves on lofty beds." Frequently these state beds were composed of the most costly and magnificent materials. The prophet Amos speaks of ivory beds (Amos vi. 4).

6—10. (6) **at Ephratah,**[f] the Israelites, says the Psalmist, first of all enquired for the ark in Ephratah, and at last found it in the country of Jaar. Ephratah was, in post-Exile times, the name of the district in which Kirjath-jearim, as well as of that in which Bethlehem was situated. —Cheyne. **fields of the woods,** this trans. the name of the town Kirjath-jearim. (7) **tabernacles,** on Mt. Zion. **footstool,**[g] as Jehovah dwells above, the cover of the ark is regarded as His footstool. (8) **arise,** etc., the usual cry on moving the ark,[h] **rest,** R. V., "resting place." **ark,** "the only mention of the ark in the Psalter." (9) **righteousness,** white clothing as the symbol of righteousness. **saints,** chosen people, Thy beloved. (10) **turn .. face,** the sign of rejecting a petition.

Psalm 132.—This present "Song of Ascents" is well suited to be a "pilgrim-song"—sung by those who went up to Jerusalem to visit the temple, and revivify their faith in the God who had chosen Zion for His dwelling place. It is concerned almost entirely with the temple, which it sets before the faithful from the first conception of it in the mind of David to its final glory when visited by the Redeemer. Vss. 1—5 are concerned with the birth of the idea in David's mind; vss 6—10, with its realization under Solomon; while vss 11—18 point to the time when David's true Son would be set upon David's throne, and the Lord Himself would suddenly come to His temple, and make the glory of the second house greater than that of the first had ever been.—Pul. Com.

11—14. (11) **sworn,** etc., 2 Sa. vii. 12—16. **fruit .. throne,** an important promise to Dav. seeing that Saul, his predecessor, left no family to reign. (12) **If,** etc., all the Lord's promises are conditional on the faithfulness of His people. **for evermore,** obs. how this expression in the Heb. equals "for a long time." (13) **chosen Zion,**[a] the term Zion is evidently used as including the district of Jerusalem. "The religious and political centers are regarded as one and the same." (14) **rest** resting-place for my symbol, the ark.

Our Confidence.—"He will not turn from it." He is not a changing God. He foreknew everything. He is able to carry out his purpose. His honor is bound up in it. His oath can never be broken.—Spurgeon.

Love of Children.—No man can tell but he that loves his children, how many delicious accents make a man's heart dance in the pretty conversation of those dear pledges; their childishness, their stammering,

their little angers, their innocence, their imperfections, their necessities, are so many little emanations of joy and comfort to him that delights in their persons and society; but he that loves not his wife and children, feeds a lioness at home, and broods a nest of sorrows; and blessing itself cannot make him happy; so that all the commandments of God enjoining a man to love his wife, are nothing but so many necessities and capacities of joy. She that is loved is safe, and he that loves is joyful.—J. Taylor.

15—18. (15) **abundantly,** or surely.[b] **poor with bread,** a sign of national prosperity. (16) **salvation,** comp. "righteousness," vs. 9. (17) **horn**[c] **of David,** the horn was the symbol of dominion. **to bud,** or branch forth, with reference to Dav.'s offspring. **lamp,**[d] "another figure for prosperity, 2 Sam. xxii. 17; 1 Ki. xl. 36. The meaning of the whole vs. is that the promises of old made to David and to Zion should yet be fulfilled, however dark present appearances."

Satisfied.—I. Blessed provision. II. Satisfied people—"satisfy her poor." III. Glorified God—"I will." IV. Happy place—Zion.—Spurgeon.

Loud Praise.—It would astonish and amuse a European stranger to hear these natives sing. They have not the least idea either of harmony or melody; noise is what they best understand, and he that sings the loudest is considered to sing the best. I have occasionally remonstrated with them on the subject; but the reply I once received silenced me for ever after. "Sing softly, brother," I said to one of the principal members. "Sing softly!" he replied, "is it you, our father, who tells us to sing softly? Did you ever hear us sing the praises of our Hindoo gods? how we threw our heads backward, and with all our might shouted out the praises of those who are no gods! And now do you tell us to whisper the praises of Jesus? No, sir, we cannot—we must express in loud tones our gratitude to him who loved us, and died for us!" And so they continued to sing with all their might, and without further remonstrance.—G. Gogerly.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THIRD.

1—3. (1) **brethren .. unity,** Heb. "For them who are brethren also to dwell together."[a] (2) **precious ointment,** see Ex. xxix. 7; Le. viii. 12, xxi. 10. The point of the comparison does not lie in the preciousness of the oil, or in its all-pervading fragrance; but in this—that being poured on the head, it did not rest there; but flowed to the beard, and descended even to the garments, and thus, as it were, consecrated the whole body in all its parts. All the members participate in the same blessing.—Perowne. **skirts,** etc., evidently the lower hem of the garments. (3) **dew of Hermon,** R. V. "Like the dew of Hermon, that cometh down upon," etc., dew that falls alike on both mountains, the lofty Hermon and the humble Zion. **there,** "in Zion the blessed fruits of this brotherly concord may chiefly be looked for, for Jehovah himself has made it the great centre of all blessing and life."—Perowne.

The Dew of Hermon.—We had sensible proof at Rasheiya of the copiousness of the "dew of Hermon." Unlike most other mountains, which gradually rise from lofty table-lands, and often at a distance from the sea, Hermon starts at once to the height of nearly ten thousand feet, from a platform scarcely above the sea-level. This platform, too—the upper Jordan valley, and marshes of Merom—is for the most part an impenetrable swamp of unknown depth, whence the seething vapor, under the rays of an almost tropical sun, is constantly ascending into the upper atmosphere during the day. The vapor, coming in contact with the snowy sides of the mountain, is rapidly congealed, and is precipitated in the evening in the form of a dew, the most copious we ever experienced. It penetrated everywhere, and saturated everything. The floor of our tent was soaked, our bedding was covered with it, our guns were dripping, and dewdrops hung about everywhere. No wonder that the foot of Hermon is clad with orchards and gardens of such marvellous fertility in this land of droughts.—Tristram.

which the promises are not a ground for faith to believe and hope to expect the enjoyment of."—Spurstowe.

[b] "Literally, this was fulfilled in the days of the restoration of Israel, by the zeal of Nehemiah, who exerted himself for the adequate provision of offerings for the temple and for the maintenance of the priesthood. See Ne. x. 32—39." — Wordsworth.

[c] 1 Sa. ii. 1.

[d] "The lamp in the household is a common symbol of prosperity and glory. 2 Sa. xxi. 17; 1 Ki. xi. 36, xv. 4; Ps. xviii. 28. One of the daily Jewish prayers is, 'Soon may the Branch, the Root of Dav., spring up, and His horn be excellent.'

author,— unknown:
date,— post-exilic.

A Psalm on brotherly love.

[a] Augustine says that this vs. gave birth to monasteries; it was like a trumpet-call to those who wished to dwell together as brethren (fratres, friars). "Touchingly must the blessings of one common dwelling-place have presented themselves to those who had been so long 'dispersed' among heathen nations." —Jennings and Lowe. "A little boy seeing two nestling birds pecking at each other, inquired of his elder brother what they were doing. 'They are quarrelling,' was the answer. 'No,' replied the child, 'that cannot be, they are brothers.' "
—Whitecross.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOURTH.

author,— unknown: date, time of the second temple.

Greetings of night watchers.

1—3. (1) **servants**, i. e. the priests and Levites. **by night stand,** as night-watchers.[a] (2) **Lift . . hands,** in the attitude of prayer. Watching unto prayer. **in the sanctuary,** or, "in holiness," R. V. "to the sanctuary;" turning your face towards the sanctuary. (3) **thee,** or you. The exact form of the high priest's blessing seems to be taken.[b]

Doxology and Benediction.—I. Doxology. 1. The offering to be presented. (1) The nature of this offering—Praise. (2) The importance of this offering. 2. The persons by whom it is to be offered. 3. The time at which it is to be offered. 4. The place towards which it is to be offered. II. Benediction. Notice—1. The power of God to bless. 2. The means by which God blesses man. 3. The authority of the servants of God to pronounce His blessing.—Hom. Com.

The Benediction—The benediction comes from the City of the Great King, from his appointed ministers, by virtue of his covenant, and so it is said to be "out of Zion. To this day the Lord blesses each one of his people through his church, his gospel, and the ordinances of his house. It is in communion with the saints that we receive untold benisons. May each one of us obtain yet more of the blessing which cometh from the Lord alone. Zion cannot bless us; the holiest ministers can only wish us a blessing; but Jehovah can and will bless each one of his waiting people. So may it be at this good hour. Do we desire it? Let us then bless the Lord ourselves. Let us do it a second time. Then we may confidently hope that the third time we think of blessing we shall find ourselves conscious receivers of it from the Ever-blessed One. Amen.—Spurgeon.

[a] "Three things are clear with regard to this Ps. First that it consists of a greeting, vss. 1, 2, and reply, vs. 3. Next, that the greeting is addressed to those priests and Levites who had the night-watch in the temple. Lastly, that this Ps. is purposely placed at the end of the collection of Pilgrim Songs in order to take the place of a final blessing." —Delitzsch.

[b] Nu. vi. 24.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIFTH.

author,— unknown: date,— later restoration.

A Hallelujah Ps. for temple service.

Cheyne styles this Ps. a mosaic work, bec. it is entirely made up of selected pieces fr. other Ps., fr. the prophetical writings and fr. the law.

1—5. (1) **servants,** so the general assemblage of worshipers is regarded. (2) **courts,** the open spaces before the sanctuary. (3) **it is pleasant,** perhaps better, He is pleasant or lovely.[c] (4) **the Lord,** etc., one reason for this call to sing praises; De. vii. 6. (5) **know,** the language of decided personal experience,[d] another ground for praise.

Praise.—I. Praise him for the privilege of serving him. II. Praise him for the power to serve him. III. Praise him for the acceptance of your service. IV. Praise him as the chief part of your service. V. Praise him that others may be induced to engage in his service.—W. H. J. Page.

Praise.—When we bless God for mercies we prolong them, and when we bless him for miseries we usually end them. When we reach to praise we have compassed the design of a dispensation, and have reaped the harvest of it. Praise is a soul in flower, and a secret, hearty blessing of the Lord is the soul fruit-bearing. Praise is the honey of life, which a devout heart sucks from every bloom of providence and grace. As well be dead as be without praise; it is the crown of life.—Spurgeon.

6—9. (6) **heaven,** etc., terms used to compass every created thing,[a] proof of the greatness of Jehovah. (7) **causeth,** etc., comp. Je. x. 13, li. 16. **vapours,** Heb. things lifted up; i. e. clouds. **ends of the earth,** Polychr. "from the earth beneath." **for the rain,** to accompany rain, with its beneficent influence. **out . . treasuries,** as Job. xxxviii. 22, 23. (8) **smote,** etc., His redemption of Israel the third ground for praise; Ex. xii. 29. (9) **tokens and wonders,** miraculous judgments, wh. were not mere wonders, but tokens or signs of the Divine will.[b]

The Resistless Pleasure of Jehovah.—I. Behold it as here exemplified: 1. Ruling all nature. 2. Overturning a rebellious nation. 3. Making sport of kings and crowns. 4. Laying a fertile country at the feet of the chosen. II. Be wise in view thereof. 1. Submit to it: it sweeps the seas, and lays hands on earth and heaven. 2. Think not to hide from it: the "ends of the earth" and "all deep places" are open to it; it is swifter than its own lightnings. 3. Be awed by its majesty: God's

[c] Ps. liv. 6, cxlvii. 1.

[d] Ps. xcv. 3.

"Griefe for the calamity of another is pitty, and ariseth from the imagination that the like calamity may befall himselfe; and therefore it is called compassion.—Hobbes.

[a] "The specification of Jehovah's doings according to His pleasure, in heaven, earth, the sea, and all deep places, puts before us in a graphic manner His particular care always and everywhere." —Calvin.

[b] Ex. v. 21, vii. 10.

way is strewn with crowns and the bones of kings. 4. Seek its protection: its mightiest efforts are in defence of those it favors. 5. Let the Lord's people fear not with so great a God, and so exhaustless an armory. —W. B. Haynes.

10—14. (10) **smote,** etc., De. iv. 38, vii. 2, ix. 1, etc. **great,** R. V., "many." (11) **Sihon,** De. ii. 30; Nu. xxi. 21—23.[c] (12) **gave their land,** the fourth reason for praise; the conquest of the Promised Land; Jos. xii. 7. (13) **Thy name,** i. e. the sum of the elements of the divine character; comp. Ex. iii. 15. (14) **judge,** i. e. vindicate His people against all oppressors. **repent,** Polychr. "takes into favor his servants;" see Ex. xxxii. 12.

God the Judge.—Others would like to do it, but must not. The world has seven judgment-days in every week, but shall not be able to condemn the saints. He himself will judge. How will he judge them? 1. Their persons, as to whether they are in or out of Christ. 2. Their principles, as to whether they are genuine or spurious. 3. Their prayers, as to whether they are availing or useless. 4. Their profession, as to whether it is true or false. 5. Their procedure, as to whether it is good or bad.—W. Jackson.

Sihon and Og.—Sihon, although conqueror of Moab, and much more formidable than the Canaanites whom Israel had feared at Kadesh, fell easily because Israel fought in faith. There is no adversary that can really offer any effectual opposition to our onward march if assailed in the strength of Christ with a cheerful courage. Og, the king of Bashan, was much more formidable even than Sihon, but he seems to have fallen yet more easily, judging from the brief notice of the conquest. Even so, when once we have overcome a difficulty or conquered an evil habit in the strength of faith, other conquests open out before us readily and naturally which we should not have dared to contemplate before. It is most true in religion that "nothing succeeds like success."—R. Winterbotham.

15—18. (15) **idols,** etc., as Ps. cxv. 4. (16) **mouths,** etc., Ps. cxv. 5. (17) **ears,** etc., Ps. cxv. 6—8.

Like Unto Them.—A singular phenomenon, known as the Spectre of the Brocken, is seen on certain mountains in Germany and Switzerland. The traveler who at dawn stands on the topmost ridge beholds a colossal shadowy spectre. But in fact it is only his own shadow projected upon the morning mists by the rising sun; and it imitates, of course, every movement of its creator. So heathen nations have mistaken their own image for Deity. Their gods display human frailties and passions and scanty virtues, projected and magnified upon the heavens, just as the small figures on the slide of a magic-lantern are projected, magnified, and illuminated upon a white sheet.—New Cyc. of Ill.

19—21. (19, 20) Comp. Ps. cxv. 9—11, cxviii. 2—4. Obs. that here the house of Levi is added. (21) **out of Zion,** God blesses out of Zion, and so, in response, out of Zion His people bless Him.[a]

Fear of God.—In Scripture it is quite common to find this "fear" put for holiness itself, or the sum of true religion. It is not, therefore, such a fear as seized the hearts of our first parents when, hearing the voice of the Lord God, they hid themselves amongst the trees of the garden; nor such as suddenly quenched the noise of royal revelry in the night of Babylon's overthrow; nor such as, on some day yet future, shall drive despairing sinners to the unavailing shelter of the mountains and rocks. It is not the fear of guilty distrust, or of hatred, or of bondage—that fear which hath torment, and which perfect love casteth out; but a fear compatible with the highest privileges, attainments, and hopes of the Christian life. It is the fear of deep humility and reverence, of filial subjection, and adoring gratitude; the fear which "blesseth the Lord," saying, "His mercy endureth for ever."—John Lillie.

"This seems to have been the morning hymn which the Levites were called upon to sing at the opening of the gates of the Temple; and, as some think, the one before was used at shutting them in the evening." — John Kitto.

[c] See also Am. ii. 9.

"If, in the ocean of life, there are rocks and shoals, it is no cruelty to chart them down; it is an eminent and prominent mercy."—H. W. Beecher.

"God is, and will be always the same to his church, a gracious, faithful, wonder-working God; and his church is, and will be the same to him, a thankful, praising people; and thus his name endures for ever.—Matthew Henry.

"How many are like idol-images, when they have eyes, ears, and mouths as though they had none: that is, when they do not use them when and how they should." — Christopher Starke.

[a] Ps. cxxxviii. 5, cxxxiv. 3.

"The loss of worldly things is to many a great grief. If, however, we gain, with the loss of transitory treasures, and with the refusing father, mother, brother, sister, wife, and children, purchase God to be our Father, and Christ to be our Brother, what have we lost?" —T. Timme.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIXTH.

1—3. (1) Identical with the first verse of Ps. cxviii., which is probably a very ancient formula, and one used at the erection both of the first (2 Chron. v. 13) and of the second temple (Ezra iii. 11). **mercy,**

author,—unknown: date,—later restoration.

Praise of God's gracious goodness.

Polychr. "goodness." (2) **God of gods,** altogether above and beyond all idol-gods.[b] (3) **Lord of lords,** having authority over all seeming authorities. Altogether the Supreme One.

The Lord is Good.—God is originally good—good of himself. He is infinitely good. He is perfectly good, because infinitely good. He is immutably good.—Charnock.

Repetitions Many, But Not Vain.—Over and over again the refrain comes, "His mercy endureth for ever." But it is never a vain repetition, unless the mind, by its heedlessness, makes it so. It is like the German piece of music which is called "The Fremensberg," which tells one of the old legends of the region—how "a great noble of the Middle Ages got lost in the mountains, and wandered about with his dogs in a violent storm, until at last the faint tones of a monastery-bell, calling the monks to a midnight service, caught his ear, and he followed the direction the sounds came from, and was saved. A beautiful air runs through the music without ceasing, sometimes loud and strong, sometimes so soft that it can hardly be distinguished, but it is always there. It swung grandly along the shrill whistling of the storm-wind, the rattling patter of the rain, and the boom and crash of the thunder; it wound soft and low through the lesser sounds, the distant ones, such as the throbbing of the convent-bell, the melodious winding of the hunter's horn, the distressed bayings of his dogs, and the solemn chanting of the monks; it rose again, with a jubilant ring, and mingled itself with the country songs and dances of the peasants assembled in the concert-hall to cheer up the rescued huntsman as he ate his supper, imitating all these sounds with marvellous exactness. The solemn chanting of the monks was not done by instruments, but by men's voices, and it rose and fell and rose again in that rich confusion of warring sounds and pulsing bells, and the stately swing of that ever-present enchanting air, and it seemed to me that nothing could be more divinely beautiful."—Mark Twain. So the sweet refrain of this psalm is heard amid all variety of circumstances, and is never absent, but investing with its own charm every one of the manifold statements which the psalm contains.

4—9. (4) **alone,** etc., Ps. lxxii. 18, lxxxvi. 10. (5) **wisdom,** R. V. "understanding," Pr. iii. 19. (6) **stretched out,** Is. xlii. 5, xliv. 24. The Heb. word is fr. the same root as that trans. firmament in Ge. i. 6—8. **waters,** of the oceans of the earth; above wh. the land is represented as lifted, keeping them within bounds. (7) **great lights,** Ge. i. 14—16. (8) **to rule,** Heb. for the rulings. (9) **to rule,** this form is plural, to indicate the several distinct dominations of the moon and the stars.

The Church's Antiphon.—There can be no doubt that this psalm was sung antiphonally in the Jewish temple, some of the priests reciting or chanting the first portion of each verse, and then the whole congregation responding, "For his mercy endureth for ever." But this oft-repeated declaration belongs not to the Jewish Church alone, but to the whole Church of God throughout all the ages and in all the world. "One February night, A. D. 358, the great church at Alexandria was bright with lights far into the night, and still the congregation did not disperse. The Bishop Athanasius was there, and the service was to be prolonged till morning; for next day the Holy Communion was to be celebrated, and it was the frequent custom among the early Christians to spend the preceding night in prayer and singing hymns. All knew that further troubles were hanging over their beloved bishop, and that the time of his presence with them would probably be very short. Suddenly a clashing noise broke the stillness. The church was surrounded by armed men. With calm presence of mind, Athanasius rose and gave out the hundred and thirty-sixth psalm, which has to every verse the response, 'For his mercy endureth for ever.' The whole congregation joined in thundering forth those grand words, when the door was burst open, and the imperial envoy, at the head of a body of soldiers, walked up the aisle. For a moment the soldiers drew back in awe at the solemn sound of the chanting, but again, they pressed on, and a shower of arrows flew through the church. Swords flashed, arms rattled, and rough shouts interrupted the music. Athanasius retained his seat till the congregation had dispersed, then he too disappeared in the darkness, and no one knew

[b] De. x. 17.

"No worship is pure and inspiring that is not fresh-hearted. The songs of the sanctuary ought to burst forth like the breeze that breaks the sea into white caps and surges through the pine tops on the mountains. The prayers of God's children ought to rise like the birds, free of wing and singing joyously."—M. C. Julian.

"There are exceptions, no doubt; but the general rule is borne out by experience, that they who honestly and earnestly use the gifts of mind and body which God has given them, obtain the things which are needful in this life, if not to overflowing, yet in sufficiency; and where means fail we generally have to admit that our own industry or prudence was at fault." — Horton.

"The patient bearing of misery is an acceptable sacrifice to God; for when the goldsmith putteth a piece of gold into the fire to make better use of it, it seemeth to the unskilful that he utterly marreth it. So the children of God in all affliction seem, to the judgment of the natural man, undone and brought to nothing; but spiritual things are spiritually discerned."

—Greenham.

where he was gone. He found a refuge among his old friends the hermits of Egypt."—Perowne.

10—15. (10) **in their firstborn,** chastising the nation by the destruction of the firstborn of men and cattle.[a] (11) **brought,** etc., the favor of God to His covenant people is the point of the Psalm. (12) **strong hand,** De. iv. 34. (13) **into parts,** R. V., "in sunder," the Heb. word is only used besides in Ge. xv. 17, where it denotes the pieces into which Ab. divided the animals.[b] (15) **overthrew,** lit. shook out, the same word is used in Ex. xiv. 27. The Pharaoh's death in the Red Sea is not necessarily implied.—Pul. Com.

Ingratitude.—The Athenians were ready to forget their benefactors when they met with any slight reverses, and would sometimes load their best friends with the heaviest calumnies. One of them thus offended replied in sorrowful tones, "Are you weary of receiving benefits often from the same hand?" Our ingratitude towards God might elicit from Him the same rebuke. He daily loadeth us with benefits, and yet we smite the lips that kiss us, and wound the heart that bled for us. One of the strangest things about the character of a Christian is that he should become weary of such amazing love.

16—22. (16) **which led,** De. viii. 15. The Psalmist recalls the general protection and care of the forty years' wanderings. (18) **famous kings,** i. e. mighty; De. xxix. 7; Ps. cxxxv. 10, 11. (19) **Sihon,** Nu. xxi. 21. (20) **Og,** Nu. xxi. 33. (21) **heritage,** or possession, Jos. xii. 7. The term heritage may be intended to remind the people that they had the land in fulfillment of gracious Div. covenant and promise. It was like an estate willed to them: their only right to the land was the "free gift" of it to them by its real Owner, who made them His heirs. (22) **his servant,** De. xxxii. 36.[a]

"Who Remembered Us."—We should echo in our thankfulness the first intimation that God gives in his providence of an approaching mercy. If you do but hear when the king is on his road towards your town you raise your bells to ring him in, and stay not till he be entered the gates. The birds rise betimes in the morning, and are saluting the rising sun with their sweet notes in the air. Thus should we strike up our harps in praising God at the first appearance of a mercy.—William Gurnall.

Israel.—

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out of the land of bondage came,
Her father's God before her moved,
An awful guide, in smoke and flame.
By day, along the astonished lands,
The cloudy pillar glided slow;
By night Arabia's crimsoned sands
Returned the fiery column's glow.
—Sir Walter Scott.

23—26. (23) **remembered .. estate,** this is a general survey of God's gracious relation to the distresses of the nation, with a special glance at the recent deliverance from Babylon.[b] **low estate,** comp. Eccl. x. 6, where the same Heb. word shephel, is used. (24) **redeemed,** this general term includes all kinds of defendings and deliverings. (25) **giveth food,** perhaps ref. to some time of famine when God supplied Israel with food. —Delitzsch. **all flesh,** i. e. all living creatures, Ps. civ. 27, cxlv. 15, cxlvii. 9. (26) **God of heaven,** so distinguished from all local deities.[c]

Divine Housekeeping. I. The Royal Commissariat. II. Its spiritual counterpart: God's august provisioning for our immortal nature. III. The queenly grace that hath the keeping of the keys: "for his mercy," etc.—W. B. Haynes.

"Who Giveth Food to all Flesh."—Of Edward Taylor, better known as "Father Taylor," the Sailor Preacher of Boston, it is said that his prayers were more like utterances of an Oriental, abounding in imagery, than a son of these colder western climes. The Sunday before he was to sail for Europe, he was entreating the Lord to care well for his church during his absence. All at once he stopped and ejaculated, "What have I done? Distrust the providence of heaven! A God that gives a whale a

[a] "The Targum gives, 'To Him who smote the Egyptians (whom) He slew with plagues.'" —Jennings and Lowe.

[b] Comp. Ex. xiv. 16, 21; Ps. lxxviii. 12, 13.

God is independent of all His creatures; He was as happy in Himself, before a creature existed, as He has been since.

[a] "If the four verses 19—22 were omitted, the Psalm would consist of 22 verses, one for each letter of the alphabet, and the phraseology of the above-named verses in the original is such that they would seem not improbably taken from the preceding Psalm." —Spk. Com.

"Note God's three ways of leading. He leads out, he leads through, and he leads into; out of sin, through the world, into heaven; out by faith, through by hope, into by love."— Michael Ayguan.

"True goodness is like the glow-worm in this, that it shines most when no eyes, except those of heaven, are upon it."— Hare.

[b] Ps. cvi. 42—45.

[c] The Pr. Bk. Ver., following the Vulg., adds, "O give thanks unto the Lord of lords, for His mercy endureth for ever," repeating vs. 3.

"In the end of the Psalm, God's fatherly providence is extended without exception, not only to all mankind, but also to all living things, so that it is no

ton of herrings for a breakfast, will he not care for my children?" and then went on, closing his prayer in a more confiding strain.—Spurgeon.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVENTH.

1—3. (1) **rivers,** the Euphrates and Tigris, also the Chebar (Eze. i, 3), and the Ulai (Da. viii. 2).[a] **Babylon,**[b] prob. Babylonia, the name of the city being put for the country. **sat down,** for time of quiet meditation. **Zion,** or Jerusalem, the associations of their beloved land. (2) **harps,** specially used for joyous occasions. **willows,** Heb. arabim; what is known as the weeping willow may principally be meant (the Salix Babylonica). **in the midst,** of the country of Babylonia. (3) **required . . song,** whether this request was made in curiosity or derision does not appear. It was felt to be impossible for mourners and exiles to respond to it. "A banquet is in progress, and fresh amusements are required. Some one suggests that the Hebrew singers should be brought in."—Cheyne.

The Sorrowful Christian (vs. 2).—The sources of spiritual sorrow. I. Some of them arise from bodily disorder. II. Some from defective views of character. III. Some from defective views of religion. IV. Some from allowed sin. V. Some from inward struggles peculiar to self.—G. Brooks.

4—6. (4) **strange land,**[c] better, "in the land of the stranger," to wh. they had been exiled by Him whose songs they were asked to sing. It was for them a time of humiliation before the Lord, not one of singing triumph songs. (5) **let . . cunning,**[d] i. e. "her skill with the harp." (6) **tongue cleave,** so as never to be able to sing any more. **above . . joy,** lit. top of my joy.[e] "The singer's joy is headless, as it were, without Jerusalem."

The Singers and Their Song (vs. 4).—I. The Christian on earth is in a strange land—1. As to his feelings; 2. As to his supplies; 3. As to his dangers. II. The Christian on earth, although on earth, has songs—1. Of gratitude; 2. Of penitence; 3. Of resignation; 4. Of hope.—G. Brooks.

A Patriotic Psalm.—This Psalm has struck the key to many a song of the love of country. The Abbé Curci, a great Oriental scholar, and author of a translation of the Old Testament into Italian, one of the few clergymen who have taken the side of Italy and freedom against the Pope, lectured to an immense assembly in Rome (1883), and expressed his special love to the 137th Psalm. He said it was the first and grandest patriotic song which was ever written—linking God and country together. Cameons, the national poet of Portugal, has paraphrased the 137th Psalm in a sonnet as the Psalm of "pious, patriotic memory." It may be considered, in a higher point of view, as the spring of the Jerusalem songs, which, in all ages of the Church, looked away from a state of exile to the final home:—

"For thee, O dear, dear country,
Mine eyes their vigils keep;
For very love, beholding
Thy happy name, they weep:
E'en now, by faith, I see thee,
E'en now thy walls discern;
To thee my thoughts are kindled,
And strive, and pant, and yearn."
—Anec. Ill. of O. T. Texts.

7—9. (7) **children of Edom,** i. e. remember how Edom joined the enemies of Jerusalem in the day of her overthrow.[a] Polychr. "Reckon it against those sons of Edom . . that day of Jerusalem." **rase it,** Heb. make bare. Polychr., "clean down, down to the ground with it." (8) **daughter of Bab.,** a fig. for Babylon with its population.[b] **destroyed,** Polychr., "thou she-devastator, thou!", who oughtest to be and shalt be destroyed.[c] **rewardeth,** etc., Is. xlvii. 1—9; Je. li. 56. (9) **dasheth,** etc., this allusion is to the horrors generally attending on the siege and sack of ancient cities.

marvel though He is so provident and beneficent a father towards His elect. —Calvin.

—Author. Perhaps a Levite of the first company of returned captives.

A touching reminiscence of the now terminated exile.

[a] The river-side may have been chosen for the performance of religious rites, as indicated in Ac. xvi. 13.

[b] Babylon was taken by Cyrus, B. C. 538; the Jews were allowed to return B. C. 536. Babylon was destroyed by Darius Hystaspes, B. C. 516; and about the same time the temple was rebuilt.

[c] Ne. ii. 2.3.

[d] "Forget herself," so trans. Ewald, Delitzsch. Syr. renders, "Let my right hand forget me."

[e] "If I set not Jerusalem as a diadem on to the head of my rejoicing, and crown all my happiness with it." — Wordsworth.

[a] "We see from Obad's prophecy how shamefully the Edomites, that brother-people related by descent to Israel, and yet pre-eminently hostile to it, behaved in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldaeans." — Delitzsch.

[b] Comp. Is. x. 32, xlvii. 1; Je. xlvi. 11.

[c] The destruction of Bab. had been foretold by the prophets, as Is. xiii. 14; Je. l. 2, 3. "God forbid that any of us should pass through suffering and

Psalm 137.—

We sat us down and wept
Where Babel's waters slept,
And we thought of home and Zion as a long-gone happy dream;
We hung our harps in air
On the willow boughs which there
Gloomy as round a sepulchre were drooping o'er the stream.

The foes whose chains we wore
Were with us on that shore,
Exulting in our tears that told of bitterness and woe;
"Sing us," they cried aloud,
"Ye once so high and proud,
The songs ye sang in Zion ere we laid her glory low!"

And shall the harp of heaven,
To Judah's monarch given,
Be touched by captive fingers, or grace a fettered hand?
No! sooner be my tongue
Mute, powerless, and unstrung,
Than its words of holy music make glad a stranger land!

May this right hand, whose skill
Can wake the harp at will,
And bid the listener's joys and griefs in light or darkness come,
Forget its godlike power
If for one brief, dark hour,
My heart forgets Jerusalem, fallen city of my home!

—Halleck.

come out of it, not only unchastened, but with no tenderer feeling for the whole suffering humanity. It should be the first question with one who in any way suffers, To what service of ministering pity am I called?"—T. T. Munger.

"Give up all that is miraculous in true religion and there is nothing left of power sufficient to move any heart to worship or adore; and without worship there is no piety. —W. S. Plumer.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH.

author, — unknown: date, time of the rebuilt temple.

"The grateful confidence of a befriended suppliant."

1—3. (1) **whole heart,** involving entireness and sincerity. **before the gods,**[d] i. e. in the presence of, and in scorn of, the idols of the heathen, who cannot prevent. Polychr., "in a place that is holy." (2) **worship,** Polychr., "prostrate myself."[e] **thy word,** or Thy fidelity to Thy promises. **thy name,** or all other characteristics implied in Thy name or title, Jehovah.[a] (3) **In the day,**[b] or immediately. **strengthenedst me,** by granting personal experiences of answer to prayer.

d "In the presence of the angels."— Luther, Calvin.

"Before kings or judges." So Chald., Syr., etc.

e 1 Ki. viii. 48.

Whole-heartedness.—Observe carefully the little points in a divine command: worship "towards the holy temple." Nothing is little when God's will is concerned. I knew a youth who had wished to be baptized, but his friends kept him back. When he fell ill, he fretted because he had not confessed his Lord according to the Scripture. "But Isaac," said his mother, "you know baptism will not save you." "No, mother," he replied, "of course it will not, for I am saved. But when I see Jesus in heaven I should not like Him to say, 'Isaac, it was a very little thing I asked of you; did you not love Me enough to do it?'"—Spurgeon.

a "Magnified Thy promise above all Thy name." — Delitzsch.

b Is. lxv. 24; Da. ix. 23.

"The effect of whole - heartedness is very manifest. Even prejudiced persons put up with a great deal in a service when they see that those engaged in it are enthusiastic.—Spurgeon.

4, 5. (4) **All the kings,** comp. Ps. lxviii. 29—32, lxxii. 10, 11.[c] **when they hear,** R. V., "for they have heard." **words,** etc., i. e. Thy promises to David and his people. (5) **sing .. Lord,** joyfully celebrate His mighty acts.[d]

c "Hiram, king of Tyre (2 Sa. v. 11; 1 Chr. xiv. 1), and Toi, king of Hamath (2 Sa. viii. 10), congratulated David upon his accession, and are supposed to be here chiefly intended." — Spk. Com.

d Is. lxvi. 10, 12.

Walking with God.—"I visited a poor old woman belonging to my congregation," said a minister. "She was entirely dependent on the church for her support. Her home was a very small cottage. The moment I entered it I saw how neat and clean everything was. She had just been gathering some sticks from the lane with which to cook her evening meal. Her face was one of the sweetest I ever saw. It was surrounded by the strings of her snow-white cap. On the table lay a well-worn copy of the Word of God. I looked around for a daughter or friend to be her companion and care-taker, but saw none. I said: 'Mother Ansel, you don't live here alone, do you?' 'Live alone! Live alone!' she exclaimed in surprise, and then, as a sweet smile lighted up her face, she added, 'No, sir, the blessed Lord lives with me, and that

makes it pleasant living!" Certainly she found walking with God a pleasant walk.—R. Newton.

6—8. (6) **Though,** etc., comp. 2 Sa. vi. 21, xxiii. 1; Ps. xviii. 28, 29, etc., as similar expressions used by David. **knoweth afar off,** i. e. "God only knows them at a distance, does not admit them into His fellowship." (7) **walk .. trouble,** Ps. xxiii. 4, lxxi. 20. **stretch forth,** etc., 1 Sa. xxiv. 6; Ps. x. 12; Job i. 12. (8) **perfect,**[e] completely work out all His purpose of grace concerning me. Polychr., "recompenses."

Perfecting.—I suppose that if the mediæval dream had ever come true, and an alchemist had ever turned a grain of lead into gold, he could have turned all the lead in the world, in time, and with crucibles and furnaces enough. The first step is all the difficulty, and if you and I have been changed from enemies into sons, and had one spark of love to God kindled in our hearts, that is a mightier change than any that yet remains to be effected in order to make us perfect. One grain has been changed, the whole mass will be in due time.—Alexander Maclaren.

[e] Phil. i. 6. "The Lord will carry to an end all things that concern my welfare."—Jennings and Lowe. "Give me the homely vessel of humility, which God shall preserve, and fill with the wine of His grace; rather than the varnished cup of pride, which He will dash in pieces, like a potter's vessel."—Wm. Secker.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH.

author, — unknown: date, near close of the exile.

Subj., the omniscience and omnipresence of God.

1—5. (1) **searched me,** more forcibly, "searched me out," "fathomed me."[f] **known me,** better, "and so Thou knowest me." (2) **Thou,** this word is emphatic. **downsitting,** etc., both my resting and my working times. **afar off,** out of heaven, or however great the distance bet. us. (3) **compassest,** lit. winnowest or siftest; R. V., "searchest out." **acquainted,** as by long and minute familiarity with them. (4) **word .. tongue,**[g] before it gets utterance; when it is only thought God knows it. (5) **beset me,** surrounded me, shut me in.[h] **laid thine hand,** the freedom accorded to man is only relative, man accomplishes God's counsel.

God's Perfect Knowledge of Man.—I. God knows all men. II. God knows all men thoroughly. 1. He knows all their words and actions; 2. He knows all their thoughts. III. God knows all men constantly. God's knowledge of us differs from our knowledge of each other, not only in its extent and completeness, but in other respects. 1. His knowledge is underived and independent; 2. His knowledge is clear and perfect. This knowledge ought to prove—1. An antidote to the pride of intellect; 2. An effectual restraint from sins both of heart and of action; 3. A solemn warning to the sinner; 4. The utter impossibility of any man justifying himself in the sight of God; 5. A comfort to the people of God when misjudged by man; 6. A guarantee of the well-being of the people of God; 7. A pledge of the triumph of the Divine government.—Hom. Com.

[f] "These palpable images paint God as He is, always close to us, always directing, always restraining."—Spk. Com.

[g] Not in this sentence stands for not yet.

[h] Comp. Job iii. 23, xiii. 27, xiv. 5, 13, 16, xix. 8.

6—8. (6) **knowledge,** such "omniscience."[a] "Knowledge so all-penetrating, so all-comprehensive."—Delitzsch. **attain,** or "I have not grown up to it." "I have not mastered it." (7) **Whither,** etc., not the language of fear, but of awe and wonder.[b] **spirit,**[c] the omnipresence of God is spiritual. (8) **bed in hell,**[d] Sheol, the place of resting for the departed.

Wonderful Knowledge.—Take a little lad of ten years, and put him into an assembly of statesmen discussing the gravest questions of diplomacy and international law, to carry documents and messages from one desk to another. In that assembly the lad has a definite place and a definite duty which he can understand and do. But suppose he should refuse to carry a paper of which he did not understand the meaning and bearing. Suppose he should throw up his position as page, on the ground that he was not made acquainted with the whole course of complicated negotiation carried on in that chamber. Would any sane man regard the boy as an injured being? Would any one think of reproaching those statesmen with unkindness or injustice? Would not the lad be simply laughed at? Even supposing that every man in the chamber were disposed to grant his ridiculous demand and to explain the business to him—could they do it? Could the child's mind grasp the destinies of nations? And yet, if this is absurd, what shall be said of a finite being, with his scanty knowledge, with his limited capacity, with his little range of experience, refusing allegiance to a God whose purposes comprehend eternity, and move in orbits vaster than his utmost reach of thought can even begin to conceive; in whose plan the countless details

[a] Ro. xi. 33.

[b] Comp. Jon. i. 3.

[c] "The word spirit is not put here simply for the power of God, as commonly in the Scriptures, but for His mind and understanding."—Calvin.

[d] Pr. xv. 11; Job xxvi. 6—9. "As birds, wheresoever they fly, always meet with the air, so we, wheresoever we go or wherever we are, always find God present."—Sales. The celebrated Linnaeus testified in his conversation, writ-

of all being in the eternity, past and future, are grouped and unified—what, I repeat, shall be said of the stupendous folly of a poor little man, the difference between whom and God is barely shadowed by the difference between a statesman and a babe, yet who refuses allegiance to God because he cannot, by searching, find out the Almighty to perfection?—M. R. Vincent.

9, 10. (9) **wings,** comp. Mal. iv. 2.[c] **uttermost .. sea,** i. e. the furthest west. (10) **there,** away beyond all presence of man, I shall find Thee. The terms used here imply friendship.

God is Behind All Space.—What a solemn mystery there is in this idea of space! Modern science has added to the benefits which it has conferred upon us also, that it has enlarged our conceptions of space. How much more worthily we are enabled to think of the universe and empire of God than those could have done who regarded the firmament as a solid shell of the earth, star-gemmed, fixed a few miles above it, and revolving around it for the purpose of alternating day and night. One of the most conspicuous respects in which astronomy has proved herself the handmaid of devotion, has been by revealing to us in part the scale on which the universe is built. How far must we travel before we reach a margin beyond which space does not extend? Is there such a margin? But though we had reached the last world that revolves around the great unknown center, we should not have come upon a tenantless void: we should still be in the presence of God, in the hollow of whose hand all worlds and suns and systems lie.—R. A. Bertram.

11—13. (11) **even .. me,** better rendered, "and let the light round about me be night." (12) **hideth not,** Heb. darkeneth not. "Even darkness cannot be too dark for Thee." **darkness,** etc., Heb. "as the darkness so the light" (to Thee).[a] (13) **for,** etc., since Thou knewest me before I was born, I cannot expect to escape Thee now that I have a separate being. **possessed,** created, formed. **my reins,** in distinction from "substance," vs. 15, this may mean, "the sensational and emotional part of the human being." **covered me,** or "Thou didst weave me together."[b]

Darkness and Light are Both Alike to God.—I. Naturally. "I form the light, and I create darkness." II. Providentially. Providential dispensations that are dark to us are light to Him. We change with respect to Him, not He to us. III. Spiritually. "Let him that walketh in darkness," etc. "Yea, though I walk," etc. He went before them in a pillar of cloud to guide them by day, and a pillar of fire to guide them by night. It was the same God in the day-cloud and the night-light.—G. Rogers.

God Ever Present.—"At one time," said Luther, "I was sorely vexed and tried by my own sinfulness, by the wickedness of the world, and by the dangers that beset the Church. One morning I saw my wife dressed in mourning. Surprised, I asked her who had died. 'Do you not know?' she replied. 'God in heaven is dead.' 'How can you talk such nonsense, Katie?' I said. 'How can God die? Why, He is immortal, and will live through all eternity.' 'Is that really true?' she asked. 'Of course,' I said, still not perceiving what she was aiming at; 'how can you doubt it? As surely as there is a God in heaven, so sure is it that He can never die.' 'And yet,' she said, 'though you do not doubt that, yet you are so hopeless and discouraged.' Then I observed what a wise woman my wife was, and mastered my sadness."

14 **thee,** emphatic, God alone is the Creator. **fearfully,** etc., "I give thanks unto Thee that I have wonderfully come into being under fearful circumstances,—circumstances exciting a shudder of astonishment."—Delitzsch; Polychr., "Thou art fearfully wonderful." **that my soul knoweth,** viz., that thy works are fearfully wonderful. The mysterious birth and early life of men especially engages the Psalmist's attention. Comparing man with the rest of creation, the Psalmist feels overshadowed by the presence of the invisible Artist, and trembles even while he admires.—Cheyne.

15, 16. (15) **substance,** R. V., "frame," bodily framework. **in secret,** out of all watching or care of men. **curiously wrought,** the Heb. word is used of variegated work woven, or perhaps embroidered. Possibly the allusion may be to the system of veins ramifying the body, or to the variegated coloring of its individual members, more particularly of the

ings, and actions the greatest sense of God's presence. So strongly indeed was he impressed with the idea, that he wrote over the door of his library: "Innocue vivite. Numen adest—Live innocently— God is present."

[c] "If I should lift wings such as the dawn of the morning has, i. e. could I fly with the swiftness with which the dawn of the morning spreads itself over the eastern sky, towards the extreme west, and alight there."—Delitzsch.

[a] Job xxxiv. 22; Da. ii. 22; Is. xxix. 15.

[b] Comp. Job. x. 11.

If Christ seals on your heart His pardoning mercy, that mercy brings all others with it and in its train.

"From hence comes the reckless indulgence of the flesh, because we weigh not thoroughly how wonderfully the heavenly Workmaster hath fashioned us."—Calvin.

A life without God is, like a ship without a compass, a rudder, or a pilot, exposed to the caprice of the winds of heaven and to the buffeting of every storm, and shipwreck of heart and hope must be the inevitable issue.

"Was it not the most natural of all things for the heathen, who was taught the old Indian fable that the world stood on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a serpent, to go below tortoise and serpent, and ask what was under both? So, if you are forced

back to matter for your origin, you are not at rest, for you ask,—What is behind matter." —M. R. Vincent.

a "As an embroidered garment, diversified with colors, my substance was curiously and artistically (yea, with art inimitable) wrought in the utter darkness of the womb." — Spk. Com.

b "My undeveloped form Thine eyes did see, and in Thy book were they all written. (viz.) the days (of my life), which were already conceived of, and for it one among them." (For it, referring to the embryonic period.) — Jennings and Lowe.

a "If I am lost in my meditations on this subject, and recover myself from this state of reverie, yet I am still ever with Thee without coming to an end." — Ewald.

Ps. xl. 5; Is. lv. 9.

b "According to vs. 21, it is not resentment for personal wrongs, but simple zeal for God's honor, which actuates the utterer of these fervid expressions." — Jennings and Lowe.

c 2 Pe. ii. 7, 8.

"Oh, pray for life! thou feels't that, with these faults of thine, thou art not ready yet with sons of God to shine."— Ruckert.

a Ps. v. 8; cxliii. 10; Jno. xiv. 6.

"Songs which, like the Psalms, have stood the test of three thousand years, may well be said to contain in

inward part.[a] **lowest .. earth,** fig. for the womb, as chamber out of reach of the eye of man, or earthly light. (16) **in continuance,** R. V., "day by day."[b] Hupfeld suggests that the passage refers to the "ball of life, as consisting of a number of threads—i. e. days—wh. are first a compact mass, as it were, and which are then unwound as life runs on." "The best connection is perhaps this: 'In God's book (i. e. His Mind) a day was formed or preordained (cf. Isa. xxii. 11) for every event in human history, and one such was set apart for the final perfecting and birth of the once imperfect substance.'"—Cheyne.

Plans.—A skillful architect before he builds draws a model, or gives a draught of the building in his book, or upon a table; there he will show you every room and contrivance: in his book are all the parts of the building written, while as yet there are none of them, or before any of them are framed and set up. In allusion to architects and other artisans, the Psalmist speaks of God, "In thy book all my members were written;" that is, Thou hast made me as exactly as if thou hadst drawn my several members and my whole proportion with a pen or pencil in a book, before Thou wouldst adventure to form me up. The Lord uses no book, no pen to decipher His work. He had the perfect idea of all things in Himself from everlasting; but He may well be said to work as by pattern, whose work is the most perfect pattern.—Joseph Caryl.

17, 18. (17) **precious,** etc., the word used rather suggests, "hard to understand," lit. "how heavy, how weighty." (18) **still with thee,** full of the thought of Thee, and Thy wondrous plans and ways.[a]

God's Thoughts.—I. The preciousness of God's thoughts. 1. Because of their originality; 2. Because of their moral excellence; 3. Because of their practicableness and utility; 4. Because of their influence upon our thoughts; 5. Because of their generosity. II. The number of God's thoughts. III. The realization of God's presence. Conclusion—1. Endeavor to understand God's thoughts; 2. Rejoice in the preciousness of God's thoughts; 3. Seek to become embodiments of God's thoughts. Live them.—William Jones.

19—22. (19) **slay the wicked,** "the change of subject is singularly abrupt." The thought of God's almighty power suggests a prayer that this power might be put forth against those who commit wickedness.[b] **depart,** etc., he wanted no association with those who could not adore with him the omniscient and omnipresent God. **bloody,** R. V., "blood-thirsty;" Ps. v. 6, xxvi. 9. (20) **wickedly,** in bad terms, and in a bad spirit. "Use Thy name for the accomplishment of wicked ends."—Pul. Com. (21) **that hate thee,** very love makes us jealous of the honor of our Beloved. (22) **perfect hatred,** or the perfection of hatred.[c]

Lesson to Conquerors.—When Edward the Confessor had entered England from Normandy to recover the kingdom, and was ready to give the Danes battle, one of his captains assured him of victory, adding, "We will not leave one Dane alive." To which Edward replied, "God forbid that the kingdom should be so recovered for me, who am but one man, by the death of thousands. No, I will rather live a private life, unstained by the blood of my fellow-men, than be a king by such a sacrifice." Upon which he broke up his camp, and again retired to Normandy, until he was restored to his throne without blood. Anger at Crime.—It is said that Adam Smith disliked nothing more than that moral apathy—that obtuseness of moral perception—which prevents man from not only seeing clearly, but feeling strongly, the broad distinction between virtue and vice, and which, under the pretext of liberality, is all indulgent even to the blackest crimes. At a party at Dalkeith Palace, where Mr. ——, in his mawkish way, was finding palliations for some villainous transactions, the doctor waited in patient silence until he was gone, then exclaimed: "Now I can breathe more freely. I cannot bear that man; he has no indignation in him."

23, 24. (23) **Search me,** the prayer of one who sincerely desires to be pure and true. **heart,** which is so deceitful. **thoughts,** which are often so divided and distracted. (24) **any wicked way,** lit. "any way of grief;" way leading to pain, such pain and suffering as are the sure consequences of sin. **way everlasting,**[a] the one true abiding way of life; that wh. has permanent good results.

A Prayer of the Upright.—We have here—I. A request for Divine

examination. This request implies—1. Consciousness of sincerity; 2. Distrust of self; 3. Confidence in God. II. A desire for entire freedom from evil. III. A request for Divine guidance in the way of righteousness. Here are two points—1. Man's need of guidance; 2. Man's infallible Guide.—Hom. Com.

Lead Us.—

Lead us, O Father, in the paths of right;
Blindly we stumble when we walk alone,
Involved in shadows of a darksome night,
Only with Thee we journey safely on.

Lead us, O Father, to Thy heavenly rest,
However rough and steep the path may be,
Through joy or sorrow, as Thou deemest best,
Until our lives are perfected in Thee.

—W. H. Burleigh.

them the seed of eternity." — Tholuck.

"Thoughts, thoughts, thoughts! Rolling wave-like on the mind's strange shore, Rustling leaf-like through it evermore, O that they might follow God's good Hand!" —William Alexander.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTIETH.

author, — unknown: date, prob. Manasseh's persecution.

A prayer for aid against slanderous enemies.

Poss. historical connection, 1 Sa. xxii. 9, xxiii. 19. Or reference may be to Ahithophel.

1—3. (1) **evil man,** or evil men. **violent man,** Heb. "man of violences." (2) **they gathered,** the plural here shows that more than one person was referred to. **for war,** i. e. to excite it, or stir it up. (3) **sharpened,** etc., Ps. lii. 2—4. **adders' poison,** the meaning is that their tongues inflict wounds which are as painful as poisoned wounds.—Pul. Com. Ps. lviii. 4; Ro. iii. 13.

Æsop and Xanthus.—The heathen philosopher, expecting some friends to dine with him, ordered his servant Æsop to provide the best things the market could supply. Tongues were only provided, and these the cook was ordered to serve up with different sauces. Course after course was supplied, each consisting of tongue. "Did I not order you," said Xanthus in a violent passion, "to buy the best victuals the market afforded?" "And have I not obeyed your orders?" said Æsop. "Is there anything better than a tongue? Is not the tongue the bond of society, the organ of truth and reason, and the instrument of our praise and adoration of the gods?" Xanthus ordered him to go again to the market on the morrow, and buy the worst things he could find. Æsop went, and again he purchased tongues, which the cook was ordered to serve as before. "What! tongues again?" exclaimed Xanthus. "Most certainly," rejoined Æsop; "the tongue is surely the worst thing in the world. It is the instrument of all strife and contention."

4, 5. (4) **purposed,** are determined, and have plotted. **overthrow,** etc., R. V., "thrust aside my steps;" comp. Ps. xxxv. 6. (5) **The proud,** so called bec. of the ambition wh. infatuates them." Polychr., "the arrogant." **snare,** see Ps. ix. 16, xxxi. 4, cxlii. 3. **gins,** the word gin is a contraction of engine, so refers generally to mechanical instruments. Here it means a contrivance to ensnare, a trap.

The Dangers of Society.—I. The secrecy of the attacks of the ungodly: "hid a snare." II. The variety of their weapons: "and cords." III. The cunning choice of position: "by the wayside." IV. The object of their designs: "for me:" they desire to destroy the man himself.—Spurgeon.

Traps.—There was "a trap hidden for him with cords;" a trap being sunk into some frequented path, and always covered over with grass or brushwood, and having long cords attached to each side, by which the hunter, lurking at a distance, might close it whenever he saw the game stepping on the spot. But the net spread for him by his enemies extended to the very "side of the encampment," which indicates, that even among soldiers lying around him, there were some who had been bribed and persuaded to watch and betray him.—Benjamin Weiss. Salmasius, one of the most learned men of his time, the great antagonist of Milton, said on his death-bed: "I have lost a world of time; if I had one year more, I would spend it in reading David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles."—Ker.

6—8. (6) **my God,** therefore the Divine defence he might seek. **hear,** R. V., "Give ear unto." (7) **covered my head,** as a helmet in battle, or

"A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear."—Shakespeare.

"I take it as a matter not to be disputed, that if all knew what each said of the other, there would not be four friends in the world. This seems proved by the quarrels and disputes caused by the disclosures which are occasionally made." — Pascal.

"My life with thee is like a song, and the sweet music thou, which doth accompany it." —Bailey.

"It was the intention of Providence that men should come forth and act some useful and

honorable part on that theater where we have been placed; might glorify Him that made us; and, by a steady perseverance in virtue, rise in the end to an immortal state." — Mathew.

"Cold prayers are as arrows without heads, as swords without edges, as birds without wings; they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Cold prayers always freeze before they reach heaven." — Brooks.

a "Let the mischievous work of their own lips fall, as some heavy weight, upon them and destroy them; let the calumnies wh. they heap upon me fall upon and cover themselves." — Spk. Com.

Ps. vii. 16, xciv. 23; Pr. xii. 13, xviii. 7.

b "Misfortunes, ceaseless and unrelenting, shall continually dog his steps."—Jennings and Lowe.

"When there is drifting and uncertainty as to what is right, there can be no restful inward conviction that we are right." —Pul. Com.

a testudo at a siege. **battle,** lit. day of armor, i. e. the day wh. necessitates equipment as for a fray. (8) **Grant not,** do not carry out their schemes for them. The Psalmist well knew that "Man proposes, but God disposes." Leave out the word lest. The Psalmist simply draws attention to the fact that his enemies are full of confidence and self-security.

Protection.—Consider—1. The period spoken of. "The day of battle." Let us notice—1. What the battle implies. (1) Enemies; (2) Peril; (3) Effort. 2. How long the battle lasts. II. The protection acknowledged. 1. Protection of a vital part; 2. Protection by an all-sufficient Being: (1) Of independent existence; (2) Sovereign authority; (3) Saving power. III. The encouragement to be deduced. 1. To trust in Him for protection; 2. To pray to Him for protection.—Hom. Com.

Covering the Head.—A captain or prince had always beside him in battle an armor-bearer, whose duty it was "to cover his master's head," that is, to ward off with the shield the blows aimed at his head, and which, in the heat of the fight, had escaped his own notice.—Benjamin Weiss.

Trust in God.—

Then, fainting soul, arise and sing:
Mount, but be sober on the wing;
Mount up, for heaven is won by prayer;
Be sober, for thou art not there;
Till death the weary spirit free,
Thy God hath said, 'Tis good for thee
To walk by faith and not by sight:
Take it on trust a little while;
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right
In the full sunshine of His smile. —John Keble.

9—13. (9) **head,** either a figure for the chiefs of the party, or for the life of those who assailed him. Polychr., "Those who are hemming me in raise their head. May the mischief," etc. **mischief,** etc., "the very things they desire for me let them come upon themselves."[a] (10) **fall,** or be thrown. **deep pits,** poss. should be "floods of waters:" or "places for running water, water-pits."—Delitzsch. Cheyne trans. "with fire let Jehovah cause them to fall, with nets that they rise not again." (11) **evil speaker,** a man of calumnious tongue. **evil shall hunt,** i. e. calamity as following upon evil doings. For the sinner "sin lieth at the door." **to overthrow him,** lit. "with drivings along."[b] (12) **I know,** and the confidence gives rest even in the midst of anxiety. (13) **Surely,** the Psalmist's settled conviction after long meditation. **in thy presence,** lit. before Thy face.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIRST.

author, — unknown: date, Manasseh's persecution.

An evening prayer in a time of anxiety.

1—5. (1) **I cry,** R. V., "I have called." (2) **as incense,** Polychr., "my prayer is prepared as incense before Thee." **lifting .. sacrifice,** i. e. "Let my daily prayer be acceptable to Thee as are the daily sacrifices of Thine own appointment."—Perowne. (3) **Set .. mouth,** a petition for taciturnity, bec. pressure of calamity might lead him to speak doubting words of God, and bitter words concerning men. **keep the door,** Mic. vii. 5. (5) **Incline not,** comp. the Lord's prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." **dainties,**[a] the things connected with the easy, luxurious life of the wicked. (5) **righteous,** etc., comp. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." **excellent oil,** R. V., "it shall be as oil upon the head; let not my head refuse it," i. e. friendly reproof would be valuable and refreshing like oil for the head. **for .. calamities,** R. V., "For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue;" meaning, "I will only meet my enemies' attacks with prayer."

a Illus. may be found in the refusal of Jewish youths to eat the dainties in Babylon.

"Prayers are but the body of the bird; desires are its angel's wings."—J. Taylor.

Keeping the Door of the Lips (vs. 3).—I. Let me ask you to consider speech as constituting one of the most tremendous agents in the world. II. Some special times and circumstances when this prayer may be offered with special fitness, and with the hope that good will come

of it. 1. When anger rises within; 2. When those we address are angry; 3. When speaking of those against whom we are prejudiced; 4. When in the presence of those who may wrongly report us; 5. When we have reason to fear that the innocent may be injured; 6. When we have reason to doubt our own motives. III. Suggest a few rules for keeping the door of the lips. Ask—1. What is the motive of speech? 2. Are the words likely to injure? 3. How will the words appear in the day of judgment?—J. F. Tuttle.

Keep the Door.—When Latimer was on trial for heresy, he heard the scratch of a pen behind the tapestry. In a moment he bethought himself that every word he spoke was taken down, and he says that he was very careful what words he uttered. Behind the veil that hides eternity is a record-book, in which our every syllable is taken down. Even the most trivial are not forgotten, for the Lord Jesus tells us that "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment!" If our words have an eternity of existence, if good words have so potent an influence to save, if idle, or profane, or poisonous speech works such perennial mischief, how needful is the perpetual utterance of the prayer, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."—J. L. Cuyler.

6—10. (6) **judges,** better, "rulers." **hear my words,** Bickell thus trans. this very difficult vs.: "For while my prayer rose at their wicked deeds, down from the crag were hurled their rulers; and the pious heard (concerning) my words, that they had been pleasant in the ears of Jehovah." Allusion to some unknown event regarded as a Divine interposition in ans. to prayer. (7) R. V. trans., "As when one plougheth and cleaveth the earth, our bones .. mouth," i. e. the sufferings of the Israelites, many of whom have sealed their faith by martyrdom.—Cheyne. **bones,** etc., "the unburied bones of slaughtered saints lie scattered as unregarded as the lumps of soil behind the ploughman."—Expos. Bible. (8) **leave .. destitute,** or "pour not out my soul unto death."[b] (9) **snares,** lit. the hands of the snares. (10) **fall,** etc., comp. Ps. cxl. 10. **whilst .. escape,** i. e. pass over the nets of traps in safety.

Bones at the Grave's Mouth.—This seems to be strong eastern painting, and almost figurative language; but that it may be strictly true, the following extract demonstrates: "At five o'clock we left Garigana, our journey being still to the eastward of north; and, at a quarter past six in the evening, arrived at the village of that name, whose inhabitants had all perished with hunger the year before; their wretched bones being all unburied, and scattered upon the surface of the ground, where the village formerly stood. We encamped among the bones of the dead, as no space could be found free from them; and on the 23rd, at six in the morning, full of horror at this miserable spectacle, we set out for Teawa."—James Bruce.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SECOND.

1—4. (1) **I cried,** R. V., "cry," comp. Ps. lxxvii. 1. (2) **I poured out,** or "I do pour out." (3) **When,** etc., the Psalmist wishes to say that he did not cry because he had the least fear that God was ignorant of his troubles; but it was this reflection wh. enabled him to stop brooding over his circumstances. His spirit was distressed, but he knew that God was faithful. **overwhelmed,** lit. darkness itself upon me; is faint. (4) **I looked,**[a] he looked about only to find himself utterly deserted. **right hand,** the position of one defending is the right side of him he defends. **no .. soul,** there is no one seeking (or inquiring for) my soul, i. e. with a view to my good.

The Burden of Souls.—I. What is meant by care for souls? 1. To have a firm conviction of their value; 2. To cherish tender solicitude for their welfare; 3. To feel alarming apprehensions of their danger; 4. To make zealous exertions for their salvation. II. Who ought specially to exercise this care? 1. Parents; 2. Teachers; 3. Ministers; 4. Members. III. The criminality of neglect. 1. It is ungrateful; 2. It is cruel; 3. It is fatal.—W. W. Wythe.

"The rebuke of the righteous may be painful, but it promotes our well-being. The pain which it causes is, like that which is inflicted by the knife in the hand of the skilful surgeon, for the good of the sufferer. The true friend who, because of his regard for us, faithfully reproves us when we are in fault, is a great blessing. And the man who, like David, is wise and good will welcome his reproofs with joy, though they are painful. He will not only not refuse them, but will receive them as the oil which was poured on the head on festive occasions, "the oil of gladness."
—Hom. Com.

[b] Is. liii. 12.

A pious sergeant of a colored regiment at Point of Rocks, when invited to take part in a meeting, said, "'Pears like I could say more in five minutes dan I could live all my life long." Words are but wind; life is real: but, when both are in harmony, their influence is mighty.

author, — unknown: date, prob. Manasseh's persecution.

The prayer of one in deep affliction.

[a] "Even the all-seeing God will not be able to discern a man who is friendly to David."—Jennings and Lowe.

There are two little words in our language which I always admire —"Try" and "Trust." You know not what you can or cannot do until you try; and if

God Cares for His People.—Sooner than one of God's saints should be forgotten He would forget the government of the world, and would suffer the nations to take their course rather than lose sight of one of His little ones. As long as a rose of His planting blooms on earth, this desert is to Him a delightful garden, and He leaves heaven to tend and nourish this plant. And happy are ye who are the weak of the flock, the poor and needy, above others! It would seem that you lie the nearest to His heart.—Krummacher.

5—7. (5) **portion,** Ps. xvi. 5. **land of the living,** in contrast with Sheol, the place of the dead. "The poet's hope then, is for this life, not for the life after death."—Polychr. (6) **Attend,** etc., Ps. xvii. 1. (7) **prison,** figuratively for some severe sorrow and distress. **righteous .. about,** "shall crown themselves with me."[b]

Prison Dreams.—What we imagine in our fetters. 1. Christ's brow girt about with rare praise. 2. Christ's people compassing and companying us in costliest service. 3. A new life of bounty and blessing—when we get out. II. How far do our dreamings come true? Before peril and after; under conviction, and after conversion; sick room, and active service. III. The duty of fidelity to prison vows and lessons.—W. B. Haynes.

The Lord My Portion.—It is observable that in the courts of kings, children and ruder people are much taken with pictures and rich shows, and feed their fancies with the sight of rich hangings and fine things; but the grave statesman passeth by such things as not worthy taking notice of—his business is with the king. Thus it is that, in this world, most men stay in the outer rooms, and admire the low things of the world, and look upon them as pieces of much excellence; but the spiritually-minded man looketh over all these things that are here below—his business is with God. Let them dote upon the world that are in love with it: whom hath he in heaven but God? And there is none upon earth that he desireth beside Him.—Spencer.

you make trial in the exercise of trust in God, mountains of difficulties will vanish as you approach them, and help will be given that you never expected. —Smiles.

b "The righteous will crown themselves with a garland of joy, on account of the success of my cause."—Wordsworth.

"Write six ciphers in a line, and they amount to nothing. Put the figure one before them and they amount to a million. All human talents and possessions are but ciphers until you put the name of Jesus at the head of them. Then they make their owner a millionaire for heaven. —T. L. Cuyler.

author, — unknown; date later exile.

A contrite supplication.

a Comp. 1 Jno. i. 9.

b Job ix. 32, xv. 14, 15; Ro. iii. 20; Ga. ii. 16.

c "A consciousness of guilt and of deserved punishment seems to lie at the root of the Psalmist's prayer, and to prompt his supplication for forgiveness." — Spk. Com.

d "Seeks to comprehend the mystery of its sufferings, and is ever beaten back upon itself in its perplexity." — Perowne.

e "As the weary child stretches forth its hands to its mother, that on her bosom it may be hushed to rest." —Perowne.

f "He declares his earnestness by a goodly similitude, comparing his soul to a droughty

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD.

1—4. (1) **righteousness,** that side of Divine justice which is turned towards good men; hence it comes to mean "beneficence."[a] The appeal is based entirely upon the attributes of the Divine character. (2) **be justified,** pass safely through a strict Divine judgment.[b] (3) **enemy,** etc., the Psalmist means that persecution and affliction had brought him the true knowledge of himself, and had deeply humbled him.[c] **in darkness,** of a deep sense of sin. **have been long dead,** who can never return to this world. The "poet seems to himself like one buried alive for ever." (4) **overwhelmed,** as Ps. cxlii. 3. **desolate,** amazed, perplexed.[d] Polychr., "my spirit within me is wrapped in gloom my heart grows numb in my bosom."

5, 6. (5) **meditate,** as Ps. lxxvii. 10—12. **work .. hands,** Ps. xliv. 1. "The mourner seeks consolation in the consideration of God's works of former ages." (6) **stretch forth,** in attitude of supplication.[e] **thirsteth,** Polychr., "Like an exhausted land my soul thirsts for Thee." "He makes his very need a chariot wherewith to mount up to God."[f]

David's Method.—I. He gathered materials; facts and evidence concerning God: "I remember." II. He thought out his subject and arranged his matter: "I meditate." III. He discoursed thereon, and was brought nearer to God: "I muse"—discourse. IV. Let us close by viewing all this as an example for preachers and others.—W. B. Haynes.

Meditation.—In order to meditate we must call to remembrance the things we have learned, and we must seek to store our minds with new and fresh truths. But neither of these is meditation itself. To remember a truth or fact is not to ponder it. In the one case we simply possess the truth, in the other we use it. A passage remembered is so much food laid up in a storehouse; a passage meditated is so much food eaten and incorporated with ourselves. Memory is the casket which holds the jewels; meditation is that which brings them forth, and arranges them upon the person, and sets out both to the best advantage. Meditation on

divine things makes them really profitable to us. A man may run through a picture gallery so as to see every painting it contains, and to derive from the sight a certain amount of pleasure, but he alone profits by such an exhibition who pauses and studies each worthy work of art, and gathers ideas from it which enrich his mind, or learns lessons from it which refine his taste, or which may guide his own efforts after excellence in art. "It is the settling of milk," says an old writer, "that makes it turn to cream, and it is the settling of truth in the mind that makes it turn to spiritual nutriment."—W. L. Alexander.

7—9. (7) **hear me,** evidently meaning, answer me. **faileth,** with weary watching and waiting. **lest,** etc., Ps. xxviii. 1. (8) **cause .. hear,** Ps. xc. 14. **in the morning,** the Heb. fig. for early, soon, speedily. **know the way,** "either the course that I should take under my difficult circumstances, or 'the way of thy commandments.'"—Cheyne; Ps. xxv. 8, cxlii. 3. (9) **I flee,** etc., lit. to Thee have I concealed or hidden; prob. meaning, "in Thee have I hidden myself, i. e. found a refuge, or hiding-place."[a]

Listening for Lovingkindness.—I. Where to listen. At the gates of Scripture; in the halls of meditation; nigh the footsteps of Jesus. II. When to listen. "In the morning;" as early and as often as possible. III How to listen. In trustful dependence: "Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning, for in Thee do I trust." IV. Why to listen. To "know the way wherein I should walk."—W. B. Haynes.

Need of Guidance.—The whole valley is surrounded by ranges of regal crags; but the mountain of the Gemmi, apparently absolutely inaccessible, is the last point to which you would turn for an outlet. A side gorge that sweeps up to the glaciers and snowy pyramids flashing upon you in the opposite direction is the route which you suppose your guide is going to take; and visions of pedestrians perilously scaling icy precipices, or struggling up to the middle through ridges of snow, begin to surround you, as the prospect of your own experience in this day's expedition. So convinced was I that the path must go in that direction, that I took a short cut, which I conceived would bring me again into the mule path at a point under the glaciers; but after scaling precipices and getting lost in a wood of firs in the valley, I was glad to rejoin my friend with the guide, and to clamber on in pure ignorance and wonder. . . . Now what a striking symbol is this of things that sometime take place in our spiritual pilgrimage. We are often brought to a stand, hedged up and hemmed in by the providence of God so that there seems no way out. A man is sometimes thrown into difficulties in which he sits down beginning to despair, and says to himself, "Well, this time it is all over with me;" like Sterne's starling, or, worse, like Bunyan's man in the cage, he says, "I cannot get out." Then when God has drawn him from all self-confidence and self-resource, a door opens in the wall and he rises up, and walks at liberty, praising God.—Geo. B. Cheever.

10—12. (10) **thy will,** thy good pleasure. **spirit is good,**[a] or let Thy good spirit lead me, etc. **land of uprightness,** lit. in a level land, where there need be no fear of stumbling.[b] "The geographical designation is applied here in a spiritual sense." (11) **Quicken me,** Ps. lxxi. 20. (12) **of thy mercy,** R. V., "in thy lovingkindness." **cut off,** etc.,[c] it is worthy of note that the Psalmist does not take the work of vengeance into his own hands, but carries his fear of his enemies wholly to God in prayer. **thy servant,** therefore may plead Thy protection and defence.

Obedience to the Will of God (vs. 10).—Three states of feeling are exhibited in David's need of Divine instruction and help in the fulfillment of the Divine will. I. Aspiration revealed. 1. Obedience is superior to knowledge; 2. Knowledge alone is positively criminal. II. Deficiency acknowledged. 1. As to the knowledge of God's will in the particular circumstances of life; 2. Of the hindrances to the performances of God's will; 3. As to the practical skill of doing the will of God. III. Desire expressed. Seek to be taught obedience—1. In the particular circumstances of life; 2. In dealing with hindrances; 3. In its active fulfillment.—G. Bainton.

Conforming to the Will of God.—If a man lay a crooked stick upon

ground: for in extreme droughts we see the ground chap as though it opened its mouth to look for drink from Heaven." — Calvin.

Ps. xlii. 1, 2, cxxiii. 2, cxxx. 6.

"A well-written life is almost as rare as a well-spent one." — Carlyle.

[a] Rashi, Aben Ezra, etc., render this sentence, "I have hidden (my trouble from others, revealing it) to Thee," i. e. "For Thee have I reserved it."

"From some sins there is no safety but in flight. Our French school-book represented Mentor as saying to his pupil in the court of Calypso, "Fly-, Telemaque; there remains no other mode of conquest but by flight!" "Flee youthful lusts;" they are not to be wrestled with, but fled from. Flight being thus needful, whither shall we flee but to our God? Who will so surely welcome, so securely defend, so permanently entertain?" —Spurgeon.

[a] Ne. ix. 20; Ps. li. 10.

[b] Ps. xxvii. 11.

[c] "The Psalmist pleads God's loving - kindness or mercy as the ground of his prayer, or his conviction, that God will destroy his enemies. This is not the language of a revengeful and bloodthirsty spirit." — Spk. Com.

"We have companions in joy; sorrow we have to face by ourselves. Unless we have Jesus

with us in the darkness, we have no one."—Exp. B.

"He lives long that lives well; and time misspent is not lived, but lost.—Fuller."

an even level ground, the stick and ground ill suit together, but the fault is in the stick; and in such a case, a man must not strive to bring the even ground to the crooked stick, but bow the crooked stick even with the ground. So is it between God's will and ours, there is a discrepancy and jarring betwixt them; but where is the fault? or, rather, where is it not? Not in the will of God, but in our crooked and corrupt affections.—Augustine. God's Leading.—Man by nature is as a cripple and blind, he cannot go upright unless he be led by a superior spirit; yea, he must be carried as an eagle carrieth her little ones, or as a mother her tender child. Think not that we can step one right step to heaven but by the conduct and convoy of God's Holy Spirit. Miserable are those who go without his conduction.—Archibald Symson.

author and date uncertain.

A song of confidence in God, as God of victory and social prosperity.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOURTH.

1, 2. (1) **my strength,** lit. my rock,[d] One of David's most familiar figures. **teacheth . . fight,**[e] these expressions are eminently suited to David. See his thanksgiving song, 2 Sa. xxii. (2) **My goodness,** i. e. He who shows goodness or lovingkindness to me.[f] Cheyne, "my castle." **my deliverer,** the heaping together of epithets is not superfluous, but designed to confirm and strengthen faith. **my people,** better, peoples, nations;[g] omitting "my."

d Ps. xviii. 2, 46.

e Ps. xliv. 3.

f Ps. lix. 10, 17; Jonah ii. 8.

g Is. xlv. 1.

"If thou hast strength, 'twas Heaven that strengt h bestowed;
For know, vain man! thy valor is from God."—
—Homer.

Inspiring Aspects of the Divine Being.—I. As the Author of human skill. II. As the Protector of human life. A protection which is—1. Unchangeable; 2. Enduring; 3. Inviolable; 4. Ever available. III. As the source of human authority. IV. As the object of human trust. V. As the Supreme Good of human life. VI. As the Recipient of human praise. 1. Gratitude urges to this; 2. Reason urges to this; 3. This is blessed.—Hom. Com.

My High Tower.—Such towers were erected on mountains, on rocks, or on the walls of a city, and were regarded as safe places mainly because they were inaccessible. So the old castles in Europe,—as that at Heidelberg, and generally those along the Rhine,—were built on lofty places, and in such positions as not to be easily accessible.—Albert Barnes. My Shield.—The Hebrew word signifies, not the huge shield which was carried by an armor-bearer, but the handy target with which heroes entered into hand-to-hand conflicts. A warrior took it with him when he used his bow or his sword. It was often made of metal, but still was portable, and useful, and was made to serve as an ornament, being brightened or anointed with oil. David had made abundant use of the Lord, his God, from day to day, in battles many and murderous.—C. H. Spurgeon.

"A little child was taken by her father to see and hear the famous George Whitefield. A deep impression was made upon her heart. She was taken ill the next day, and, when she was dying, said, 'Let me go to Mr. Whitefield's God!' "

3, 4. (3) **what is man,** Ps. viii. 4. The Heb. word used here is Adam. **son of man,** Heb. Enosh, man in his feebleness: the son of frail mortal man."[a] It enhances our estimate of God's goodness to consider the insignificance and unworthiness of the creatures on whom He bestows it." (4) **Man . . vanity,** "earth-born man is like unto a breath."—Cheyne; Ps. xxxix. 5, 6. **shadow,** the evening shadow which in the E. lengthens and passes very quickly.[b]

a "Literally, the vs. runs, 'Jehovah, what is man, that Thou shouldst know him, the son of frail man that Thou shouldst take him into consideration?' "—Jennings and Lowe.

b Job viii. 9, xiv. 2; Ps. cii. 11, cix. 23.

What is Man? (vs. 3).—I. What was man as he came from the hands of his Creator? 1. Rational; 2. Responsible; 3. Immortal; 4. Holy and happy. II. What is a man in his present condition? 1. Fallen; 2. Guilty; 3. Sinful; 4. Miserable and helpless in his misery. III. What is man when he has believed in Christ? 1. He is restored to a right relation to God; 2. He is restored to a right disposition towards God; 3. He enjoys the influences of the Holy Spirit; 4. He is in process of preparation for the heavenly world. IV. What shall man be when he is admitted into heaven? 1. Free from sin and sorrow; 2. Advanced to the perfection of his nature; 3. Associated with angels; 4. Near to his Saviour and his God.—G. Brooks.

" 'Let us make man in our image.' Such is man's height, and depth, and breadth, and mystery. He has not come from one principle or distinction of the Divine nature, but out of all principles. Man is the image of

Man a Temple in Ruins.—That God hath withdrawn Himself, and left this His temple desolate, we have many sad and plain proofs before us. The stately ruins are visible to every eye, that bear in their front, yet extant, their doleful inscription—"Here God once dwelt." Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man to show

the Divine presence did sometime reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity to complain He is now retired and gone. The lamps are extinct, the altar overturned, the light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervor. The faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, the impurity, the decayed state in all respects of this temple, too plainly show the great inhabitant is gone.—J. Howe.

5—8. (5) **Bow,** etc., comp. the prayer here with the thanksgiving of 2 Sa. xxii. 8—18. Here begins the direct prayer for the overthrow of his enemies. The Psalmist longs for a theophany, a coming of God to judgment.—Perowne. **touch,** etc., Ps. civ. 32.[c] (6) **Cast forth,** lit. "lighten lightning." **arrows,** poetical fig. for the lightning. **destroy,** R. V., "discomfit." (7) **rid,** R. V., "rescue;" a peculiar Aramaic word elsewhere used in the sense of opening wide, and always in connection with the mouth or the lip. **strange children,** R. V., "strangers;" hostile tribes surrounding the sacred nation. (8) **right .. falsehood,**[a] Polychr., "the grasp of whose hand is a lie;" an expression denoting faithlessness to a solemn covenant, the right hand being lifted up in the taking of an oath.

The Sins of the Tongue.—A bitter word dropped from our lips against a brother is like a pistol fired amongst mountains. The sharp report is caught up and intensified and echoed by rocks and caves, till it emulates the thunder. So a thoughtless, unkind word, in passing from mouth to mouth, receives progressive exaggerations, and, snowball-like, increases as it rolls. Gossip-mongers are persons who tear the bandages from social wounds, and prevent their healing: they are persons who bring flint and steel,, and acid and alkali together, and are justly chargeable with all the fire and ebullition. A whisper-word of slander is like that fox, with a firebrand tied to its tail, that Samson sent among the standing corn of the Philistines. It brings destruction into wide areas of peace and love. Evil-speaking is like a freezing wind, that seals up the sparkling waters and tender juices of flowers, and binds up the hearts of men in uncharitableness and bitterness of spirit, as the earth is bound up in the grip of winter.—F. W. Robertson.

9—11. (9) **I will sing,** a resolve made in full anticipation of victory. **new song,** Ps. xxxiii. 3, xl. 3. Song composed freshly for new mercies received. **ten strings,** R. V. omits "and an instrument;" i. e. it is a "psaltery of ten strings;" Ps. xxxiii. 2, xcii. 3. (10) **salvation,** etc., "there has always been a belief, especially in the East, that 'a divinity doth hedge a king.'"—Pul. Com. **David,** mentioned here generically for the line of Davidic kings. **hurtful sword,** lit. sword of evil.[b] (11) **Rid me,** etc., comp. vss. 7, 8.

For God's Ear.—I. The singer. A grateful heart. II. The song. Praiseful. New. III. The accompaniment: "Psaltery." Helps to devotion. Give God the best. IV. The auditor and object of the eulogium: "Thee, O God."—W. B. Haynes.

God the Supreme Ruler.—What a doctrine this for the kings and great men of the earth to remember! Could they be brought to feel and acknowledge it, they would not trust to the sagacity of their own councils, nor to the strength of their own arm; but would ever remember that the Most High is the ruler among nations, and that he putteth down one and raiseth up another according to the dictates of His own all-perfect will. Such remembrances as this would stain the pride of all human glory, and would lead men to feel that the Lord alone is to be exalted.—John Morison.

12—15. (12) **That,** etc., R. V., "When our sons shall be...; and our daughters...hewn after the fashion," etc. This figure marks the native strength and vigor and freedom of the youth of the land; also the polished gracefulness, the quiet beauty, of the maidens. They are like the exquisitely sculptured forms (the Caryatides) which adorned the corners of some magnificent hall or chamber of a palace.—Perowne. **grown up,**[a] or grown large. **corner stones,** corner pillars, sculptured pillars, abiding in the house and giving grace and strength to the interior. Some think the elaborately carved corners, or cornices, are meant. **polished,** Heb. cut, carved. Read, "cut to grace a palace." (13) **all .. store,** Heb. from kind to kind. **streets,** should be "pastures."[b] (14) **That .. labour,** R. V., "When our oxen are well laden." **no breaking in,** of hostile armies. **nor**

the whole Deity. There is in him a sanctuary for the Father, for the Son, and for the Holy Ghost. 'We will make our abode with him.' "—J. Pulsford.

[c] Ex. xix. 18, xx. 18.

[a] Is. xliv. 20.

"The pledge of the right hand, which used to be a witness of good faith, was violated by treachery and wickedness." — Cicero.

"For the mind there is no rest; but for the soul there is rest. It does not look around; it looks up, and knows God — knows as love can know, knows as trust can know. And that is the only satisfying knowledge." — Pul. Com.

[b] "The allusion may be to the destructiveness of the sword, or, it may be to the badness of the cause in which the sword from which the Psalmist prays for deliverance was drawn." — Spk. Com.

"Ferdinand, king of Aragon, sending his son against the Florentines, thus bespake him: Believe me son, victories are not gotten by art or subtlety, but given of God." — John Trapp.

[a] If a gentleman is to grow up he must grow like a tree: there must be nothing between him and Heaven." — Archd. Hare.

[b] The root meaning of the word used is 'places outside the city.' " — Perowne.

"The last verse sums up all the preceding picture of growth, pros-

perity, and tranquility, and traces it to the guardian care and blessing of Jehovah. The psalmist may seem to have been setting too much store by outward prosperity. His last word not only points to the one Source of it, but sets high above the material consequences of God's favor, joyous as these are, that favor itself, as the climax of human blessedness." —Maclaren.

c De. xxxiii. 27, 29.

going out, or sallying against besiegers. Polychr., "There is no murder nor manslaughter, and in our streets no loud outcry." **no complaining,** R. V., "outcry," as of a besieged city. (15) **Happy,** etc., that people to whom God graciously grants temporal safety and prosperity.[c] "The acme of Israel's good fortune consists in this, that it has chosen to be the people, whose God is the Lord."—Delitzsch.

Verses 12—14.—Most commentators regard these vss. as a fragment from an earlier writer. The previous vss., too, are full of echoes from earlier Pss. (Pss. 8, 33, 104, etc., and especially Ps. 18.

True Happiness.—Coleridge, the poet, in a letter written a fortnight before his death, addressed to his god-child, says:—"On the eve of my departure, I declare to you, that health is a great blessing; competence, obtained by honorable industry, a great blessing; and a great blessing it is to have kind, faithful, and loving friends and relatives; but that the greatest blessing, as it is the most ennobling of all privileges, is to be indeed a Christian."—Whitecross.

The Happy Nation.—

Thrice happy nation, where with look benign
Thine aspect bends; beneath thy smile divine
The fields are with increasing harvests crown'd,
The flocks grow fast, and plenty reigns around,
Nor sire, nor infant son, black death shall crave,
Till ripe with age they drop into the grave;
Nor fell suspicion, nor relentless care,
Nor peace-destroying discord enter there,
But friends and brothers, wives and sisters, join
The feast in concord and in love divine.—Callimachus.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH.

author, — unknown: date, after the restoration.

Praise of the all-bountiful King.

The last of the alphabetical Psalms.

d "The heart lifted up to God, and full of the thoughts of God, can no more conceive that its praise should cease, than that God Himself should cease to be." — Perowne. God is King in verity; others are called kings in vanity. " — Martin Geier.

"Then God is to be blessed and praised in dark as well as bright days." — Johannes Paulus Palanterius.

1—3. (1) **O king,** the real King of the nation of Israel; all its governors were but princes under Jehovah, the great King. **ever and ever,** "in this devotion to the ever-living King he forgets his own mortality—this impulse of the soul towards the praising of the God, to whom the soul owes its origin, is a practical proof of a life after death."—Delitzsch. Comp. Ps. xxx. 12, xxxiv. 1.[d] (2) **Every day,** each new day finding a new occasion, and new reasons. (3) **greatly,** R. V., "highly." **to be praised,** Ps. xlviii. 1. **unsearchable,** "it is so abyssmally deep, that no searching reaches its reason or ground;" comp. Is. xl. 28; Ro. xi. 33.

The Te Deum.—The tradition about the Te Deum is that it was first sung by Ambrose and Augustine, through inspiration, when, in 387, they were together at Milan. The truth is that this hymn had its origin in a responsive Christian song which Ambrose introduced into the West from the Eastern Church. It was a morning Psalm of praise, and began, "Every day I will bless Thee, and praise Thy name for ever and ever." This 145th Psalm may be looked on as having the germ of the widespread Christian hymn, and as being itself the Te Deum of the Old Testament. The Jews were accustomed to say that he who could pray this Psalm from the heart three times daily, was preparing himself best for the praise of the world to come.—Ker.

4—7. (4) **One . . another,** lit. generation to generation. (5) **speak,** or meditate upon. De Wette says, "rehearse in poetry." (6) **declare,** or rehearse each one of them. (7) **abundantly utter,**[a] pour forth as from a fountain. **sing,** loudly, joyfully. **righteousness,** i. e. "God's acting in inviolable accordance with His counsel and the order of His salvation."

The Antiphon.—I. To praise God is a personal duty: "I will." II. Its right performance will excite others to engage in it: "And men shall." III. The accompaniment of others in praise will re-act upon ourselves. "And I will;" "And they shall abundantly," etc. IV. Such praise widens and expands as it rolls along. Beginning with God's majesty and works, it extends to His acts, greatness, goodness, and righteousness.—C. A. Davis.

Thy Greatness.—All men are enamored of greatness. Then they

a Comp. Da. iv. 37, vi. 26, 27.

"Some men make complaint, that it is a great misfortune to die before our time. I would ask what time? Is it that of Nature? But she, indeed, has lent us life, as we do a sum of money, only no certain day is fixed for payment. What reason then to

must seek it in God, and get it from God. David did both. All history shows the creature aspiring after this glory. Ahasuerus, Astyages, Cyrus, Cambyses, Nebuchadnezzar, were all called "the great." Alexander the Great, when he came to the Ganges, ordered his statue to be made of more than life size, that posterity might believe him to have been of nobler stature. In Christ alone does man attain the greatness his heart yearns for—the glory of perfect goodness.—Thomas Le Blanc.

8, 9. (8) **gracious,** Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. **great mercy,** great in mercy. "The real will of God makes for graciousness, which stoops down sympathetically, and for compassion, which rich in help and consolation espouses the cause of the sinner; wrath is only the background of His nature, which He reluctantly and after long waiting lets loose against those, who repulse His great grace."—Delitzsch; Ps. ciii. 8. (9) **all his works,** Ps. ciii. 22. Reference is to the "entirety of things created."

Yielding to Mercy.—I heard once a story from a soldier, who, with his company, had laid siege against a fort, that so long as the besieged were persuaded their foes would show them no favor, they fought like madmen; but when they saw one of their fellows taken and received to favor, they all came tumbling down from their fortress and delivered themselves into their enemies' hands. I am persuaded, did men believe there is grace and willingness in the heart of Christ to save sinners, as the word imports there is, they would come tumbling into His arms; but Satan has blinded their minds that they cannot see this thing.—Bunyan.

10—13. (10) **saints,** or beloved ones;[a] Cheyne, "thy loving ones." (12) **mighty acts,** acts indicating august and Divine power. They so confess, that the glorious majesty of Jehovah's kingdom may become the property of humanity. (13) **everlasting kingdom,** or kingdom running on through all the ages. There is no beginning and passing to God's kingdom: "it is eternal periphery of temporal history; it is also its eternal purport wh. is gradually unfolding and working itself out."

The Glory of Christ's Kingdom (vs. 11).—The glory of Christ's kingdom is manifested—I. In its origin. II. In the manner and spirit of its administration. III. In the character of its subjects. IV. In the privileges attached to it. Apply:—1. Pray and labor for its advancement; 2. Press into it.—R. Hall.

An Everlasting Kingdom.—High up over the door of the old mosque in Damascus, which was once a Christian church, but for twelve centuries has ranked among the holiest of the Mahomedan sanctuaries, are inscribed these memorable words: "Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." Though the name of Christ has been regularly blasphemed, and the disciples of Christ regularly cursed for twelve hundred years within it, the inscription has, nevertheless, remained unimpaired by time, and undisturbed by man. It was unknown during the long reign of Mohamedan intolerance and oppression; but when religious liberty was partially restored, and the missionaries were enabled to establish a Christian church in that city, it was again brought to light, encouraging them in their work of faith and labor of love.—John Bate.

14—17. (14) **upholdeth,** etc., His providential care is as minute and precise as it is extensive and glorious.[b] (15) **wait,** looking, watching with expectation. (16) **thine hand,** represented as holding the supply of every creature's need. (17) **holy,**[c] better, merciful; R. V., "gracious."

Comprehensiveness of Diyine Provision (vs. 15).—Man and beast dependent on the Divine care. God's provision for the world is—I. Universal in its extent: "the eyes of all." II. Suitable in its supply: "due season." III. Communicated with infinite ease: "openest Thine hand." IV. Contributes to the satisfaction of its recipients: "and satisfieth, etc."—J. B. Dodd.

Care of Providence.—Socrates, one of the sages of Greece, who in the night of paganism longed for light, spoke one day as he sat among his disciples of the overruling providence of the Deity, which, being omnipresent, did hear and see everything, taking care of all creatures; and that we should always feel and recognize this more, the more we honored and revered the Supreme Being. In the emotion of his heart, the wise man alluded to a parable from the poems of the incomparable Ho-

complain if she demands it at pleasure, since it was on this condition you received it?" — Cicero.

"We write our blessings on the water, but our afflictions on the rock." — Guthrie.

"The door of mercy has hinges and it may be shut, and then locked with the adamantine key of justice." — Raleigh.

[a] Ps. xvi. 10.

Voltaire said, "In twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apotles to rear." Some years after his death, his very printing press was employed in printing New Testaments, and thus spreading abroad the Gospel. Gibbon, "with solemn sneer," devoted his gorgeous history to sarcasm upon Christ and His followers. His estate is now in the hands of one who devotes large sums to the propagation of the very truth Gibbon labored to sap.

[b] Wherein is the conspicuous excellence of this kingdom seen? Not in the symbols of earthly pride and power, but in gracious condescension to the fallen and the crushed, in a gracious care which provides for the wants of every living thing." — Perowne.

[c] Re. xv. 3, 4. "A wicked man's prayer is sick of the plague, and God will not come near him. The loadstone loseth its virtue when it is bespread with gar-

lick; so doth prayer when it is polluted with sin." — T. Watson.

"In agony nature is no atheist, the mind which knows not where to fly, flies to God."—Hannah More.

mer, likening Divine Providence to a mother, who, with gentle and unseen hand, fans the flies from her sleeping child. Among his disciples was Critias, the traitor, who afterwards condemned him to death. He laughed at the comparison, for he thought it ignoble and common. Therefore he laughed and mocked at it in his heart. However, Socrates observed it, and understood his thoughts. He turned to him, and said: "Dost thou not feel, my dear Critias, how nearly allied the human in its simplicity is to the Divine, and how the former must raise us to the latter?" Thus he spoke. Critias departed with an angry heart; but Socrates continued to instruct the other disciples. When Socrates was sentenced to death by the malice of Critias and condemned to drink the poisoned cup, the tyrant remembered the words and the parable of the sage, and he came to him and said deridingly: "Well, Socrates, will the gods even now protect thee from the flies?" But Socrates smiled, and said: "The gods, Critias, now lead me to rest after my day's work is done. How could I still think of the flies?"—F. A. Krummacher.

18—21. (18) **nigh,** so both able and ready to meet every occasion of need. **in truth,** i. e. sincerely. "Mere formal prayer is useless, does not lessen the distance between God and man, rather augments it." (19) **fulfil the desire,** we know that such expressions are not to be taken absolutely; God answers according to His own wise and beneficent will. (20) **will he destroy,** or better, he destroys, is accustomed to destroy. The judgments of God aid the confidence of His servants in Him. (21) **holy name,**[a] Ps. xxxiii. 21, ciii. 1, cv. 3.

Nearness of God.—The nearness or remoteness of a friend is very material and considerable in our troubles, distresses, wants, dangers, etc. I have such a friend and he would help me, but he lives so far off; and I have another friend that has a great love for me, that is able to counsel me, and to speak a word in season for me, and that in my distress would stand close to me, but he is so remote. I have a special friend, that did he know how things stand with me would make my burden his, and my wants his, and my sorrows his; but he is in a far country, he is at the Indies, and I may be undone before I can hear from him. But it is not thus with you, O Christians! who have a God so nigh unto you, who have the signal presence of God in the midst of you, yea, who have a God always standing by you.—Thomas Brooks.

[a] Re. v. 13.

"I respect the man who knows distinctly what he wishes. The greater part of all the mischief in the world arises from the fact that men do not sufficiently understand their own aims. They have undertaken to build a tower, and spend no more labor on the foundation than would be necessary to erect a hut."—Goethe.

"Like our shadows, our wishes lengthen as our sun declines."—Young.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIXTH.

author,— unknown: date, prob. Maccabaean.

A call to trust wholly in God.

1—4. (1) **Praise,** better, Hallelujah, the term characteristic of Psalms cxlvi.—cl. each begins and ends with the same expression. **O my soul,** Ps. ciii. 22.[a] (2) **sing praises,** or play upon an instrument.[b] **have any being,** lit. while I yet (am).[c] (3) **princes,** the inability to render assistance, not the capriciousness of earthly potentates, is mainly in view.[d] **no help,** or power to save. "Confidence in human aid of any kind is forbidden." (4) **returneth,** etc., Ge. ii. 7. **thoughts,** or purposes. So weak is he, and not to be depended upon.

Ceaseless Praise.—George Carpenter, the Bavarian martyr, being desired by some godly brethren, that when he was burning in the fire he would give them some sign of his constancy, answered, "Let this be a sure sign unto you of my faith and perseverance in the truth, that so long as I am able to hold open my mouth, or to whisper, I will never cease to praise God, and to profess His truth;" the which also he did, saith mine author; and so did many other martyrs besides.—John Trapp.

Put not Your Trust in Princes.—Shakespeare puts this sentiment into Wolsey's mouth:—

> "O how wretched
> Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favor!
> There is, betwixt that smile we do aspire to,
> That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,
> More pangs and fears than wars and women have:
> And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
> Never to hope again."

[a] "As a fit prelude to these Psalms of praise the Psalmist attunes his own soul to that work of praise in which he summons all creation to join."—Spk. Com.

[b] Ps. xxxiii. 2. xcviii. 5, 6. cxlix. 3.

[c] "His life shall be a thanksgiving unto the power that made him."
—Perowne.

[d] Ps. cvii. 40, cxviii. 9.

A good remark is made as to the authorship of particular psalms: "When we discern in a letter the well-known hand of a friend, we are

5—7. (5) **God of Jacob,** declared in special revelation to Jacob,[e] in general revelation shown as Creator of heaven and earth, etc. **hope,** etc., a striking contrast bet. such a hope, and that in man who so quickly passes away; Je. xvii. 7; Ps. xxxiii. 12. (6) **Which made,** etc., comp. Ac. iv. 24. **keepeth truth,** is faithful. Men easily become of a different mind and do not keep their word: He, however, is the One that keepeth truth, inasmuch as He unchangeably sees to it that His promises are fulfilled.—Delitzsch. To this attribute prominence is given.[f] "From the omnipotence of God the Psalmist passes to His faithfulness, then to His righteousness, and then to His bounteousness and graciousness."—Jennings and Lowe. (7) **looseth,** with prob. reference to release fr. Bab. captivity.[g] Vss. 7—9 picture God's character as a ruler.

The Blessedness of Trusting in God (vs. 5).—How exalted the frame of the Psalmist's mind at the time he penned these words. We shall first —I. Confirm his testimony. 1. However numerous and powerful his enemies, he can never be overcome; 2. However enlarged his expectations he can never be disappointed. II. Commend it to your especial attention. 1. Seek to know the character of Jehovah as here drawn; 2. Seek to obtain an interest in Him as your God; 3. Make use of Him for all the ends for which He has given Himself to you.—Simeon.

Trust in God.—I was once goaded by a poor Irish papist to try it, who told me that if a priest would but give him a drop of holy water, and make a circle with it around a field full of wild beasts, they would not hurt him. I retired, reflecting, what a fool I am that I cannot put such trust in my God as this poor man puts in his priest and a drop of holy water! And I resolved to try what "the name of the God of Jacob" would do, having the Father's fixed decrees, the Son's unalterable responsibility, and the Spirit's invincible grace and operation around me. I tried it and felt my confidence brighten. O brethren, get encircled with covenant engagements, and covenant blood, and covenant grace, and covenant promises, and covenant securities; then will "the Lord hear you in the time of trouble, and the name of the God of Jacob will defend you." —Joseph Irons.

8—10. (8) **openeth,** etc., comp. Is. xlii. 7. Reference may be either to physical helplessness, or spiritual want of discernment.[h] (9) **strangers,** etc. in this vs. three great examples of natural defencelessness are taken, strangers, widow, fatherless.[a] **relieveth,** R. V., "upholdeth," sets upright. **upside down,** Polychr., "leads to ruin." This is done in the wise ordering of Div. Providence. (10) **reign,** or shall be king.

Counting God Out.—A striking illustration of the folly of counting God out of one's plans for life is given in the course of William M. Tweed. Here was a man who sought wealth and power, and who for a time seemed successful in their pursuit. Apparently he did not propose to obey God or to live for a life to come. What he wanted was worldly prosperity. He thought he had it. He went to Congress. He gathered his millions. He controlled the material interests of the metropolis of his country. He openly defied public sentiment and courts of justice in the prosecution of his plans. He was a brilliant and therefore a dangerous example of successful villainy. But the promise of prosperity for the life which now is, is only to the godly. As William M. Tweed lay dying in a prison-house in the city he once ruled, his confession of bitter disappointment was, "My life has been a failure in everything. There is nothing I am proud of." If any young man wants to come to an end like this, the way to it is simple and plain. "The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors." "The way of the wicked he turneth upside down."—S. S. Times.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVENTH.

1—6. (1) This verse might perhaps be better rendered: "Praise ye Jah, for he is good; sing unto our God, for He is lovely; comely is the hymn of praise."—Perowne. **praise is comely,** "sweet and beautiful," Ps. xxxiii. 1. (2) **build up,** as at the return from captivity.[b] **outcasts,** better, exiles: those thrust out. (3) **wounds,** lit. pains. (4) **telleth,**[c] or appor-

not solicitous about the pen with which it was written."—Ker.

[e] "It is a characteristic of these Pss. to proclaim to all nations which worshipped idols, that 'the God of Jacob,' 'the God of Zion,' is the Creator and Governor of all things; and to make an appeal to all nations to turn to Him."—Wordsworth.

[f] "This is, in fact, the central thought of the Psalm. For on this ground beyond all others is God the object of trust. He is true, and His word is truth, and that word He keeps not for a time, but for ever."—Perowne.

[g] Ps. lxviii. 6.

[h] The several works of mercy enumerated in these verses were combined in the personal ministry of our Lord.

[a] Ps. lxviii. 5; Ja. i. 27.

"To trust in fleeting power is madness; to trust in the Eternal King is wisdom and blessedness, and in some sense makes him who trusts a sharer in the eternity of the God in whom is his hope, and from whom is his help."—Exp. B.

"No friendly voice speaks comfort to her soul, nor soft-eyed pity drops a melting tear." —Robert Glynne.

author,— unknown: date.—prob. Maccabaean.

Praise to the Restorer of Jerusalem.

[b] Ps. cxxii. 3.

[c] Is. xl. 26—29.

tioneth a number. This is a proof of His omniscience and omnipotence, and so of His ability to help His people. **by names,**[d] R. V., "He giveth them all their names;" the sign of intimate and familiar knowledge, as of a shepherd over his flock. (5) **is infinite,** or "there is no number;" no numbering of it; is incalculable, i. e. not to be measured by single facts (the sands of thought, to apply cxxxix. 18), or even by the more complete results of human reasoning. Vaster therefore than the stars.—Cheyne; Ps. cxlv. 3. (6) **lifteth up,** setteth up, establisheth. **meek,** i. e. afflicted. Ps. xxii. 26.

The Excellence of Praise to God.—I. The praise of God is excellent in itself. II. The praise of God is excellent in its reasons. 1. His relation to His Church; 2. His relation to His troubled souls; 3. His relation to heavenly hosts; 4. His retributive relation to men.—Hom. Com.

Jerusalem.—
Jerusalem! Jerusalem! the blessing lingers yet
On the city of the chosen, where the Sabbath seal was set;
And though her sons are scattered, and her daughters weep apart,
While desolation, like a pall, weighs down each faithful heart;
As the plain beside the waters, as the cedar on the hills,
She shall rise in strength and beauty when the Lord Jehovah wills:
He has promised her protection, and the holy pledge is good,
'Tis whispered through the olive groves, and murmured by the flood,
As in the Sabbath stillness the Jordan's flow is heard,
And by the Sabbath breezes the hoary trees are stirred.—Mrs. Hale.

7—11. (7) **Sing,** lit. answer, as in the responses of a liturgical service: "answer one another." (8) **upon the mountains,** where man does not plough or sow seeds. (9) **giveth,** etc., as Job xxxviii. 41.[a] **which cry,** when they cry. (10) **of the horse,** with reference to its use in battle: as the strength of Egypt lay in its horses and chariots, this fig. is used generally for "carnal security."[b] **legs of a man,** i. e. his strength and swiftness. (11) **hope in,** wait for His mercy.

The Providence and Pleasure of God.—I. The providence of God. 1. Presiding over the elements; 2. Creating vegetation; 3. Providing for the wants of His creatures. II. The pleasure of God. 1. It is not in those who trust in their own resources; 2. It is in those who reverence and trust Him. III. The praise of God. 1. A response for Divine favors; 2. An expression of gratitude for Divine favors.—Hom. Com.

His Beneficence.—It would be a terrible thing, indeed, for all created beings if almighty power were under the control of malevolence, or even of selfishness. We see what happens when exceptional human power is directed by unscrupulousness; we see what suffering, what desolation is the result. We are so familiar with the thought of God's goodness that we are not much affected by it; but we ought to be profoundly stirred by the truth that omnipotence, exercised everywhere in God's vast domain, through every sphere, is put forth to feed, to clothe, to shelter, to help, to relieve, to brighten, to bless.—Pul. Com.

12—16. (12) **Praise,** here "praise aloud." (13) **strengthened,** the wall was complete, and the gates fixed. Poss. this Ps. was prepared for thanksgiving service on the completion of the work.[c] (14) **peace,** comp. Is. lx. 17. **finest of the wheat,** lit. fat of the wheat:[d] Ps. lxxxi. 16. (15) **runneth,** the word being figuratively treated as if it was a messenger. His commands in the natural world are promptly obeyed. (16) **snow like wool,** snow-flakes like flocks of wool covering the fields.[e]

Snow.—"The snow-flake," as Professor Tyndall strikingly says, "leads back to the sun"—so intimately related are all things to each other in this wonderful universe. It leads further and higher still—even to Him who is our sun and shield, the light and heat of all creation. The whole vast realm of winter, with its strange phenomena, is but the breath of God—the Creative Word—as it were, congealed against the blue transparency of space, like the marvelous frost-work on a window-pane. The Psalmist had not the shadow of a doubt that God formed and sent the annual miracle of snow, as He had formed and sent the daily miracle of manna in the desert. It was a common-place thing; it was a natural, ordinary occurrence; but it had the Divine sign upon it, and it showed forth the glory and goodness of God as strikingly as the most wonder-

[d] Jno. x. 3. "There is no heaven, either in this world, or the world to come, for people who do not praise God. If you do not enter into the spirit and worship of heaven, how should the spirit and joy of heaven enter into you?" — John Pulsford.

It was a fine reply that a pupil of the Deaf and Dumb Institution of Paris made to the following question, put by a gentleman visiting it. "What is eternity?" "It is the lifetime of the Almighty!"

[a] Ps. civ. 27, 28; Lu. xii. 24. The references to Job throughout this Ps. are numerous.

[b] "In all those things to which the God-estranged self-confidence of man so readily clings, God has no delight and no pleasure." —Delitzsch. Ps. xx. 7, xxxiii. 16, 17; Pr. xxi. 31; Ho. i. 7.

"It must be a prospect pleasing to God to see His creation forever beautifying in His eyes, and drawing nearer to Him by greater degrees of resemblance." — Addison.

[c] Neh. vii. 3.

[d] For orig. promise of plenty, see De. xxxii. 13, 14.

[e] "He wraps the earth in snow as in a warm white woolen garment, and scatters the frost so that the trees, etc., appear as if powdered with ashes blown about by the wind."—Jennings and Lowe. "That all Creation must involuntarily praise

ful supernatural event in his nation's history. When God would impress Job with a sense of His power, it was not to some of His miraculous, but to some of His ordinary works that He appealed. And when the Psalmist would praise God for the preservation of Israel and the restoration of Jerusalem—as he does in this Psalm—it is not to the wonderful miraculous events with which the history of Israel abounded that he directs attention, but to the common events of Providence and the ordinary appearances and processes of nature.—Hugh Macmillan.

17—20. (17) **ice,** i. e. hail. **morsels,**[f] Polychr., "crumbs," i. e. in profusion as men feed birds. (18) **melteth them,** the waters frozen by the cold.[g] (19) **his word,** better, words: His lively "oracles." "God's works in nature are for all men; but there is a special privilege belonging to His chosen people." (20) **not dealt so,** De. iv. 7, 32—41.[h]

Electing Grace Inspires the Heart with Praise.—I. God's love has chosen us. Hallelujah. II. God has intrusted us with His truth. Hallelujah. III. God has made us almoners of His bounty. Hallelujah. IV. God through us is to save the world. Hallelujah.—W. B. Haynes.

Winters in Palestine.—The wintry season was sometimes very severe in Judæa and Palestine; usually lasted about six weeks; though sometimes intermingled with casual mitigations. Severe about Jerusalem—having both hail and snow. But when the sky is agitated by those tempestuous winds called Levanters, the cold is so piercing, the conflict so great of hail, ice, snow, and rain, that many of the poor people and their cattle perish. And it is dreadful to be at the mercy of armed bands at those times. An Oriental, describing a defeated army near Ascalon, says: "In haste they threw away their armor and clothes, but soon sunk under the cold, together with want of food, slippery and rugged roads, which were everywhere furrowed and broken up by torrents, that they were taken captives in the woods and on the mountains, and threw themselves into the hands of their enemies rather than perish." How welcome, then, the sudden and unexpected change in the text! "He causeth His wind," etc.—Hom. Com.

f Job xxxvii. 10.

g "Israel in the captivity had been ice-bound, like ships of Arctic voyagers in the Polar Sea; but God sent forth the vernal breeze of His love, and the water flowed, the ice melted, and they were released."
—Wordsworth.

h He. iv. 1, 2.
"Those who know the value of human life know the importance of a year, a day, and even an hour.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHTH.

author,— unknown: date, prob. Maccabaean.

1—6. (1) **from the heavens,** or, O ye of the heavens: including both things and beings. **heights,** the regions lifted up. (2) **angels,** conceived as attending on God in heaven. **hosts,** the heavenly bodies, described in the next verse. (3) **stars of light,** the light of the stars was the chief thing noticed. What the stars really are was, and is still, a mystery. (4) **heavens of heavens,** denoting the boundless depths of the heavens.[a] **waters,** "the storehouses of the rain." From their first to their last page, the Scriptures acknowledge the existence of celestial waters, to which the rain-waters stand related as a finger-post pointing upwards.—Delitzsch; Ge. i. 7. (5) **commanded,** Ps. xxxiii. 6. (6) **decree,** etc., Job xxviii. 26.[b] **pass,** R. V., "pass away." or, better, "wh. they (the celestial bodies and beings) cannot transgress."

All creatures called to praise God.

a De. x. 14; 1 Ki. viii. 27.

b "God has engraven a law on all His works in nature wh. regulates their mutual relations, and none of them transgresses it." — Spk. Com.

God's Praise in the Heavens.—I. The praises of God by heavenly beings. 1. Voluntary; 2. Constant; 3. Thorough. II. The praise of God by heavenly bodies. Because—1. Created by Him; 2. Sustained by Him; 3. Governed by Him. III. The interest of godly men in God's praise in the heavens.—Hom. Com.

"A line of praises is worth a leaf of prayer; and an hour of praises is worth a day of fasting and mourning."
—J. Livingston.

Music.—Music has been called the speech of angels. I will go further and call it the speech of God Himself. Without words it is wonderful—blessed—one of God's best gifts to men. But in singing you have both the wonders together, music and words. Why is there music in heaven? Because in music there is no self-will. It goes on certain laws and rules which man did not make, but has only found out. Some of us may not be able to make music with our voices; but we can make it with our hearts, and join in the angels' song this day, if not with our lips, yet in our lives. Christmas has always been a day of songs, of carols, and of hymns; and so let it be for ever. For on Christmas Day, most of all days (if I may talk of eternal things according to the laws of time) was

"God the Supreme was depicted by the ancients holding in his hand a wreath of stars, to show the double conception, that they both obey and adorn him."

manifested on earth the everlasting music which was in heaven.—Charles Kingsley.

7—10. (7) The call to praise Jehovah now turns to the earth, as the second great division of created things. **dragons,** general term for any large water-animals.[a] **all deeps,** contents of deep places, or seas. (8) **Fire,** i. e. lightning. "Refers perhaps to the sublime storms in mountain regions, in which the lightning seems like falling masses of fire, and the clouds around the summits like the smoke of a burning mountain."—Cheyne. **vapours,** fogs and mists. **stormy wind,** "all these natural phenomena are messengers and servants of God;" Ps. cvii. 25. (9) **fruitful trees,** i. e. fruit trees, as distinguished from forest trees. **cedars,** the king, and type of forest trees. (10) **flying fowl,** Heb. birds of wing.

Stormy Winds.—Cannon Liddon preached in St. Paul's on Sunday afternoon, December 23, 1883, and took for his text Ps. cxlviii. 8, "Stormy wind fulfilling His word." He spoke of the Divine use of destructive forces. I. In the physical world we see wind and storm fulfilling God's word. 1. The Bible occasionally lifts the veil, and shows us how destructive forces of Nature have been the servants of God. 2. Modern history illustrates this vividly. II. In the human, spiritual, and moral world, we find new and rich application of the words of the text. 1. In the State we see the storm of invasion and the storm of revolution fulfilling God's word. 2. In the Church we see the storm of persecution and the storm of controversy fulfilling God's word. 3. In the experience of individual life we see outward troubles, and inward storms of religious doubts fulfilling God's word.—The Contemp. Pulpit.

11—14. (11) **Kings,** etc., beginning with the noblest and gathering up all classes. (13) **excellent,** R. V., "exalted." (14) **horn,** the sign of dignity, prosperity, and pre-eminence. **near unto him,** so the subject of gracious and peculiar interest. De. iv. 7.

A People Near to God (vs. 14).—They are near to Him—I, Because they are reconciled to Him by faith in Christ. II. Because they live in habitual communion with Him. III. Because they seek conformity to Him. IV. Because they enjoy His protection. V. Because they shall be with Him for ever.—G. Brooks.

Music.—On Thursday evening, March 29th, 1883, for above an hour all who had occasion to use the telephone in Chicago found it vibrating to musical tones. Private and public telephones, and even the police and fire-alarm instruments, were alike affected. The source of the music was a mystery until the following day, when it was learned that a telegraph wire, which passes near most of the telephone wires, was connected with the harmonic system, that tunes were being played over it, and that the telephone wires took up the sounds by induction. If one wire carrying sweet sounds from place to place could so affect another wire by simply being near it, how ought Christians in communication with their Father in heaven, to affect all with whom they come in contact in the world! The Divine music of love and gentleness in their lives should be a blessing to society.—The Pulpit Treasury. Influence of Joy.—There are souls in the world who have the gift of finding joy everywhere, and of leaving it behind them when they go. Joy gushes from under their fingers like jets of light. Their influence is an inevitable gladdening of the heart. It seems as if a shadow of God's own gift had passed upon them. They give light without meaning to shine. These bright hearts have a great work to do for God.—Faber.

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINTH.

1—4. (1) **new song,** "as expressive of all the new hopes and joys of a new era, a new spring of the nation, a new youth of the Church bursting forth into a new life."—Perowne; comp. Ps. xxxiii. 3. (2) **made him,** constituted him a people. **their king,** i. e. Jehovah whether a Davidic king occupied the throne as his representative or not. (3) **in the dance,** or with the pipe. **timbrel,** Ex. xv. 20. (4) **beautify,** or make glorious. **meek,** prob. here, the afflicted or oppressed; Polychr., "He adorns the wretched with victory."

"The ancients thought there was an ethereal and lofty ocean in which the worlds floated like ships in a sea." — Thomas Le Blanc.

a "Sea monsters, mentioned first because at the bottom of the scale in creation."
—Perowne.

Ps. lxxiv. 13.

"What voices have the hills! How solemn the sounds of the mountains from their sublime solitudes! The mountains thunder, and the hills re-echo; but they speak peace and send down plenty to the vales in running rivulets." —Thomas Le Blanc.

A poor man who had been a follower of Jesus about twelve months thus spoke of the advantage he had derived from religion since he had embraced it; "This year I have had a good crop on my little piece of land; I have got a fat pig in my sty, and some money in my pocket; last year this time I had nothing; the whole went to the public-house. I know religion is a good thing for body as well as soul."

author,— unknown: date, prob. Maccabaean.

Subject, zeal for the cause of Jehovah.

"Praise is the rent we owe to God; and the larger the farm, the greater the rent."—Bowes.

"Meekness not only gives great peace of mind, but often adds a lustre to the countenance. We

The Lord's Pleasure in His People (vs. 4).—I. The people. 1. Have a special relation to God; 2. Are regenerated and sanctified by His spirit; 3. Conformed to His image; 4. Zealous for His glory. II. The pleasure God has in them. 1. In their persons; 2. Their welfare; 3. Their services; 4. Their graces; 5. Their fellowship.—G. Brooks.

Cheerfulness.—Give us, oh, give us the man who sings at his work! Be his occupation what it may, he is equal to any of those who follow the same pursuit in silent sullenness. He will do more in the same time—he will do it better—he will persevere longer. One is scarcely sensible of fatigue whilst he marches to music. The very stars are said to make harmony as they revolve in their spheres. Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness, altogether past calculation its powers of endurance. Efforts to be permanently useful must be uniformly joyous—a spiritual sunshine—graceful from very gladness—beautiful because bright.—Thomas Carlyle.

5—9. (5) **joyful in glory,** i. e. in the glory or beauty wh. God confers upon them. **upon their beds,** the place for soliloquy;[b] "where before, in the loneliness of night, they consumed themselves with grief for their shame." (6) **sword,** see Ne. iv. 17, 18. "A revival of the old military spirit of the nation." (7) **heathen,** R. V., "nations." (8) **bind,** etc., the reference is prob. rather prophetical, applying to the moral subduing of the nations under the power of the Gospel, than having regard to further national conquests. **the judgment written,** prob. ref. to the "judgment of extermination pronounced against the old inhabitants of Canaan." **this honour,** better, He, Jehovah, is an honor to all His saints.[c] He is the glorious object of their praise.

Saintly Joy.—I. The state to which God has lifted the saints: "glory," in contrast with sin, reproach, affliction. II. The emotion which accordingly befits the saints: "be joyful." III. The utterance of that emotion incumbent on the saints: "sing aloud."—C. A. Davis.

b Ho. vii. 14.

c Or it may mean, this honor, the work of subjecting heathen nations.

"Here joy enters into us, there we enter into joy; the joys we have here are from heaven; the joys that we shall have with Christ are without measure and without mixture."—T. Watson.

"Those who have been adorned with Jehovah's salvation have the subjugation of the world to God's rule committed to them."

PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH.

author, etc.,—as prev. three Psalms.

1, 2. (1) **sanctuary,** where those that love Him are met together. **firmament,** etc., the heavens, where His might and majesty are displayed. (2) **for .. acts,** in the recital of such acts as the Exodus, restoration from Bab., etc. **excellent greatness,** the abundance of His greatness.

The general Hallelujah of animated creation.

Hallelujah!—Mr. John Janeway, on his death-bed, said, "Come, help me with praises, all is too little: come, help me, O ye glorious and mighty angels, who are so well skilled in this heavenly work of praise. Praise Him, all ye creatures upon the earth; let everything that hath being help me to praise Him. Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah! Praise is now my work, and I shall be engaged in that sweet employment for ever."—Whitecross.

3—6. (3) **trumpet,** cornet. (4) **timbrel,** tambourine. **organs,** or "pipes." (5) **cymbals,** instruments which they clanged together. **high sounding,** Polychr., "crashing." (6) **everything,** lit. all the breath: the entirety of animate creatures.

"It is a great deal better to be a joyful Christian than a happy Christian, because the happiness of a happy Christian depends upon what happens to him, but joy does not depend upon what happens to us, or upon our surroundings."—Chapman.

The Duty of Praising God (vs. 6).—Be it known—I. That God deserves all imaginable praise from His creatures. II. There is not a thing that breathes which has not abundant reason to praise Him. 1. Those who are yet in heathen darkness; 2. Those who enjoy the light of revelation; 3. Those who are brought to saving knowledge of Christ. III. The more we abound in this blessed exercise the more exalted will our happiness be.—Simeon.

"Praise ye the Lord."—Praise God with a strong faith; praise him with holy love and delight; praise him with an entire confidence in Christ; praise him with a believing triumph over the powers of darkness; praise him with an earnest desire towards him, and a full satisfaction in him; praise him by a universal respect to all his commands; praise him by a cheerful submission to all his disposals; praise him by rejoicing in his love, and solacing yourselves in his great goodness; praise him by promoting the interests of the kingdom of his grace; praise him by a lively hope and expectation of the kingdom of his glory.—Matthew Henry.

"While others call the wondrous Lord by partial names that utter some one side of his wondrousness, to us he has but one name—Saviour. He is that and that alone, and all besides only as it is wrapped up in that." — Phillips Brooks.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

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Introduction.

The Book of Proverbs is evidently not the work of a single author. According to the book itself certain verses (xxiv. 23–34) are the "sayings of the wise." Ch. xxx. is ascribed to Agur and ch. xxxi. to King Lemuel. Study of the language and style of the different portions of the book and of the social conditions reflected in them has led most scholars to the opinion that it was compiled long after Solomon's day, and that some unnamed author had much to do with putting it into its present form. "The opening words, then, of the book — 'The Proverbs of Solomon the son of David, King of Israel' — are not to be taken as an assertion that all which follows flowed from Solomon's pen, but rather as a general description and keynote of the subject of the treatise.

"The main body of Proverbs is the collection which begins at chap. x., 'The Proverbs of Solomon,' and ends at xxii. 16. This collection has certain distinct features which mark it off from all that precedes and from all that follows. It is, strictly speaking, a collection of proverbs, that is of brief, pointed sayings,— sometimes containing a similitude, but more generally consisting of a single antithetical moral sentiment,— such as spring into existence and pass current in every society of men. As the form is the same in all, so the general drift of their teaching is quite uniform; the morality inculcated is of no very lofty type; the motives for right conduct are mainly prudential: 'Be good, and you will prosper; be wicked, and you will suffer," is the sum of the whole. A few scattered precepts occur which seem to touch a higher level and to breathe a more spiritual air." We see in these chapters the reflection of a period of "comparative simplicity and purity, when the main industry was that of tilling the soil, when the family life was pure, and when the king was still worthy of respect. The whole collection seems to date from the earlier and happier times of the monarchy.

"To this collection is added an appendix (xxii. 17–xxiv. 22), which opens with an exhortation addressed by the teacher to his pupil." The sayings indicate a time of growing luxury, when the poor are oppressed. Another brief appendix follows (xxiv. 23–34) and then "we pass on to an entirely new collection, ch. xxv.–xxix., which was made, we are told, in the literary circle at the court of Hezekiah, two hundred and fifty years or thereabouts after the time of Solomon. In this collection there is no uniformity of structure such as distinguished the proverbs of the first collection. The social condition reflected in these chapters is not very attractive; it is clear that the people have had experience of a bad ruler (xxix. 2); we seem to have hints of the many troubled experiences through which the monarchy of Israel passed — the divided rule, the injustice, the incapacity, the oppression (xxviii. 2, 3, 12, 15, 16, 28).

"The book closes with three quite distinct passages, which can only be regarded as appendices (xxx.; xxxi. 1–9; xxxi. 10–31). It is impossible to say when or how these curious and interesting additions were made to our book, but scholars have generally regarded them as the product of the exile, if not the post-exile period. Now the two collections, which have been described, with their several appendices, were at some favorable point in religious history, possibly in those happy days of Josiah when the Deuteronomic Law was newly

promulgated to the joyful nation, brought together, and, as we should say now, edited, with an original introduction by an author who, unknown to us by name, is among the greatest and noblest of Biblical writers. The first nine chapters of the book, which form the introduction to the whole, strike a far higher note, appeal to nobler conceptions, and are couched in a much loftier style than the book itself. The writer bases his moral teaching on Divine authority rather than on the utilitarian basis which prevails in most of the proverbs. Writing in a time when the temptations to a lawless and sensual life were strong, appealing to the wealthier and more cultured youth of the nation, he proceeds in sweet and earnest discourse to woo his readers from the paths of vice into the Temple of Wisdom and Virtue. In the wonderful passage which introduces Wisdom appealing to the sons of men, on the ground of the part which she plays in the Creation and by the throne of God, we recognize the voice of a prophet — a prophet, too, who holds one of the highest places in the line of those who foretold the coming of our Lord." — *Expositor's Bible.*

Synopsis.

(*According to Angus.*)

Part I. — A connected discourse on the value and attainment of true wisdom.....i.–ix.

Part II. — Proverbs, strictly so called, expressed with much force and simplicity....x.–xxii. 16.

Part III. — Contains several renewed admonitions on the study of wisdom.....xxii. 17–xxiv.

Part IV. — Proverbs selected by the men of Hezekiah; by those, that is, whom he employed to restore the service of the Jewish Church.....xxv.–xxix.

Part V. — The wise instructions of Agur to his pupils Ithiel and Ucal, and lessons addressed to Lemuel by his mother, chiefly enigmatical....xxx.–xxxi. 9.
A picture of female excellence, xxxi. 9–31.

(*According to Horne.*)

Part I. — The proem or exordium.....i.–ix.

Part II. — For the use of persons who have advanced from youth to manhood.....x.–xxii. 16.

Part III. — Principally relating to rich men and nobles; a miscellaneous collection.....xxii. 17–xxiv.

Part IV. — A posthumous appendix, xxv.–xxxi.

(*According to Litton.*)

Part I. — An exhortation to wisdom..i.–ix.

Part II. — Disconnected moral maxims, x.–xxii. 17.

Part III. — Observations on wisdom, xxii. 17–xxiv.

Part IV. — Separate maxims....xxv.–xxix.

Part V. — The supplement.....xxx.–xxxi.

(*According to Zöckler.*)

Part I. — Introductory.

1. Group of admonitory discourses, i. 8–iii. 35.
2. Group of admonitory discourses, iv. 1–vii. 27.
3. Group of admonitory discourses, viii. 1–ix. 18.

Part II. — Original Nucleus of the Collection. Genuine Proverbs of Solomon.

1. Difference between the pious and ungodly.....x.–xv.
2. Exhortations to obedience, *etc.*, xvi.–xxii.

Part III. — Additions Made Before Hezekiah's Day to the genuine Proverbs of Solomon, which form the nucleus of the collection.

1. Addition.....xxii. 17–xxiv. 22.
2. Addition.....xxiv. 23, 24.

Part IV. — Gleanings By the Men of Hezekiah.

1. Admonition to the fear of God, *etc.*, xxv.

Various warnings.....xxvi.–xxix.

Part V. — The Supplements.

1. Words of Agur.....xxx.
2. Words of Lemuel, *etc.*.....xxxi.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1—4. (1) **proverbs,** root of *Heb.* word sigs. either to *rule* or *to resemble:* so of these Provs. some are maxims, and others parables; and not proverbs in merely the current and popular sense. **Solomon,**[a] though he did not compose all, was the dominant spirit among the wise men of his age, some of whose sayings are here incorporated with his own. **king . . Israel,** this describes Solomon. (2) **know**[b], become acquainted with. **wisdom,** an appreciation of what God requires of us, and what we conversely owe to God: this, in its widest sense, the truest wisdom. **instruction,** admonition; moral training and discipline. **perceive,** discern, spiritual insight. (3) **receive,** into the heart as principles of holy living. **the . . wisdom,** *R. V.*, "wise dealing." **justice,** *R. V.*, "righteousness," or right walking in relation to God. **judgment,** justice. **equity,** what is right and reasonable towards man: integrity. (4) **subtilty,** *R. V., marg.* "prudence;" skilfulness in discriminating betw. truth and error, right and wrong. **simple,** open, *i. e.* to external impressions, hence easily misled. **to . . man,** this bk. pre-eminently one for youth.

A great teacher and true learner (*vss.* 1–6). — In these six verses we have—I. A great teacher. 1. His history, the son of a great man, the king of a great people; 2. His lessons, their form; 3. His design, mental and moral culture. II. A true learner. 1. A wise man; 2. Attentive; 3. Improving.— *Thomas.*

Proverbs. — One of the missionaries was working up into practical use a large collection of national proverbs gathered during many years of extended travel, and I subjoin a few, which especially struck me, either by their quaint force or their resemblance to our own wise saws. For instance, the well-known warning not to look a gift horse in the mouth, has its equivalent in Badaga, one of the Indian tongues, "If any one offers you a buffalo, do not ask if she gives milk;" and the Malayali rendering of "A burnt child dreads the fire," is identical with the corresponding French proverb, "A scalded cat fears cold water," while the Hindu version is very picturesque and characteristic, "He whose father was killed by a bear is afraid of a black stump." Again, we say, "If you send an ass on its travels it will not come back a horse," which in Tamil runs, "You may decorate an ass, but that will not make it a horse;" and another dialect expresses nearly the same idea by the sententious adage, "A donkey may grow, but he will never be an elephant." The European proverbs that "No man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*," and that 'Familiarity breeds contempt," are tersely and picturesquely combined in the Tamil adage, "The temple cat does not fear the idol." The Malayalis reprove a boaster who glories over the unfortunate, with the pithy remark. "Any one can leap a fallen tree;" and their proverb, "Running up and down the boat does not bring one sooner to land," is a keen rebuke to those who chafe and fret under circumstances of forced inaction; while the sacred warning not to cast pearls before swine is aptly paraphrased by the question, "What is the use of reading the Vedas to a wild buffalo?" A few more Tamil sayings seem well worthy of notice. "The tears of the oppressed are sharp swords," reads like a sentence from the Proverbs of Solomon; and "The flower out of reach is dedicated to God," is surely a most graceful statement of the futility of day dreams of service and sacrifice in the pathless future. "The ant, measured by its own hand, is eight spans long," expresses with superior elegance and force the gist of more than one English proverb; and "A black cow may give white milk," is an adage admirable for terseness and point, even if doubtful in morality. There is much shrewdness in the Servian proverbs, "Speak the truth, but come away quickly after," and "When an old dog barks, then see what the matter is;" and volumes of truth and beauty are summed up in the simple saying, "The sun goes over unclean places, but is not defiled." Of how many bright and holy lives spent in labor among vice and misery might this proverb be taken as the fittest motto! Russian proverbs present a remarkable combination of sound common sense, deep religious feeling, and pithy, almost coarse expression. A few taken almost at random will illustrate all three. "Measure your cloth ten times, for you can only cut it once." "A fool can cast a stone into the sea, but a hundred wise men cannot get it out." "If you knew where you would fall, you could put down straw." "Pray to God, but row towards shore." "With God go over the sea; without God cross not the threshold." "A mother's prayer saves from the depths of the sea." "Fear not the rich man's frowns; fear the

a 1 Ki. iii. 12; iv. 29, 32; Ecc. xii. 9, 10.

"Proverbs can be handed from one to another like coins. A truth that is worth uttering is worth remembering." — *Pul. Com.*

b Ps. cxix. 98–100; 2 Ti. iii. 15–17; 1 Th. v. 21; Ps. xvii. 4.

"The Bible is not given to teach us philosophy, but religion; not to show us the way to science, but the way to holiness and heaven. Notwithstanding, therefore, the extent and variety of Solomon's knowledge in botany, in natural history, and other departments of science, we have in preservation none whatever of his discoveries or his speculations on such subjects." — *Wardlaw.*

Proverbs: "The wit of one man, and the wisdom of many." — *Earl Russell.* "Remnants which, on account of their shortness and correctness, have been saved out of the wreck and ruins of ancient philosophy." — *Aristotle.* "Short sentences, into which, as in rules, the ancients have compressed life." —*Agricola,* "Well-known and well-used dicta, framed in a somewhat out-of-the-way form or fashion."—*Erasmus.* "Edge tools of speech, which cut and penetrate the knots of business and affairs." —*Bacon.*

"How much more doth it concern us to be hearers ere we offer to be teachers of others. He gathers that hears, he spends that teacheth. If

we spend before we gather we shall soon prove bankrupts."—*Bp. Hall.*

a Ma. xiii. 11, 16; Jo. ii. 22; Ac. viii. 27–39; Ac. xiii. 7; 1 Co. iii. 6.

b Ph. iii. 12; Pr. ix. 9; Ex. xviii. 17–24; 1 Co. iii. 18.

c Ps. cxix. 18, 33, 34; 1 Co. ii. 9, 10; He. xiii. 9.

d Lit. helmsmanship, fr. root = cord, *i. e.* rope of a rudder.

"Dark sayings are often like roots, which lie a long time in the earth before their juices begin to move and their inner life seeks to express itself in stem, and leaf, and blossom, and fruit."—*Peop. Bib.*

holiness the right path to knowledge

e Job xxviii. 28; Ps. cxl. 10; Ecc. xii. 13; He. xii. 28, 29.

f Ge. iv. 6–8; 1 Sa. ii. 12; 1 Ki. xii. 13.

g Ps. xxxvi. 1; Je. viii. 9.

"It is to be noted that 'the fear of the Lord' is only indicated as 'the beginning of wisdom.' A further education is needed, and is provided for by the increasing fullness and graciousness of Christian revelation." — *People's Bib.*

"It hardly entered into the mind of a Hebrew thinker to conceive that 'fear of the Lord' might pass into full, wholehearted, and perfect love. And yet it may be shown that this was the change effected when Christ was of God 'made unto us Wisdom;' it is not that the 'fear,' or reverence, be-

beggar's tears." "Love me when I am black, when I am white every one will love me." "We cannot go to church for the mud, but we may get to the tavern." "No need to plant fools, they grow of themselves." — *Overland, Inland and Upland.*

5, 6. (5) **wise . . hear,**[a] *R. V.*, "That the wise man may;" *i. e.* increase yet more his wisdom. **and . . learning,**[b] that wh. one receives fr. a teacher: doctrine, knowl. **and . . understanding,**[c] *i. e.* he who has widened his knowledge by exercising discernment. **shall . . counsels,**[d] *i. e.* may learn the art, and attain the power of ruling. (6) **understand,** *etc.*, "the climax of the definition of wisdom." — *Stanley.* **interpretation,** *R. V.*, "a figure;" a riddle, knotty saying wh. calls for interpretation. **dark sayings,** enigmas.

Proverbs (*vs.* 6).—I. Abundant in all languages. II. As a rule spring from the people. III. Marked by great diversity of form. IV. Since so popular, natural that the Spirit should use them. V. Those of this book all grave and good. — *Arnot.*

Proverbs. — Hear the Hindu: he, too, has his book of proverbs. He says, "The sugar-cane is sweeter knot after knot." What a Bible upon the development of character is there! "The sugar-cane is sweeter knot after knot:" the further it grows, the more it grows; the more perfectly it is developed, the sweeter it becomes. It needs no great sagacity to see the practical applications of so beautiful a fact in nature. The one application that may be fixed upon is this, that men as they grow older should grow sweeter. If we are growing bitterer as we grow older I know not who planted us; God can hardly be held responsible for such an irony; but if we are growing sweeter, gentler, purer, fuller of the love that would redeem the world, God is in us of a truth; whether we belong to any sect or no sect, we belong to God. — *Peop. Bib.*

7. fear . . Lord,[e] "the temper of mind wh. must be possessed by him who means to be profited." — *Stuart.* Reverential awe. **is . . knowledge,** the first and *chief* thing, in all true knowledge: without this holy fear no man can be wise. **fools,**[f] the hardened, the stupid, sinners who reject God's rule. **despise,**[g] as men puffed up with conceit. **wisdom,** piety, as the right rule of life, and end of study. **instruction,** of age, holiness, experience, as herein proffered.

The root of knowledge (*vs.* 7). — I. Show the advantage of knowledge, even of worldly knowledge; especially of the higher knowledge, of the way of salvation. II. Show that the first step in this higher knowledge is the fear of the Lord. He who fears God will study the best things, and study them well.

Two hard students. — In the early part of the reign of King William III., the University of Edinburgh had at the same time, two bright ornaments, Dr. Rule, M. D., and Mr. Campbell, Professor of Divinity. Dr. Rule was also an acceptable and tried minister. The lodging-rooms of these two eminent men stood so that the windows were opposite to each other, though at some distance. Dr. Rule used to sit up late at his studies, and it was Professor Campbell's custom to rise very early in the morning; so that many times the doctor's candle would not be put out by the time Mr. Campbell's was lighted. The one, their friends used to call the evening star; and the other, the morning star. They lived together in great love, and a most intimate friendship subsisted between them till death. The doctor died but a little time before Mr. Campbell. When the tidings came to Mr. Campbell that the doctor was departed, he was deeply impressed. He presently recovered himself, and said, "that the evening star was gone down, and the morning star would soon disappear." — *R. T. S.* — *The fear of the Lord.* — There are two kinds of fear; one full of suspicious watchfulness, of anxious apprehension, of trepidation, terror and dismay; the other such as can dwell in the same heart with confidence and love, and is but another form of reverence. Filial fear of God is a duty; slavish and servile dread of Him is a sin. Filial fear shrinks from sin, servile fear only from the smart of punishment. Filial fear keeps men from departing from the living God; servile fear drives them from Him, even as it impelled our first parents to hide themselves among the trees when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden. By filial fear men are made like the Man Christ Jesus, upon whom rested "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;" by servile fear they may be scared from

iniquity, as the wolf from the sheepfold by the shepherd's gun, but it does no more to make them holy than the fright does to destroy the wolf's ferocity. Filial fear animates us to avoid whatever would be offensive to our Heavenly Father, and, if the expression may be allowed, to consult His feelings and desires; but servile fear, as it springs from selfishness, causes us only to care for ourselves and at best makes us not better, but only a little more prudent than the devil. — *R. A. Bertram.*

8, 9. (8) **son,**[a] the reader is addressed with parental kindness and authority. **instruction,** disciplinary education. **father,**[b] obedience to a father the finest model of subordination in patriarchal times. **forsake,** reject or neglect as puerile. **law,** *R. V., marg.* "teaching." (9) **they,** being obeyed. **ornament,** garland, *R. V.*, "chaplet." **grace,** gracefulness: *i. e.* a beautiful adornment. **and . . neck,** emblem of authority gained by learning and obedience; "insignia of office and honor were usually displayed by some conspicuous ornament on the neck." — *Stuart.*

Filial love a blossom of beauty (*vs.* 9). — I. God the Author of the family constitution. II. Intended the parent to rule in the world of home. III. The moral beauty of children found in obedience to these Divinely appointed home-rulers.

My mother's Bible. — On one of the shelves in my library, surrounded by volumes of all kinds, on various subjects and in various languages, stands an old book, in its plain covering of brown paper, unprepossessing to the eye, and apparently out of place among the more pretentious volumes that stand by its side. To the eye of a stranger it has certainly neither beauty nor comeliness. Its covers are worn; its leaves marred by long use; its pages, once white, have become yellow with age; yet, old and worn as it is, to me it is the most beautiful and most valuable book on my shelves. No other awakens such associations, or so appeals to all that is best and noblest within me. It is, or rather it *was*, my mother's Bible — companion of her best and holiest hours, source of her unspeakable joy and consolation. From it she derived the principles of a truly Christian life and character. It was the light to her feet and the lamp to her path. It was constantly by her side; and, as her steps tottered in the advancing pilgrimage of life, and her eyes grew dim with age, more and more precious to her became the well-worn pages. One morning, just as the stars were fading into the dawn of the coming Sabbath, the aged pilgrim passed on beyond the stars and beyond the morning, and entered into the rest of the eternal Sabbath — to look upon the face of Him of whom the law and the prophets had spoken, and whom not having seen she had loved. And now no legacy is to me more precious than that old Bible. Years have passed; but it stands there on its shelf, eloquent as ever, witness of a beautiful life that is finished, and a silent monitor to the living. — *Haven.*

10. sinners, ungodly in general: but esp. habitual and abandoned sinners. **entice,**[c] make repeated attempts at persuasion. **consent . . not,**[d] afford thou no entrance. Open not thy heart to their friendship, nor thy mind to their plausible suggestions. This and the following *vss.* indicate a state of society in wh. civil authority was weak and bands of robbers committed deeds of violence.

A father's warning (*vs.* 10). — I. The enticers of youth. 1. From within; 2. From without. II. The enticements. 1. Pleasant; 2. Alluring; 3. Deceitful; 4. Dangerous. III. The prescription. 1. Blunt refusal; 2. Obstinate resistance. — *Wythe.*

A child tempted to disobedience. — A boy was once tempted by his companions to pluck some ripe cherries from a tree which his father had forbidden him to touch. "You need not be afraid," said they, "for if your father should find out that you had taken them, he is so kind, that he would not hurt you." "For that very reason," replied the boy, "I ought not to touch them; for though my father may not hurt me, my disobedience would hurt my father." — *One false step.* — A boy who was a scholar in one of the Sunday schools in Leeds was on his way to school, when he was accosted by some others, who invited him to join them in a walk. At first he refused, then vacillated, then consented. They sauntered into the principal street of the town; then into a yard, climbed upon a wall, and found themselves within reach of the window of a warehouse, which, on trial, they found unfastened. Without reflecting

observe parental instruction

a Ge. xxii. 9; He. xi. 23; 1 Sa. i. 28; 1 K. iv. 29, 30.

b Ep. vi. 2; Co. iii. 20.

"As letters graven in the body of a tree, they grow up with the tree, and the fruit of the tree grows up with the tree, and therefore the twigs break not with the greatness of the weight of it; because they grow up together." — *Gibbs.*

"Be very vigilant over thy child. While he is a tender twig, straighten him: whilst he is a new vessel, season him: such as thou makest him, such commonly shalt thou find him. Let his first lesson be obedience, and his second shall be what thou wilt. Give him education in good letters, to the utmost of thy ability and his capacity. Season his youth with the love of his Creator, and make the fear of his God the beginning of his knowledge." — *Quarles.*

c Ge. iii. 6; 1 K. xiii. 15-19, 24; 1 K. xxii. 4; 2 Ch. xxiv. 17, 18; Ga. i. 6, 7; iii. 1.

d Ge. xxxix. 9, 10; 1 K. xxii. 13, 14; ii. 9, 10; Ac. viii. 18, 20; Ma. vi. 3-10.

"We can best keep out sin, not by bare expulsion of the spirit of evil, leaving the soul empty, swept, and garnished, and therefore ready for the advent of worse sins, but by filling our thoughts and affections with pure and worthy objects, by overcoming evil with good." — *Peop. Bib.*

"It is of vast moment to be 'just

right' when starting. At Preston, at Malines, at many such places, the railway lines go gently asunder; so fine is the angle that at first the paths are almost parallel, and it seems of small moment which you select. But a little further on one of them turns a corner, or drives into a tunnel, and now that the speed is full the angle opens up, and at the rate of a mile a minute the divided convoy flies asunder."—*J. Hamilton.*

on the consequences, some of them opened the window and got in, leaving the Sunday scholar to keep watch on the wall. They ransacked the place until they came to a desk, which by some means they opened, and abstracted a sum of money. This they divided, giving to their companion a share of it. Unknown to them, their motions had been observed, and their object suspected; and very quickly the police had them all in safe custody.

Enticing sins.—There is said to have been kept in the halls of the Inquisition a beauteous statue of a virgin; the painter's tenderest strokes of art had been expended to give loveliness to the face, and the sculptor's utmost skill had been enlisted to add charm to charm in the rounded molding of form and limb. The white arms were undraped and extended wide, as though to embrace; the eye and lip, and the whole attitude were full of winning invitation; and the professing penitent was led into this fair presence, and commanded to advance and embrace the figure. As soon as he drew near to meet that bending neck and stooping smile, the fair white arms encircled him, not with the caress of love, but with the vice-like clutch of vengeance and the bosom opened, and the lips expanded, and a hundred gleaming knives shot from the virgin figure, transfixing the victim with a hundred scarlet stabs; the parted lips pushed forth a barbed tongue, and showed fanged teeth to lacerate and tear—in short, the beauty was transformed into a beast, the fairy form became an armory of poignards whose every charm concealed a dagger, and whose every grace was death. And so it is with sin.—*Mursell.*

a "*Comp.* mocking question of the tempter concerning Job (i. 9). "Doth Job fear God for nought?" "Sinners are essentially hypocrites. They dare not show their true characters to their fellow-men. Were they to do so, instead of enjoying social fellowship and patronage, they would be shunned as monsters. Hence they always work under mask, and love the dark."—*David Thomas.*

11—14. (11) **If . . say,** if, for example, their enticement take this form. **Come,** become one of our fraternity. **let . . blood,** *i. e.* bloodshed, murder. **for . . cause,**[a] not offering the excuse of even private revenge: "innocence is fruitless, as to exempting fr. the attack of such assassins."—*Stuart.* (12) **Let us,** *etc.*, the sudden and effective destruction of the victims, as if the earth were to gape open and destroy men alive. **grave,** *R. V.*, "sheol." **whole,** *i. e.* in the fulness of their strength. (13) **We . . substance,** enticement to crime through profit: many riches are to be obtained. **we . . spoil,** *i. e.* booty, prey. (14) **Cast . . us,** "you shall equally with others cast lots for your share of the booty."—*Delitzsch.*

The tempter.—He is always existing in every state of society, and not hard to find. There are human beings who have come to adopt evil as a trade, and, not content with practising it themselves, must have help and sympathy in their work, and turn recruiting-sergeants for the devil. The beautiful laws of our being assert themselves amidst all the perversion of depraved choice. Crime, like sorrow, is lonely, and craves partnership. Remorse would soothe itself by fixing the like sting in the bosoms of others. And the criminal, constantly on his defence against society, learns to acquire an allurement of manner which is not the least of his dangerous qualities. The warning to youth against "enticing sinners" of both sexes can never be obsolete. Beware of persons of "peculiarly fascinating manners." What is it that fascinates? Generally it will be found to be some species of flattery, overt or concealed, attacking the weak point of the tempted ones. The warning may be so far generalized into "Beware of the flatterer." Flattery is at the bottom of most temptation.—*E. Johnson.*

b "The devil doth not know the hearts of men, but he may feel their pulse, know their temper, and so accordingly can apply himself that way the tide of a man's constitution runs, that way the wind of temptation blows. Satan tempts the ambitious man with a crown, the sanguine man with beauty, the covetous man with a wedge of gold."—*An Old Writer.*

c Isa. lix. 7; Ro. iii. 15.

> Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
> In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side;
> Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
> Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,
> And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light.
>
> —*Lowell.*

15, 16. (15) **walk not,** *comp.* Ps. i. 1. **refrain,** "resist the very first solicitations to evil."—*Pul. Com.* **path,**[b] the beaten byway not so public as the highway. (16) **run,** the sign of their eagerness. **evil,** of all sorts, wh. in the end is sure to become evil unto themselves. **shed blood,**[c] see *vs.* 11, and *comp. vs.* 18.

Evil companionship.—Mr. Jay gives, in his *Reminiscences*, the following mournful account of a young man, the only son of his predecessor at Bath. He had good abilities, and seemed much inclined to become truly religious; but he "became acquainted with some sceptical or as, by a patent of their own, they call themselves, free-thinking young men; gave up the house of God and the Sabbath. Swimming on a Sunday, for amusement and experi-

ment, he caught a chill, which brought on consumption. This for months gave him warning, and space for repentance; but it is to be feared this grace of God was in vain. During his gradual decline he refused all intercourse with pious friends or ministers, and when his good nurse entreated him to call me in, as I lived close by, and there had been such an intimacy between us, he frowned and rebuked her, and ordered her to mind her own business. On the last day of his life, unasked, I ventured into his dying chamber. He was sensible, but exclaimed, 'O Voltaire! Voltaire!' He then raised himself up in the bed, and, wringing his hands, again exclaimed, 'O that young man!' I said, 'My dear sir, what young man?' With a countenance indescribable he answered, 'I will not tell you.' What have I seen in a long ministry of the dire effects of evil associates and licentious publications!"

"Those are marked for ruin that are deaf to reproof and good counsel."

"It is an argument of a wicked man but to company with the wicked. We judge evil accompanyings to be next to evil deeds." —*Jermin.*

Shall these feet of mine, delaying,
Still in ways of sin be found,
Braving snares, and madly straying,
On the world's bewitching ground?
No, I was not born to trifle
Life away in dreams or sin;
No, I must not, dare not, stifle
Longings such as these within. — *Horatius Bonar.*

"The end of learning is to know God, and out of that knowledge to love and imitate Him"

17—19. (17) **Surely . . bird,** "strictly speaking, the first *proverb* in the book," *viz.*, when the net is so evident that the bird sees it, he will not go in; and the schemes of these tempters are so evidently a dangerous trap that you cannot be silly enough to be caught.[a] **bird,** *lit. master of a wing.* (18) **own blood,**[b] those robbers who are laying wait for the property and lives of others, are really, if they but knew it, preparing destruction for themselves; it is, as if they were laying wait for their own blood; this is the unexpected but appropriate issue of their plottings. (19) **so,** *i, e.* deceitful, ruinous. **ways,** manner of life and its results. **greedy of gain,**[c] and so strives to gain it unlawfully. **of the owners,** better, *of him that gets it in possession.* It becomes a fatal curse to him, 1 Tim. vi. 10.

Moral traps (*vs.* 17).—I. Sin lays traps for souls. Net made of sensuality, avarice, ambition, *etc.* II. These traps are laid in secrecy. Sin works insidiously —takes advantage of ignorance, *etc.* III. These traps must be exposed. This the work of the true teacher.— *Thomas.*

"*Greedy of gain.*"—More of us than we are willing to believe are kept from entire surrender to Jesus Christ by money and worldly possessions; and many professing Christians are kept shriveled and weak and joyless because they love their wealth more than their Lord. When ballast is thrown out the balloon shoots up. A general unlading of the "thick clay" which weighs down the Christian life of England and of America, would let thousands soar to heights which they will never reach as long as they love money and what it buys as much as they do. No man enters into life who does not count all things but loss, and die to them all that he may follow Christ.— *Alex. Maclaren.*

Money-getting has well been called unhealthy when it impoverishes the mind, or dries up the sources of the spiritual life; when it extinguishes the sense of beauty, and makes one indifferent to the wonders of nature and art; when it blunts the moral sense, and confuses the distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice; when it stifles religious impulse, and blots all thoughts of God from the soul.— *O. S. Marden.*

a "The sense of the proverb is, — the wicked, who think themselves shrewd and wise, are more silly and foolish than even the birds of the air which flit over their heads. The birds flee from the net when is spread in their sight, but the wicked *spread a net for themselves* and are taken thereby."—*Wordsworth.*

b Ps. vii. 14-16.

c Ha. ii. 9; 1 Ti. vi. 9, 10.

"The voice of the mother who thinks that her children are in danger rings upon the ear with no uncertain, theatrical sound."

"God has to deal with His human children who are in danger, and therefore He speaks with earnestness when He says, 'Do thyself no harm.'" —*Preach. Com.*

20, 21. (20) **Wisdom,** *Heb. chocmah,* fr. *chacam,* to judge, decide. We may express the ideas of the word by the terms *intelligent piety,*[d] that wisdom of which the "fear of the Lord" is the beginning. **without,** out of doors. **uttereth her voice,** "the instrumentality wh. wisdom uses in her public preaching are the prophets and teachers."—*Pul. Com.* **streets,** or *open squares,* the usual resorts of men.[e] (21) **place of concourse,** *lit. where confusion is;* the *hum* of crowded market-places. **openings of the gates,** *R. V.,* "entering in" where the city magistrates held their courts,[f] and other business was done.

Wisdom's voice (*vss.* 20–29).—I. An awakening appeal. 1. By whom it is made; 2. The place in which it is addressed; 3. The manner in which it is delivered: 4. The persons to whom it is applied. II. An important exhortation.

d The personification of abstract qualities is an efficient mode of producing impression and conveying instruction, esp. to the young

e "Wisdom goes where all public matters go, to the great squares and places of business." —*Miller.*

f Ru. iv. 1, 2.

1. The subject to which this exhortation refers — turn in repentance, with full purpose of heart, without delay; 2. The inducement to do this. III. A solemn denunciation. 1. Its procuring cause; 2. Its terrific nature — aggravating consideration.

Wisdom. — Perhaps some wide law of association connecting the purity and serenity of wisdom with the idea of womanhood, determines the feminine form of the personification. Not in solitude, but in the haunts of men, through sages, lawgivers, and teachers, and yet more through life and its experiences, she preaches to mankind. Something of the same kind was present, we may believe, to Socrates when he said that the fields and the trees taught him nothing, but that he found the wisdom he was seeking in his converse with the men whom he met as he walked in the streets and *agora* of Athens. — *Plumptre.*

"She need not be ashamed of her teaching, bec. she is a true friend of the people."—*Otto Zöckler.*

"Scorners *love* scorning. The habit grows by indulgence. It becomes a second nature."—*Arnot.*

22, 23. (22) Discourse of wisdom to end of chapter; "one of the noblest specimens of sacred eloquence." **simple,**[a] or ignorant; those who, being unthoughtful and frivolous, are easily drawn aside by temptation. **scorners,** who ridicule as well as neglect truth and goodness; sneering at sacred things. **fools,** those who are malignant and obdurate. (23) **Turn you,** the physical movement that illus. the moral act of *repentance.*[b] **at,** "toward," so as to notice; or "because of." **reproof,** but not reproof only: it is immediately connected with promises and offers of grace. **spirit,**[c] "energizing influence." **my words,** precepts, secrets, *comp.* Joel ii. 28; Ac. ii. 17.

Sinners admonished (*vs.* 23). — I. The reproofs He administers. 1. By the Scriptures; 2. By ministers; 3. By conscience; 4. By Providence. II. The submission He requires. We are to return — 1. With penitent hearts; 2. Believing minds; 3. Fervent devotion; 4. Prompt obedience. III. The encouragement He imparts. 1. A convincing Spirit; 2. Quickening Spirit; 3. Comforting Spirit; 4. Sanctifying Spirit. — *Eta.*

The risks of sin. — Some years since a vessel lay becalmed on a smooth sea in the vicinity of an iceberg. In full view, the mountain mass of frozen splendor rose before the passengers of the vessel, its towers and pinnacles glittering in the sunlight, and clothed in the enchanting and varied colors of the rainbow. A party on board the vessel resolved to climb the steep sides of the iceberg, and spend the day in a picnic on the summit. The novelty and attraction of the hazardous enterprise blinded them to the danger, and they left the vessel, ascended the steep mountain of ice, spread their table on the summit, and enjoyed their dance of pleasure on the surface of the frosty marble. Nothing obscured their security or marred their enjoyment. Their sport was finished and they made their way down to the water level and embarked. But scarcely had they reached a safe distance before the loud crash of the crumbling mass was heard. The scene of their gaiety was covered with the huge fragments of the falling pinnacles, and the giant iceberg rolled over with a shock that sent a thrill of awe and terror to the breast of every spectator. Not one of that gay party could ever be induced to try that rash experiment again. — *Hom. Cycl.*

24, 25. (24) **Because,** *etc.*, there seems to be an interval of silence, during wh. Wisdom waits to see if any would heed her. None accept, so her voice of pleading is changed for one of judgment.[d] **refused,** to stop in your wilful ways, and give heed to me. **stretched . . hand,** the fig. for earnestness in beseeching,[e] or "a forensic gesture to arrest attention." (25) **set at naught,** rejected. **would none of,** *lit. were not willing or inclined to it.*

Judgment follows disobedience (*vss.* 24–26). — I. A merciful visitation. 1. Call; 2. Entreaty; 3. Counsel; 4. Reproof. II. Just complaint. 1. Neglect; 2. Refusal; 3. Scorn. III. An awful warning. 1. God's laws are unchangeable; 2. He has plainly declared them; 3. He is clear of the sinner's blood. — *Whythe.*

Misimproved privileges. — It is related of Jeine, the chief of one of the South Sea Islands, who had offered no small amount of opposition to the introduction of Christianity, that during a sickness which terminated in his death, he manifested more mental distress than is usually seen in a heathen. He often expressed a wish that "he had died ten years before." And why? The light of life and love had been shining around him, but he had opposed its entrance into his heart, and its power over his people. And now, having loved darkness, in darkness of soul, stung by an upbraiding conscience, he must die. — *Gill.*

[a] "The three classes are addressed in a graduated scale. 'Simple,' *open*, fatally open to evil; then the 'scorners,' mocking at all good; lastly the 'fools' in the darker sense of the word, hardened, obstinate, perverse, hating the knowledge they have rejected."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] Eze. xxxiii. 11; Isa. lv. 7.

[c] "I offer to you both My word outwardly to your ears, and a plentiful measure of My spirit to make that word effectual to you."—*B p Hall.*

"When we turn at His reproof, He will pour out His spirit; when He pours out His spirit, we will turn at His reproof: blessed circle for the saints to reason in."—*Arnot.*

[d] Comp. Isa. lxv. 12; lxvi. 4; Je. vii. 13, 14; Eze. viii. 18.

[e] Job xl. 13; Ps. lxviii. 31; lxxxviii. 9; Rom. x. 21.

"Scratch the green rind of a sapling, or only twist it in the soil, and a scarred or crooked oak will tell of the act for centuries to come. How forcibly does this figure teach the necessity of giving right tendencies to the minds and hearts of the young!"—*A b p. Leighton.*

26, 27. (26) **laugh,** *etc.,*[a] *comp.* Ps. ii. 4. The words "laugh," with "mock," depict the most contemptuous indignation. **calamity,** crushing misfortune. **fear cometh,** *i. e.* that wh. caused you fear. (27) **desolation,** or a storm suddenly sweeping down on you; fig. drawn fr. nature.[b] **whirlwind,** moving with fatal rapidity and overwhelming power. **anguish,** at an intolerable yet hopeless lot.

Advice of a dying father. — A gentleman called his sons around his dying bed, and gave them the following relation: "When I was a youth, the Spirit strove with me, and seemed to say, 'Seek religion now;' but Satan suggested the necessity of waiting till I grew up, because it was incompatible with youthful amusement. So I resolved I would wait till I grew up to be a man. I did so, and was then reminded of my promise to seek religion; but Satan again advised me to wait till middle age, for business and a young family demanded all my attention. 'Yes,' I said, 'I will do so; I will wait till middle age.' I did so; my serious impressions left me for some years. They were again renewed; conscience reminded me of my promises; the Spirit said, 'Seek religion now;' but then I had less time than ever. Satan advised my waiting till I was old; then my children would be settled in business, and I should have nothing else to do; I could then give an undivided attention to it. I listened to his suggestion, and the Spirit ceased to strive with me. I have lived to be old; but now I have no desire as formerly to attend to the concerns of my soul; my heart is hardened. I have resisted and quenched the Spirit; now there is no hope. Already I feel a hell within, the beginning of an eternal misery. I feel the gnawings of that worm that never dies. Take warning from my miserable end; seek religion now; let nothing tempt you to put off this important concern." Then in the greatest agonies he expired.

28—31. (28) **not answer,** though the call be ever so earnest.[c] **early,** in the usual sense of *earnestly; R. V.,* "diligently." **not find me,** though God's gracious promise is, "They that seek Me early shall find Me." (29) **For,** *etc.,* this verse distinctly gives the reason for the severity wh. appears to be so strange. It lies in the nature of the human soul that the rejection of appeals to repentance hardens and sears. **did not choose,** *i. e.* desire and seek. **fear of the Lord,** wh. is first step of the true wisdom. (30) **would none,** did not want my counsel. **despised,** rejected with scorn. (31) **eat . . way,** reap as they sowed: find out to their surprise what is the true fruitage of rebellion and sin.[d] **filled,** *i. e.* satiated.

Logical result of sin. — If men will not plough the earth, or cast in the seed, or take advantage of the opportunities created by the sun, in harvest they shall beg, and in winter they shall be desolate. Does any one complain of the arbitrariness of the course of nature? Do not men instantly sit in judgment upon those who have allowed the seasons to pass by without availing themselves of the opportunities offered? Instantly the spirit of criticism arises and declares that nature has been outraged, that law has been dishonored, and that only suffering can follow. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; it is also a fearful thing to fall into the hands of neglected nature. The divine economy of the universe is one. A sacred unity binds together all worlds, all laws, all souls, all destinies. Surely he is a scorner and a fool who undertakes to live a life apart from that economy, and who supposes that, having detached himself from the central power, he can create a rival throne, and sway with success a competitive sceptre. "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" — *J. Parker.*

32, 33. (32) **turning away,** instead of, as they should, turning *towards* Wisdom. The term is used in grave irony. **prosperity,** better, the *carelessness, false security. R. V., marg.* "careless ease." "The easy-going indifference to higher truths is that wh. destroys." (33) **dwell safely,** *lit. in confidence.*[e] **quiet from fear,** *R. V.,* "without fear," *etc.,* as illus. by the wise man who built on the rock.[f]

Prosperity. — 1. Let those to whom God has denied prosperity cheerfully accept their lowliness. In their humble position they are comparatively safe. They live where many arrows of destruction do not fly. 2. Let those who have attained prosperity ever recognize that the post of honor and of power is the place of danger, and that they need peculiar grace from God that they may not fall. 3. Let those who are being injured by their prosperity beware lest they go down fast to utter and irretrievable ruin. — *Clarkson.*

[a] "The scorn and derision with wh. men look on pride and malice, baffled and put to shame, has something that answers to it in the Divine judgment." - *Spk Com.*

[b] *Comp.* Mat. vii. 26, 27.

"You cannot paint an angel upon light; so mercy could not be represented — mercy could not be, unless there were judgment without mercy, a ground of deep darkness lying beneath, to sustain and reveal it." — *Arnot.*

As at the Rom. siege of Jerusalem, desolation suddenly came on heedless Jews.

[c] *Comp.* Lu. xvi 24-31.

[d] Isa. iii. 10; Eze. xi. 21; Ro. vi. 21; Ga. vi. 7, 8.

"'The fruit of their own way' is a very mixed metaphor, but means what the sinner wins to himself by the advance he makes upon his path." — *Miller.*

If sinners cast not away their sins for God's sake, God will cast them away for their sins' sake.

"Not outward prosperity, but the temper which it too often produces; the easy-going indifference to higher truths is that which destroys." — *Plumptre.*

[e] De. xii. 10.

[f] Matt. vii. 24, 25.

"His ark is pitched within and without; tossed, it may be, but not drowned: shaken, but not shivered." — *Trapp*

"The Roman censors took such a distaste to the son of Africanus for his unworthy li-

that they drew from his finger the ring on which the image of his father was engraved. Because he had so greatly fallen off from his father's character they would not, they said, allow him to wear in a ring the likeness of a parent whose image he did not bear in his mind or heart. The children of Jesus, even the youngest, should strive to be like Him."

So long as man honestly desires God's service he may find peace and rest. — If at any time it is in our heart to obey the voice of the All-wise, to lend an attentive ear to the Divine counsel, we may reckon on His grace and favor. Happy the heart that heeds the voice of Wisdom! Others may be rocked and tossed on the heaving billows of care and anxiety, of alarm and dread; but he, "dwelling in the secret place of the Most High," hiding in the Rock of His salvation, shall "dwell safely, and be quiet from fear of evil." God will hide him in His pavilion; he will "rest in the Lord." Let no man think that the best treasures of thought are scattered prodigally on the surface of life for swine to trample under foot. They lie deep, and must often be sought with toil and anguish of soul. Yet to the honest seeker after light, if only he follow the Light of the world, it will surely dawn, though for a season

> 'The intellectual power, through words and things,
> Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way."— *Pul. Com.*

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1—5. (1) **receive my words,** simply, *take them*, listen and attend to them; words of reproof, counsel and promise; "the first thing in a sincere disciple." —*Stuart.* **hide . . thee,** as in a store, or treasury.[a] (2) **incline thine ear,** or, so as to point thine ears towards: sharpen or prick thine ear, like an animal.[b] Dispose thyself earnestly to attend to Div. truth. **apply,** or bend. **understanding,** *i. e.* the discrimination bet. what is right and wrong. (3) **criest after,** the sign of importunate earnestness. **knowledge,** *Heb. binah,* discernment.[c] **liftest,** as if to eagerly shout. (4) **silver,** or money,[d] wh. engages the unwearying, unrelaxing toil of men. **hid treasures,** *i. e.* concealed in the earth. (5) **fear,** not terror but reverence. The right sentiment to entertain towards God, and the right knowledge of Him to apprehend.

The course of the wisdom-seeker. —1. His search for life-giving truth must be characterized by readiness to receive. He must be wholly different in spirit from those who are disinclined to learn. 2. But there must not only be readiness; there should be eagerness to receive. He must "incline his ear" (*vs.* 2). 3. Beyond this, there must be carefulness to retain. The student must not let his mind be a sieve through which knowledge passes and from which it is readily lost. 4. Further, there must be perseverance in the search. He must "apply his heart to understanding" (*vs.* 2). 5. And there must also be enthusiasm in the endeavor *vss.* 3, 4). With the untiring energy and inexhaustible ardor with which men toil for silver or dig for the buried treasure, should the soul strive after the high end to which God is calling it. —*Pul. Com.*

Treasure trove. — The allusion to searching for wisdom as for hid treasures points to a custom in Eastern countries. In consequence of the great insecurity in life and property the habit was to hide treasure in the earth. Frequently the owner might die without pointing out to any one the place where he had concealed his treasures. Consequently, the habit of seeking for such hidden things grew up in the East, and became a source of great profit to those who were successful in its cultivation. It would seem as if God had purposely hidden both wisdom and understanding in order that the energy of man might be developed in searching for them.— *Peop. Bib.*

6, 7. (6) **Lord . . wisdom,**[e] but they must be in right attitude of mind and heart to whom He gives it. **out of his mouth,** not by unknown agencies, but by rational instructions; *i. e.* by his words. (7) **sound wisdom,** in the sense of *healthy, nourishing,* and *confirming.* **buckler,** defending us with the efficiency of a skilfully used shield. *Heb. maghen,* a frequent word in the Psalms.[f] **walk uprightly,** walkers of innocence; whose behavior is sound, *R. V.*, "walk in integrity."

Good men and their God (*vss.* 6–9.)— I. The description of men — righteous, walking uprightly, His saints. II. The God of good men. 1. As to what He is to creation generally; 2. As to what He is to the good specially. (1) He provides for their instruction; (2) He superintends their career; (3) He protects them from their enemies. — *Thomas.*

The Lord a buckler. — That is to say, He protects those who walk in His ways, and He preserveth the way of His saints, literally of "His ardent wor-

a Pr. vii. 1; Ps. cxix. 11.

The *reception* and *retention* of Div. truths are both indicated in the terms of this verse.

b "The ear must be turned away from the sounds of earthly pleasure, the din of worldliness, and the voice of human speculation, and must listen attentively to communications from the spiritual and eternal." — *D. Thomas.*

c Pr. i. 2; xvi. 16.

d Mat. xiii. 44; Lu. xv. 8.

Job xxviii. 12-20.

"The man who finds a treasure he had not sought has the joy of surprise; he who has searched and striven, the joy of success."

"We ought to glory in nothing, because we have nothing of our own." — *Cyprian.*

e 1 K. iii. 9, 12; Ja. i. 5; iii. 17.

f Ps. iii. 10; vii. 10, *etc.*

"Somewhere thou livest and hast need of Him;
Somewhere thy soul sees higher heights to climb;
And somewhere still there may be valleys dim
That thou must pass to reach the hills sublime."
—*Julia C. R. Dorr.*

shipers." This term was used of the tribe of Levi because of their zeal in God's service. The word saint implies dedication to God, and being set apart to the love and service of Christ. The doctrine of the text is that God is evermore on the side of those who are righteous, or upright, or holy. They represent Him upon the earth, and as His chosen children they are dear to Him, and on them the light first shines which is to fall downward upon the rest of the world, as the light of the morning first strikes the mountains and then passes downward into the valleys and chases away all darkness. — *Peop. Bib.*

8, 9. (8) **paths of judgment,** or justice; "here by the substitution of the abstract for the concrete expression, 'paths of the just,' and therefore essentially synonymous with the 'way of his saints' in the second clause." — *Otto Zöckler.* "God defends the right way, and those in it." **saints,** not the absolutely holy, but the devout and God-fearing;[a] those "called with a holy calling." (9) **righteousness,** *etc.*, all parts of man's duty to God and to man. Jno. vii. 17. **every good path,** *the whole good track.*[b] "Every pursuit in wh. good may be found." — *Stuart.*

God the source of wisdom. — Some of the courtiers of the Emperor Sigismund, having no taste for learning, inquired why he so honored and respected men of low birth on account of their science. The emperor replied, "In one day I can confer knighthood or nobility on many, in years I cannot bestow genius on one. Wise and learned men are created by God only. No advantage of education, no favorable combination of circumstances can produce talents where the Father of spirits hath not dropped the seeds of them in the souls which he hath made." — *Whitecross.*

10–12. (10) **entereth,**[c] as *vs.* 2; *R. V.*, "shall enter," *i. e.* take up permanent residence. **pleasant,** so as not to be *forcibly* sought, but *willingly*, as for personal gratification. (11) **Discretion,** or reflection. **understanding,** or discernment. (12) **way of the evil,** from either accompanying or following them in their wilful and wicked paths. **froward things,** perverse, deceptive things.

The antidote to temptation. — I. We need an antidote to temptation. It is not enough to trust to our own spiritual health to throw off the poison. The tempter can choose the moment of his attack. The mine may be suddenly sprung, and we may be lost before we have fully realized the situation. II. The antidote to temptation must be some form of positive good. Fire is quenched by water, not by opposing flames. Evil must be overcome with good. The way to keep sin out of the heart is to fill the heart with pure thoughts and affections till there is no room for anything else. III. True wisdom is the surest antidote to temptation. Christ, the Wisdom of God, dwelling in our hearts, is the great security against temptation. — *Pul. Com.*

A good man's last words. — Mr. Benn, of Highgate, had long been the subject of a severe affliction, which at length terminated his valuable life before he had, to human appearance, reached its meridian. The evening before his departure he desired all his children to come into his chamber, and placing them around his dying bed, thus addressed them: "You all know that I am soon going to be removed from this world to a better; and I trust that you are walking the same road, and will soon follow me. You all know the road; great pains have been taken to show it to you. Where is it to be found?" The children all instantly replied, "In the Bible." The dying parent proceeded: "Keep hold of that chain; it will never mislead you. When you are in doubt whether this or that be right, ask your Bible; see if your Saviour would have done so." Addressing the elder children, he said: "Remember you are to teach the younger; tell them all we have taught you, and try to make it a pleasure." To his eldest son he observed: "When you go into the world, and are exposed to persons who perhaps will ridicule the Saviour's name and the Bible, do not listen to them. Seek that society which will help you to practise your Bible; this book will provide comfort for you when friends forsake you. Every other comfort in this world has its drawback and is transitory. When you are in pain or suffering, write upon it, 'The road to heaven.'" — *R. T. S.*

13–15. (13) **paths of uprightness,** figured by a straight line, and bright with the smile of God's favor; level paths. **darkness,** "to reject deliberately the light of knowl. and to work wickedness."[d] — *Pul. Com.* (14) **for-**

Paulinus, when he was told that the Goths had sacked Nola, and plundered him of all that he had, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Lord, Thou knowest where I have laid up my treasure!"

a Comp. Ps. lxxxv. 8; cxlviii. 14; cxlix. 9.

b "Track for a wheel. The Christian's path is a rut, or definite *tracking.*"—*Miller.*

"He preserveth the way of His saints both from being drawn out of that way, and from all evil while they walk in it."—*Jackson.*

c "The *heart* is here, as always, named as the centre and organic basis of the entire life of the soul, as the seat of desire, and the starting point for all personal self-determination. The *soul*, on the contrary, appears as the aggregate and sum total of all the impulses and efforts of the inner man. The former designates the living centre, the latter the totality of the personal life of man."—*Otto Zöckler.*

"A speculative knowledge is like that of the Queen of Sheba at a distance; an experimental is like her sight of the order and glory of Solomon's court, that left no more spirit in her."—*Charnock.*

"For our actions let His Word be our guide, and for the events of things and all that concern us, let His good pleasure and wise disposing be our will. Let us give up the rudder of our life into His hand to be steered by Him"—*Abp. Leighton.*

d Ro. xiii. 12; Eph. v. 11; 1 Th. v. 5.

wardness, *etc.*, *lit. the perverseness of evil:* their own perversity and that of others like themselves. (15) **crooked,**[a] in contrast with the "level" of *vs.* 13. *R. V.*, "Who are crooked in their ways;" ref. to deceitful and fraudulent conduct. **froward,** a term wh. may be represented by our familiar "way ward."

Wickedness and wisdom (*vss.* 10–22). — I. Wickedness. 1. Its nature — speech corrupt, habit corrupt, heart corrupt, influence corrupt; 2. Doom of wickedness — destruction, extirpation. II. Wisdom — 1. Guards the innocent; 2. Delivers the fallen. — *Thomas.*

Early memories. — Mr. Abbott relates, in his *Mother at Home*, that some time ago a gentleman in one of the most populous cities of America was going to attend a seamen's meeting in the Mariners' chapel. Directly opposite that place there was a sailors' boarding-house. In the doorway sat a hardy weather-beaten sailor, with arms folded, and puffing a cigar, watching the people as they gradually assembled for worship. The gentleman walked up to him and said, "Well, my friend, won't you go with us to the meeting?" "No," said the sailor bluntly. The gentleman, who, from the appearance of the man, was prepared for a repulse, mildly replied, "You look, my friend, as though you had seen hard days. Have you a mother?" The sailor raised his head, looked earnestly in the gentleman's face, and made no reply. The gentleman, however, continued: "Suppose your mother were here now, what advice would she give you?" The tears rushed into the eyes of the poor sailor; he tried for a moment to conceal them, but could not; and hastily brushing them away with the back of his rough hand, rose and said, with a voice almost inarticulate through emotion, "I'll go to the meeting." He crossed the street, entered the door of the chapel, and took his seat with the assembled congregation.

16, 17. (16) **strange woman,**[a] a woman who has made herself like the heathen, by breaking loose from the purities and duties of the family. **flattereth,** and so overcometh the unsophisticated and inexperienced. *Lit. smooths her words.* (17) **guide . . youth,** perhaps referring to her husband, whom in her willfulness she had left. **covenant,** *etc.*, the marriage cov. entered into in the presence of God, wh. required strict purity of life.

Perils in the deep (*vss.* 12–19). — The dangers are delineated here in exact order, continuous succession, and increasing power. I. The way of the evil. II. Speaking froward things. III. Leaving the paths of righteousness. IV. Walking in the ways of darkness. V. Rejoicing to do evil. VI. Delight in the frowardness of the wicked. — *Arnot.*

Temptation. — Gaze not on beauty too much, lest it blast thee; nor too long, lest it blind thee; nor too near, lest it burn thee. If thou like it, it deceives thee; if thou love it, it disturbs thee; if thou hunt after it, it destroys thee. If virtue accompany it, it is the heart's paradise; if vice associate it, it is the soul's purgatory. It is the wise man's bonfire, and the fool's furnace. — *Quarles.*

18, 19. (18) **inclineth,** sinks down to. *R. V., marg.* "she sinketh down unto death, wh. is her house." She is lost to every interest of virtue and goodness. **dead,** "the shades." This may intimate the certain fate of all who yield to her flatteries.[b] Her house is a Hades, where are the shades of those who have perished by her blandishments. (19) **return again,** their fate is irrevocable; like death, this is "a bourne fr. wh. no traveler returns." **neither . . life,** there is no resurrection to life and purity.

Evil company. — Some insects take their colors from the leaves they feed upon, so our characters will receive a tinge from the books we read and the conversations we listen to. He who means to be a good painter will be sure to draw after the most excellent copies, and guide every stroke of his pencil by the better pattern that he lays before him; so he who desires that the table of his life may be fair, will be careful to propose the best examples, and will never be content till he equals or excels them. As physicians often order their patients into the country for salubrity of air, so we ought to avoid every place the moral atmosphere of which is polluted by evil example. A desert is better than a debauched companion; for the wildness of the place is but uncheerful, whilst the wildness of bad persons is infectious. "I had a good education at school," a criminal once said, "but it was the education of the streets that ruined me."

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a "The way of sin is labyrinthian and rough, as well as dark." — *D. Thomas.*

"The light stands in the way of their wicked ways as the angel did in Balaam's way to his sin." — *Trapp.*

"Better is the sorrow of him that suffereth evil than the jollity of him that doeth evil, saith St. Augustine." — *Trapp.*

"Principles are like the rails on which the train runs, keeping it in a direct course and facilitating its speed." — *Pul. Com.*

"O Trojan, son of Anchyses, easy is the path that leads to hell. But to retrace one's steps, and escape to the upper regions, this is a work, this is a task." — *Virgil.*

"Wisdom is the talent of buying virtuous pleasures at the cheapest rate." — *Fielding.*

"Death is here twice mentioned to show that it is a double death, a temporal death, and an eternal death, to which she bringeth men." — *Jermin.*

"Example is a living law, whose sway men more than all the written laws obey." — *Sedley.*

b "Everything dies under the influence of (sensual) wickedness, — self-respect, spiritual sensibility, mental freedom, the freshness, the vigor, and the beauty of life." — *D. Thomas.*

"That which is dyed with many dippings is ingrain, and can very hardly be washed out." — *J. Taylor.*

"It is not enough to shun the evil way, unless men walk in the good way."

20—22. (20) **That,** *etc.*, the advice and warning are given that the youth may, at the outset of his life, be wisely guided in his choice of friends. (21) **dwell,** settle,[a] permanently rest. Change is the attendant on all wickedness, stability attends all goodness. **perfect,** men of integrity. (22) **cut off,** by sudden calamity, as the proper fruitage of their wrong-doing. **transgressors,** *R. V.*, "they that deal treacherously." **rooted out,**[b] exterminated.

Influence of example.— Mr. Brainerd informs us, that when among the American Indians, he stopped at a place where there was a great number, and offered to instruct them in the truths of Christianity. "Why," said one of them, "should you desire the Indians to become Christians, seeing the Christians are so much worse than the Indians! The Christians lie, steal and drink worse than the Indians. They first taught the Indians to be drunk. They steal to so great a degree, that their rulers are obliged to hang them for it; and even that is not enough to deter others from the practice. But none of the Indians were ever hanged for stealing; and yet they do not steal half so much. We will not consent, therefore, to become Christians, lest we should be as bad as they. We will live as our fathers lived, and go where our fathers are, when we die." Notwithstanding that Mr. B. did all he could to explain to them that these were not Christians in heart, and that he did not want them to become such as these, he could not prevail on them to accept his doctrine, but left them, mortified at the thought that the wickedness of some who professed Christianity should produce such prejudices.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1, 2. (1) **forget not,** this counsel involves the duty of making effort to remember, frequently recalling, and using well all aids to keep it in mind.[c] **my law,** or my teaching,[d] which is contained in the following verses. "Divine revelation has all the attributes of a law — publicity, authority, practicability." **keep,** or watch over, as one does who guards a vineyard. **commandments,** the particular precepts contained in the general *law* (2) **length of days,** the sign of Div. favor then so greatly desired,[e] and promised as one of the chief blessings attending obedience. **long life,** *Heb. years of life*, with the emphasis on *life*, life in its fullest sense, prosperous and happy. **peace,** "internal and external contentment and tranquillity of mind," arising from prosperity; peace has always been the foremost word in *Heb.* benedictions.

The philosophy of health and peace (*vss.* 1, 2).— I. Obedience to moral law is a condition of physical health. 1. Physical health requires obedience to the Divine laws of our being; 2. Obedience to the Divine laws involves the study of them; 3. A hearty agreement with the Divine will is essential to secure the study of His laws. II. Obedience to moral law a condition of spiritual peace. Peace requires two things. 1. The inward harmony of the soul's powers; 2. The sense of the Divine favor.— *Thomas.*

Long life.— No one thinks of measuring life only by days and years. To live long with the constant feeling that life is not worth living, or to live long with the constant apprehension of death, must be counted as a small and empty life. Now, it is the chief blessedness in the lot of the children of light that each day is a full, rich day, unmarred by recollections, unshadowed by apprehensions. Each day is distinctly worth living; it has its own exquisite lessons of cloud or sunshine, its own beautiful revelations of love, and pity, and hope. Time does not hang heavily on the hands, nor yet is its hurried flight a cause of vain regret; for it has accomplished that for which it was sent, and by staying longer could not accomplish more. And if, after all, God has appointed but a few years for His child's earthly life, that is not to be regretted; the only ground for sorrow would be to live longer than His wise love had decreed. "If God thy death desires," as St. Genest says to Adrian in Rotrou's tragedy, "life has been long enow."— *R. F. Horton.*

3, 4. (3) **mercy and truth,** *R. V., marg.* "kindness and truth;" these when predicted of man, indicate the highest standard of moral conduct towards his neighbor. "The two elements of a morally perfect character." **bind . . neck,**[f] like a charm or talisman: but better far than any such. "The neck is, in Sol.'s writings, the organ and symbol of obedience." **write . . heart,** so as to govern your very motives and feelings. **table,** or *tablet*, Je. xvii. 1;

a "To dwell in the land is the highest blessing for the whole people of Israel and for individual men."— *Spk. Com.*

Ex xx. 12; Le. xxv. 18; xxvi. 5; Ps. xxxvii. 29.

b Job. xviii. 16–18.

"There is a knowledge that plays round the head, like lightning on a mountain's summit, that leaves no trace behind; and there is a knowledge that, like the fertilizing stream, penetrates into the very recesses of the heart, and issues forth in all the fruits of holiness, of love, and peace, and joy for evermore."— *Barton Bouchier.*

c "Looked at as a book for the education of the young, we may see in each section a 'counsel' to be learned and remembered, day by day, so as to form a habit of mind by the frequent recurrence of the same impressions."— *Spk. Com.*

d "My directions: the orig. term alludes to throwing out the hand, as if to guide a passenger in his way."— *Miller.*

e Ps. xxi. 4; xci. 16.

"The longer distance a pure river runs through a country, the greater the amount of blessings which it diffuses on its way to the ocean. The longer a man of 'mercy and truth' lives, the more he is enabled to bless his fellow-creatures. A long life gives a man time to attain great knowledge of God, and thus enables him to glorify Him upon the earth."— *Preacher's Com.*

f "Like the *totaphoth*, or fillets prescribed by the Law (Ex. xiii. 16)."— *Wordsworth.*

2 Cor. iii. 3. (4) **good understanding,** *R. V., marg.* "good repute;" [a] not as *marg., good success.* **in . . man,** *i. e.* in the judgment of.

Present blessings.— We are accustomed to dwell on the promised joys of the future world as if godliness had no promise of the life which now is, and in so doing we take all life and color from those expected blessings. The true view seems to be, The way of wisdom, the path of the upright, is so full of joy, so crowned with peace; the life of the children of the kingdom is so wisely and bountifully provided for; the inevitable pains and troubles which fall to their share are so transformed; that from this present good we can infer a future better, gathering hints and promises of what we shall be from the realized felicity of what we are.— *R. F. Horton.*

5, 6. (5) **Trust,** man, being a dependent creature, must trust some one; they alone are truly wise whose trust is in the Lord.[b] **all thine heart,** or wholly, without letting any confidences in things spoil the trust in God. **own understanding,**[c] as if you had no need of a Divine helper. (6) **acknowledge him,** or recognize; have regard to Him and His will. "Recognize Him as the unconditional controller over all thy willing and doing." **and he,** the "he" is emphatic; God Himself covenants to lead. **direct,** make them straight, even, and prosperous.

The condition of Divine guidance.—1. Self-surrender. "Lean not to thine own understanding." 2. Whole-hearted faith. "Trust in God with all thine heart." Every thought, affection, and desire must be given over to His direction. The more completely we trust the more surely will God guide us. (3) Active faith. God guides, but we must follow His directions. It is vain for us to pray for a Divine leading unless we consent to follow the directions indicated to us. — *Pul. Com.*

A deist confounded. — A deist, on a visit to his friends, among other topics of conversation, enlarged considerably on the sufficiency of reason, separate from Divine assistance, to guide us to happiness. To whom the relative present, who was a farmer, made the following reply: "Cousin, when you were about fourteen years of age, you were bound apprentice to your trade, and having served the appointed time, you soon became a master, and have now continued in business about twelve years. I wish to know whether you could not prosecute your trade at this time to greater advantage than when you first embarked in it as a master?" The tradesman admitted that his experience in business was of considerable value to him; but asked, what relation that had to the present topic of discourse. The farmer answered: "You were come to the perfect use of your reason, and had been for a long time taught how to manage your trade; and if, therefore, your reason without experience was insufficient to preserve you from many errors, in so plain and easy a business as yours, how can you imagine that it should be sufficient, without Divine assistance, to guide you to heaven?" The deist was confounded. — *Cheever.*

7, 8. (7) **wise . . eyes,**[d] *i. e.* shun self-sufficiency. Pr. xxvii. 2; Ro. xii. 16. **fear,** *etc.*, the fear of God makes us sensitive to what is evil, and helps us to shun it, whatsoever form it may take. (8) **health,** or, as *marg.*, *medicine.* **navel,** as the *centre* of the body put for the whole body. **marrow,** refreshing or moistening.[e] **bones,** the bodily framework.

Self-conceit (*vs.* 7). — I. It involves self-ignorance. Let the wisest think — 1. Of his knowledge in comparison with what is to be known; 2. In comparison with what ought to be known. II. It obstructs mental improvement. 1. This requires an earnest seeking for knowledge; 2. And this requires a deep sense of the necessity of knowledge. III. It destroys social influence. The elements of social power are intelligence, generosity, truthfulness, humility. — *Thomas.*— *Health to the virtuous.* — Sickness of body may be the portion of the best of men or women. Some are born to suffer, until they die and pass to the blessed country where the inhabitant will never say, "I am sick." But the constant tendency of piety and its invariable accompaniment, morality, is to give (1) health and strength of bodily frame; the pure blood, the clear eye, the strong muscle, the steady nerve, the "green old age." It regularly gives (2) an active mind; and it necessarily imparts (3) a soul that is "in health" (3 John 2). The man who fears God and departs from evil is the man who is fitted and is likely to have the largest show of vigorous, robust, healthy life in all its forms. — *Pul. Com.*

[a] Ge. xxxix. 2—4; Lu. ii. 52.

"No man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, pure, and good without the world being better for it, without somebody being helped and comforted by the very existence of that goodness."—*Phillips Brooks.*

[b] Isa xxvi. 4.

[c] "Many might have attained wisdom, had they not thought they had already attained it"—*Seneca.*

"The fundamental principle of all religion is an entire self-commitment to the grace and truth of God, with the abandonment of every attempt to attain blessedness by one's own strength or wisdom."—*Otto Zöckler.*

Ps. xxxvii. 3; cxviii. 8, 9; Je. ix. 24.

"Our prayer should be not so much that God should guide us safely, as that He should show us His way." "The character must be known, and, being known, must be loved, if there is to be a lasting confidence. We shall not lean with much weight where we do not love. The trust of a Christian will be in proportion to his love to his Lord."—*Preacher's Com.*

[d] "There is not a greater enemy to the power of religion, and the fear of God in the heart, than conceitedness of our own wisdom."—*Matt. Henry.*

[e] "There is, prob., a reference to the local applications used by the surgery of the period as means of healing."—*Spk. Com.*

The highest point of wisdom is to be wise against ourselves.

Conceit natural to humanity. — Little localized powers and little narrow streaks of specialized knowledge are things men are very apt to be conceited about. Nature is very wise; but for this encouraging principle how many small talents and little accomplishments would be neglected! Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to human character what salt is to the ocean; it keeps it sweet and renders it endurable. Say rather it is like the natural unguent of the sea-fowl's plumage, which enables him to shed the rain that falls on him and the wave in which he dips. When one has had all the conceit taken out of him, when he has lost all his illusions, his feathers will soon soak through, and he will fly no more. . . . I say that conceit is just as natural a thing to human minds as a centre is to a circle. But little-minded people's thoughts move in such small circles that five minutes' conversation gives you an arc long enough to determine their whole curve. An arc in the movement of a large intellect does not differ sensibly from a straight line. — *Holmes.*

"As the sun melts the hoar-frost from the windows and leaves a clear medium for the rays of the sun to enter the chamber, so the contact of God with the human soul will melt away the self-esteem which shut Him out."— *Preacher's Com.*

"Good, the more communicated, more abundant grows." — *Milton.*

9, 10. (9) **Honour,** *etc.*, by making the prescribed free-will and thank offerings.[a] More generally, recognize God's hand in all temporal blessings, and be thankful to Him. **substance,** or capital, stock. **increase,** the revenue derived from it. (10) **barns,** or storehouses of various kinds. **presses,** or winevats, into which the produce of the vineyards and oliveyards would be carried. **burst out,** *R. V.*, "shall overflow."

Trade morality. — The Rev. John Parkhurst, the author of the Hebrew and Greek lexicons, having a tenant who fell behind in the payment of his rent, which was £500 per annum, it was represented to his landlord that it was owing to his being overrented. A new valuation being made, it was agreed that, for the future, the rent should be not more than £450. Mr. Parkhurst justly inferring that if the farm was then too dear, it must necessarily have always been too dear, unasked, and of his own accord, immediately struck off £50 from the commencement of the lease; and instantly refunded all that he had previously received more than £450 per annum. — *Whitecross.*

We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee. — *Day's Psalter.*

a Ex. xxii. 29; De. xxvi. 2; Mal. iii. 10.

"God will not have the dregs that are squeezed out by pressure poured into His treasury. He loveth a cheerful giver." — *Arnot.*

"Enjoy the blessings of this day, if God sends them, and the evil bear patiently and sweetly; for this day only is ours; we are dead to yesterday, and are not born to to-morrow." — *Jeremy Taylor.*

11, 12. (11) **despise not,** shrink not from;[b] sometimes affliction must come even to one who loves God. **be weary,** or loathe, abhor. **his correction,** *R. V.*, "reproof," wh. is always paternal, and the means to gracious ends. (12) **whom . . correcteth,**[c] He. xii. 5–8. **delighteth,**[d] love making the father strong to bless the child with needed corrections.[e]

God's fatherly love shown in chastening. — 1. God must be angry with us for our sin. For love can be angry, nay, sometimes must be. 2. If God chastens in love, it is for our own good. Strong love aims at the highest welfare, even though this involve misunderstandings and temporary estrangement. 3. God's paternal relation with us is the ground of his chastening in love. Hence we may take the chastening as a proof of the love and fatherhood of God. — *Pul. Com.*

The chastening of the Lord. — The shadow falls everywhere; summer has its shadow as well as winter. A survey of human society will show the observer that "chastening" seems to be unequally distributed. The eyes of the wicked stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish; while many a godly man is tottering under an intolerable burden, or smarting with anguish which he cannot express. How is this? The divine sculptor is using a sharp chisel; the heavenly Father is employing a heavy rod; the severe refiner sits over a glowing furnace. Thus "chastening" is taken out of the heart-chilling region of atheism, and set down in the midst of the very household of God. There is a "chastening" that hath on it no superscription; but there is also a chastening which is written within and without by the finger divine. — *Peop. Bib.*

b Job v. 17.

c "From this passage it appears that every Jewish child was taught to acknowledge another Father in heaven chastising him, even as he had been chastised by his earthly father." — *Spk. Com.*

d "For whom Jehovah loves He corrects, and, as a father, does the son a favor," so *Miller* trans. the passage.

e Comp. He. ii. 10; v. 8, 9.

"God's strokes are better than Satan's kiss and love; God smites for life; Satan caresses for death." — *Egard.*

13, 14. (13) **Happy,** better, *blessed.*[f] **wisdom,** or goodness, the true wisdom. **getteth,** *Heb. draweth out,* from God's stores of truth, and the experiences of life. Draws out, as metals by digging. (14) **merchandise,** traffic in it.[g] Some prefer the word "accumulation." **gain,** "produce thereof."

f O the blessedness of the man! as Ps. i. 1.

g There appears here an evident

allusion to the new commerce of Sol.'s time with Ophir, *etc.*

fine gold, the technical word used for the native gold, in the nugget or the dust.

Spiritual merchandise (*vs.* 14).—I. The trade. 1. The assets, capital, stock; 2. The receipts, present joys, promises; 3. The liabilities, obligations; 4. The accounts, books, correspondence. II. Its advantages. 1. The losses, indolence, negligence, timidity; 2. The profits, large, sure, enduring. III. Its requisites. 1. Promptness; 2. Perseverance; 3. Regularity; 4. Attention.—*Whythe.*

"The Gospel mentions not riches, honors, beauty, pleasures; it passes these over in silence, which yet the Old Testament everywhere makes promise of. They were then children, and God pleased them with the promise of these toys and rattles as taking with them. But in the Gospel He has shown us He has provided some better things for us; things spiritual and heavenly."—*Goodwin.*

A poor man's wisdom.—An old man, of very acute physiognomy, answering to the name of Jacob Wilmot, was brought before the Police Court. His clothes looked as if they might have been bought second-hand in his youthful prime, for they had suffered more from the rubs of the world than the proprietor himself. "What business?" "None; I'm a traveler." "A vagabond, perhaps?" "You are not far from wrong; travelers and vagabonds are about the same thing. The difference is that the latter travel without money, and the former without brains." "Where have you traveled?" "All over the Continent." "For what purpose?" "Observation." "What have you observed?" "A little to commend, much to censure, and very much to laugh at" "Humph! what do you commend?" "A handsome woman that will stay at home, an eloquent preacher that will preach short sermons, a good writer that will not write too much, and a fool that has sense enough to hold his tongue." "What do you censure?" "A man who marries a girl for her fine clothing, a youth who studies law or medicine while he has got the use of his hands, and the people who elect a drunkard to office." "What do you laugh at?" "I laugh at a man who expects his position to command that respect which his personal qualities and qualifications do not merit." He was dismissed.—*Haven.*

15, 16. (15) **rubies,** *Heb. peninim,* prob. pearls. **all . . desire,** *lit. all thy delights,* "all thy jewels."—*Stuart.* (16) **in . . hand,**[a] she is valuable in herself, and also in the things that she brings with her, 1 Ki. iii. 11–13.

Length of days in the hand of wisdom (*vs.* 16).—I. It is not a uniform experience that a man lives long who lives well; such a rule would not be suitable to the present dispensation. II. It is true that all wickedness acts as a shortener of life, and all goodness as its lengthener; but other elements enter, and complicate the result, and slightly veil the interior law. Take as an illustration, drunkenness, which is selected by the agents of assurance societies for their calculations. Other sins, if human eyes could trace them, would give the same results.—*Arnot.*

Eternity.—St. Augustine telleth us that length of days is eternity, for whatsoever hath an end is short: but riches and honor, which by men are esteemed good things, they are in the left hand. It is not forbidden thee to enjoy the good things of this life, but do not put that in the right hand which should be in the left; do not prefer temporal things before eternal. Let us use the left hand for a time, but desire the right hand for eternity.—*Jermin.*

[a] "The right hand in the Bible everywhere means one's highest instrumentality or agency."—*Miller.*

"One grain of grace is far beyond all the gold of Ophir, and one hour's enjoyment of God to be much preferred before all the King of Spain's annual entradoes. 'Let me be put to any pain, any loss, so I get my Jesus,' said Ignatius."—*Trapp.*

17. ways,[b] properly *highways,* main roads. The ways along wh. she will lead those who devote themselves to her. **pleasantness,** "all the enjoyments and entertainments of sense are not comparable to the pleasure wh. gracious souls have in common with God and doing good."—*Henry.* **paths,** *bypaths,* smaller side roads. **peace,**[c] such as may ensure peace: "she brings tranquillity and serenity and blessedness."

[b] "Her ways are the ways of chastity, justice, truthfulness, holy affections, benevolent activities, and communings with the great God, and from these pleasure must inevitably spring."—*D. Thomas.*

Connection between holiness and happiness (*vs.* 17).—I. State the nature of holiness: it is the work of the Holy Spirit; involves change of heart and life. II. Consider the certain connection between holiness and happiness. 1. It is established by the deductions of reason; 2. Also in the Holy Scriptures; 3. Founded on experience. III. The reflection which this subject awakens. Learn how false are the estimates which the ungodly form of religion when they represent it as unfriendly to happiness.—*Gilbert.*

[c] Matt. xi. 29, 30.

"Both the way and the end to which the way leads is peace. There are many ways in the world pleasant but not safe; others safe but not pleasant."—*Fausset.*

Peace through wisdom.—Other sources of gratification are to be found, but some of them do not carry the sanction of conscience; some of them are out of the reach of the lowly; others are only open to the learned or the favored; most, if not all of them, are short-lived, and become of less worth as they are more frequently employed. The wisdom which comes from God and which leads to him, which makes the human spirit the friend and follower of the Son of God, brings a "peace which passes all understanding," the "peace of God," and "joys which through all time abide."—*Clarkson.*

18. tree of life,[a] as Ge. ii. 9; iii. 22; Re. ii. 7; xxii. 2. Personification of Wisdom as a fruitful tree giving nourishment and immortality. But the former personification of Wisdom as a queen remains in the verse, and it is the queen, not the tree, on wh. we are to gain and keep our hold.

Happiness of wisdom. — To know the secret of the Lord, to walk in this world not guideless, but led by the Lord of life, to approach death itself not fearful, but in the hands of that Infinite Love for whom death does not exist, surely this is worth more than the gold and precious stones which belong only to the earth and are earthy. This wisdom is laden with riches which cannot be computed in earthly treasures; "she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her." The creation itself, in its vast and infinite perfections, with all its æonian changes, and all the mysterious ministries which order its details and maintain its activities, comes from that same wisdom which controls the right human life. The man, therefore, who is led in the ways of wisdom, trusting wholly to God, is in harmony with that great universe of which he forms an intelligent part: he may lie down without being afraid; he may walk securely without stumbling; no sudden fear can assail him; all the creatures of God are his sisters and his brothers; even Sister Death, as St. Francis used to say, is a familiar and a friend to him. — *R. F. Horton.*

The sympathy of wisdom.—

Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle; minds like these,
In childhood, from this solitary being,
This helpless wanderer, have perchance received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solicitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. — *Wordsworth.*

19, 20. (19) **The Lord,** the wise man now turns attention fr. what wisdom is to man, and shows how it is related to God. **founded,** or created. Advancing knowledge of the earth's crust, and history, should deeply impress on us the wonderful wisdom of God in arranging it for the abode of man.[b] **established,** or prepared, set firm. (20) **depths,** *comp.* Ge. i. 7; vii. 11. The expression may well refer to the great geological changes. But some understand it of "the fertilization of the earth by streams and fountains wh. burst forth from the interior of the earth." **clouds . . dew,**[c] this is not a strictly scientific statement, as the dew is formed by the condensation of the atmosphere. But we familiarly speak of the "falling dew." Dew is of exceeding value in hot countries to fertilize the earth.

Wisdom the source and sovereign of worlds (*vs.* 19). — These words give us two ideas of the universe. I. That it is organized by wisdom. This opposed — 1. To the eternity of the universe; 2. To the contingent origin of the universe. II. That it is organized by one Being. 1. The unity of the universe shows this; 2. The Word of God declares this. — *Thomas.*

The dew. — If clouds are necessary to produce rain, sunshine is an essential to the formation of dew. A dewy morning only follows a day whose sun has well warmed up the earth. It is necessary that the heat should readily radiate into the surrounding atmosphere by night. When the surface of the earth thus cools down more rapidly than the incumbent air about it, and when the air is saturated with moisture, then, by the contact of temperatures, the air becomes unable to retain its moisture, and yields its sprays and vapors to be shaped by a natural law, the same which rounded the world out of chaos and orbed the universe, and then what was invisible becomes visible in drops of settling dew. So, whenever dew is seen to fall, there must first have been a flowing down of sunshine in the day, and then a responsive current of warmth uprising in the night toward the region whence it came. The earth receives and yet returns the heat the heavens gave, and as if to reward such gratitude the dew descends to refresh and gladden its beseeching and thankful breast. So, when people's hearts are hard, and dry, and desolate, it may be because

[a] "As the tree of life in Paradise, which was a sign of God's favor, or the tree which sweetened the waters of Marah, or the tree seen in the Revelation, or any living or good tree which bringeth forth fruit whereby men live." —*Muffet.*

Nobody giving any attention to old Diogenes while discoursing of virtue and philosophy, he fell to singing a funny song; and multitudes crowded to hear him "Ye gods!" he said, "how much more is folly admired than wisdom!"

"A rooted habit becomes a governing principle. Every lust we entertain deals with us as Delilah did with Samson: not only robs us of our strength, but leaves us fast bound."—*Tillotson.*

[b] "We are raised by science to an understanding of the infinite wisdom and goodness which the Creator has displayed in all His works."—*Lord Brougham.*

[c] Job. xxxvi. 27, 28.

"The wisdom of God is reflected in nature. All our knowledge is just the reflection of this wisdom; it is thinking into the thoughts of God; thus it is a communion with Him. Spiritual knowledge brings us nearest to God, who is Spirit. Christ as the incarnate 'Word,' by whom all things were made, and the Wisdom of God, is our Mediator, and unites us to God." — *Pul. Com.*

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without adversity.

they lack responsiveness to heaven's gifts — for want of gratitude for the light and privilege which have shone upon them all their days. — *Clark.*

21, 22. (21) **them,** *i. e.* the things already said, or the wisdom and discretion of the second clause. **depart . . eyes,** keep them, by never letting them be out of sight. Watch them as you would priceless jewels. (22) **life,** or health, vitality, vigor. **soul,** man's inner life. **grace,** or like a gracious ornament.[a] Religious principles give a refinement and gracefulness to character. **neck,** man's external life.

Fidelity to principle (*vss.* 21–26). — The advantages connected with fidelity to the ethics of godliness are here sketched, and they are — I. Life. II. Ornament. III. Safety. IV. Courage. — *Thomas.*

Jealousy of wisdom. — We have had to expend energy in securing wisdom, and we have to expend equal energy in retaining her, for she is jealous of neglect; yea, she will fly away from the mind that does not offer her the hospitality of its whole capacity. There must be no rival affections; wisdom must dominate everything, bringing all other idols and affinities within the action of its own supreme will. Thus we are not called upon to be mere idolators of wisdom, but to keep it in the heart, with the distinct view of reproducing it in an obedient and pure life. Thus wisdom does not imprison the heart in a palace of luxury and self-indulgence, but constrains the heart to give forth, to put to practical test, every counsel that has been learned in the spiritual school. Wisdom rightly used is increased in amount and energy. "Wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it." — *J. Parker.*

23, 24. (23) **not stumble,** so far from falling, you shall not even stumble." (24) **liest down,** *etc., comp.* Ps. iii. 5.[e] **afraid,** bec. you will have no consequences of sin to be afraid of. **sweet,** as is that of the innocent child.

Ninth Earl of Argyle.—On the very day on which he was to die, he dined with appetite, conversed with gayety at table, and, after his last meal, lay down, in order that his body and mind might be in full vigor when he should mount the scaffold. At this time one of the Lords of the Council came to the castle with a message from his brethren, and demanded admittance to the earl. It was answered that the earl was asleep. The Privy Councillor thought that this was a subterfuge, and insisted on entering. The door of the cell was softly opened, and there lay Argyle on the bed, sleeping, in his irons, the placid sleep of infancy. The conscience of the renegade smote him. He turned away, sick at heart, ran out of the castle, and took refuge in the dwelling of a lady of his family, who lived hard by. There he flung himself upon a couch, and gave himself up to an agony of remorse and shame. His kinswoman, alarmed by his looks and groans, thought that he had been taken with sudden illness, and begged him to drink a cup of sack. "No, no," he said, "that will do me no good." She prayed him to tell her what had disturbed him. "I have been," he said, "to Argyle's prison. I have seen him within an hour of eternity sleeping as sweetly as ever man did. But as for me——."—*Macaulay.*

25, 26. (25) **sudden fear,** unexpected calamity may come, but the godly man need have no fear in such times. **desolation,** *etc.*,[d] in this Bk. of Prov. sudden calamity is regarded as a usual mode of Div. judgment on the wicked. (26) **thy confidence,** the thought of "Him who keepeth Israel" shall comfort you and bring you peace. **being taken,** in a trap, or by any concealed danger.

Confidence in God the true safeguard from temptation (*vs.* 26). — I. Do not say God is your confidence, if He be only your dread. II. There is a trust which only the unreconciled experience. III. Confidence in God is not to be attained by a wish whenever you please. IV. True confidence has a power for good on the life. — *Arnot.*

Tempting danger. — Whilst King William, at a battle in Flanders, was giving orders in the thickest of the fight, he saw, to his surprise, among his staff one Michael Godfrey, a merchant of London, and deputy governor of the Bank of England, who had thus exposed himself in order to gratify his curiosity. The king, riding up to him, said, "Sir, you ought not to run these hazards; you are not a soldier; you can be of no use here." "Sire," answered Godfrey, "I run no more hazard than your majesty." "Not so," said William; "I am here where it is my duty to be, and I may, without presump-

a Pr. i. 9.

"Most certainly that superior wisdom which corrects, reproves, and informs man against his own inclination, can be no part of himself."—*Fénélon.*

"That which is inward shall have an outward expression. He who abounds in prayer shall have a light upon his face, which other men will see, and know that the glory was not kindled by human hands."—*Parker.*

b "Thou shalt ever go under a double guard, the 'peace of God' within thee, and the 'power of God' without thee."—*Trapp.*

c Le. xxvi. 6; Ps. iv. 8.

"His sleep is sweetest who when he is awake, doth sweetly sleep in a neglect of worldly crosses or contentments."—*Jermin.*

"When wisdom and innocency, like Castor and Pollux, appear together they presage the soul's happiness."—*J. Watson.*

d Pr. i. 27; Ps. lxxiii. 19.

"Come sleep, O sleep! the certain knot of peace, the baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe; the poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release, the impartial judge between the high and low"—*Sir Philip Sydney.*

"So safe will all thy ways be that to fear will be a sin."—*Plumptre.*

"O God, I have made an ill use of Thy mercies, if I

tion, commit my life to God's keeping; but you —." The sentence needed no completion, for at that very moment a cannon-ball laid Godfrey lifeless at the king's feet. He had been wise had he restricted himself to the ways of his calling and duty. — *Spurgeon.*

27—29. (27) **Withhold,** the godly man need have only one anxiety, that of "doing good," all the good he can. **Due,** not as having business claims, but the claims wh. belong ever to the suffering and the needy.[a] (28) **say not,** *comp.* Jas. ii. 15, 16, v. 4. "Promptly fulfill all obligations both of justice and charity." **neighbour,** companion, friend. (29) **devise,** plan and put in practice. **securely,** without care or suspicion. Not for a moment thinking you have evil designs. So do not abuse confidence.

Marshal Turenne. — The celebrated Marshal Turenne observed in his army an officer of distinguished birth but very ill-mounted. He invited him to dinner, and, when the repast was over, took him aside and said to him in the kindest manner, "I have a favor to ask of you, sir; you may find it difficult to grant, but I trust you will not refuse your general. I am old," continued he, "and even a little infirm, and spirited horses fatigue me; I have seen you have one on which I think I should be more at my ease; and if I were not afraid to ask so great a sacrifice, I would propose that you should give it to me." The officer replied by a profound bow, and went immediately for his horse, which he led into Turenne's stable. The next day the general sent him one of the best and handsomest horses in the army.— *Whitecross.*— *Beneficence.* If Christians had really asked God to guide them, meaning what they said, would all the rich be found in districts together, while all the poor are left to perish in other districts apart? If Christians had really accepted God's direction, would they be living in princely luxury while the heathen world is crying for the bread of life? would they be spending their strength on personal aims while the guidance of social and political affairs is left in the hands of the self-interested? would they be giving such a fragment of their wealth to the direct service of the Kingdom of God? — *Exp. Bib.*

30. Strive not, either in private contention or public litigation. **without cause,** or to no purpose. The litigious spirit is unsuitable to the good and godly man. It leads men to make occasions of quarrel when really there are none.

Strife. — Look at strife in two aspects. I. As a principal inherent in the soul. II. As a principle liable to perversion. — *Thomas.*

Contention. — Two learned physicians and a plain, honest countryman, happening to meet at an inn, sat down to dinner together. A dispute presently arose between the two doctors on the nature of ailment, which proceeded to such a height, and was carried on with so much fury, that it spoiled their meal, and they parted extremely indisposed. The countryman, in the meantime, who understood not the cause, though he heard the quarrel, fell heartily to his meat, gave thanks to God, digested it well, returned in the strength of it to his honest labor, and at evening received his wages. "Is there not sometimes," adds Bishop Horne, "as much difference between the polemical and the practical Christian?" — *Whitecross.*

31, 32. (31) **Envy not,** "do not anxiously covet the booty wh. men of violence acquire."[b] — *Stuart.* **oppressor,**[c] *man of mischief,* or rapacious man. (32) **froward,** or one bent out of right ways; *R. V.*, "perverse." **secret,** "confidential intercourse;" *R. V., marg.*, "friendship." Ps. xxv. 14. **righteous,** better, the *straightforward,* upright.

The oppressor (vs. 31).— I. His character is not to be envied. 1. Because envy is in itself an evil; 2. Because there is nothing in the oppressor to be desired. II. His conduct is not to be followed.— *Thomas.*

The secret of the Lord.— When a few years have been passed in humble dependence on God, it is then possible to look back and see with astonishing clearness how real and decisive the leadings of the Spirit have been. There were moments when two alternatives were present, and we were tempted to decide on the strength of our own understanding; but thanks be to His name, we committed it to Him. We stepped forward then in the darkness; we deserted the way which seemed most attractive, and entered the narrow path which was shrouded in mist. We knew He was leading us, but we could not see. Now we see, and we cannot speak our praise. Our life, we find, is all a

have not learnt to be content with Thy corrections." —*Bp. Hall.*

[a] Prob. it expresses, in this bold form of speech, the great Scriptural thought that the so-called possession of wealth is but a stewardship: that the true owners of what we call our own are those to whom, with it, we may do good."— *Spk. Com.*

"He gives twice to one in need who gives at once."— *Publius Syrus.*

"A slow-footed favor is a favor without favor." — *Grotius.*

"The benefit is thankless wh. sticks long bet. the hands of the giver."— *Seneca.*

If God afflict you, let not impatience add to the affliction.

"Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of Christian graces; to sit where He places us, to be what He would have us to be, and as long as He pleases."— *Cecil.*

"This world would be a world of peace if men were all peace-makers." — *John Ruskin.*

[b] Ps. lxxiii. 3.

[c] "The good old rule sufficeth them, the simple plan, that they should take who have the power and they should keep who can."— *W. Wordsworth.*

"God will scorn them, and lay them open to the scorn of the world." — *Mat. Henry.*

"Well may we think our substance due where we owe ourselves."—*Bp. Hall.*

plan of God, and He conceals it from us, as if on purpose to evoke our trust, and to secure that close and personal communion which the uncertainty renders necessary.— *Exp. Bib.*

33, 34. (33) **The curse,** "the infliction of temporal misfortunes ending with the 'cutting off' of the wicked."— *Pul. Com.* **in the house,** abiding constantly with them. "God is angry with the wicked every day." **habitation,** though it be but a cottage or a tent. (34) **scorneth,**[a] Jas. iv. 6; 1 Pe. v. 5. God precisely meets man, adapting His dealings with him to man's disposition. **scorners,** who scoff at the precepts of God. **lowly,** who are willing to receive Div. instructions.[b]

God in the house.— A Scottish laborer went to work for a wealthy farmer. It was regarded as something of a favor to be employed by him, as he was a prompt and liberal paymaster, and was held by his neighbors to be a very superior farmer. But the laborer soon left the farmer's employ. "I'm told you've left farmer R.," said a neighbor. "Yes, I have," was the reply. "Was the work too hard for you?" "There was nothing to complain of on that score." "What then? Were the wages too low?" "No." "Why did you leave?" "There was no roof on the house." And he went on his way, leaving his questioner to ponder on the strange answer he had given. The Scotchman's meaning may be found in the saying of an old writer, who affirms that a dwelling in which prayer is not offered up to God daily is like a house without a roof, in which there cannot be either peace, safety, or comfort.— *Hom. Cyc.*

35. **wise,** made wise by heeding the teachings of the true Wisdom. **glory,**[c] a comprehensive term for all honor and good. **promotion of,** or exalteth. **fools,** who are wicked more than foolish. "Shame is the nobility conferred on fools."— *Müntinghe.* "Fools are elevated like the light dust, and then are swept away."— *Stuart.*

The rewards of wisdom and folly (*vs.* 35). — I. Distinguish the two characters. II. Declare their proper award. III. The effect of wisdom on our condition in the eternal world. There the conduct of all will be rightly appreciated; then wisdom and folly will appear in their true light. Recommend— 1. A retrospect of your past lives; 2. A prospective view of futurity.— *Simeon.*

Massillon. — Massillon, an eminent French preacher, in the first sermon he ever delivered, found, upon his getting into the pulpit, the whole audience in a disposition no way favorable to his intentions; their nods, whispers, or drowsy behavior, showed him that there was no great profit to be expected from his sowing in a soil so barren. However, he soon changed the disposition of the audience by his manner of beginning. "If," said he, "a cause the most important that could be conceived were to be tried at the bar before qualified judges; if this cause interested ourselves in particular; if the eyes of the whole kingdom were fixed upon the event; if the most eminent counsel were employed on both sides: and if we had heard from our infancy of this undetermined trial, would you not all sit with due attention and warm expectation to the pleadings on both sides? Would not all your hopes and fears be suspended upon the final decision? And yet, let me tell you, you have this moment a cause of much greater importance before you; a cause where not one nation but all the world are spectators; tried not before a fallible tribunal, but before the awful throne of Heaven; where not your temporal and transitory interests are the subjects of debate, but your eternal happiness or misery; where the cause is still undetermined; but, perhaps the very moment I am speaking may fix the irrevocable decree that shall last forever; and yet, notwithstanding all this, you can hardly sit with patience to hear the tidings of salvation. I plead the cause of Heaven, and yet I am scarcely attended to."— *R. T. S.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1, 2. (1) **ye children,** the pupils or hearers of the teacher of wisdom are so called in affectionate earnestness. The expression suggests that the counsels are urged with a paternal authority.[d] **of a father,** who had been a son, and knew, by happy experience, the value of parental instruction and discipline.[e] **understanding,** spiritual discernment of that which is right and

[a] Ps. xviii. 26.

[b] "Humility is both a grace and vessel to receive grace."—*Trapp.*

"He and he only possesses the earth as he goes toward heaven, who is humble and cheerful, and content with what his good God has allotted him: who has no turbulent, repining, vexatious thoughts that he deserves better; nor is vexed when he sees others possessed of more honor or more riches than his wise God has allotted for his share." — *Izaak Walton.*

[c] Da. xii. 2, 3.

"As is our character so are we before God and His universe, and so will be our destiny in the great hereafter."—*D. Thomas.*

"You shall have him ever inquiring into the estates of his equals and betters, wherein he is not more desirous to hear all, than loth to hear anything overgood; and if just report relate aught better than he would, he redoubles the question, as being hard to believe what he likes not. Whom he dares not openly backbite, nor wound with a direct censure, he strikes smoothly with an over-cold praise."— *Bp. Hall.*

"They shall be promoted, indeed, but their exaltation shall be like that of Haman, who was exalted when he was hung upon a gallows fifty cubits high."—*Lawson.*

[d] *Comp.* Ps. xxxiv. 11; 1 Th. ii. 11; 1 Jno. ii. 12, 13, 18

[e] "The author designs to represent himself as a son,

good. (2) **good doctrine,** oral teaching received by me, which I hand over to you. He received the substance of it from his father. **law,** or practical directions for the guidance of his life.

A religious home (*vss.* 1–4). — I. The love of a religious home. 1. Natural love; 2. Spiritual love. II. The training of a religious home. The teaching was — 1. Worth retaining; 2. Practical; 3. Quickening. III. The influence of a religious home. For this, two reasons. 1. The susceptibility of childhood; 2. The potency of parental affection. — *Thomas.*

A father's instruction. — Do not venture upon great sea voyages without proper instruments and without being taught how to use them. So in life. Be enriched with doctrine or wisdom, and cultivate that tender filial spirit which gratefully yields itself to direction. It is at once wise and lovely for youth to consult the aged, and to avail themselves of accumulated experience. Any other spirit is vain, self-conceited, frivolous, and unworthy. Why should the father be anxious to instruct and direct the son? Because he has seen more of life — more of its mystery, its peril, its tragedy; therefore his heart yearns to preserve the young from danger. The father's position is one of moral dignity and supreme benevolence. Having suffered himself, he would save his children from pain. — *Exp. Bib.*

3, 4. father's son, specially favored son. **tender,** in sense of gentle, docile. **only beloved,** or the darling of my mother, so receiving her special care.[a] *R. V., marg.* "an only one." (4) **sight,** estimation. **live,** *i. e.* thou shalt enjoy a long and peaceful life.

Filial recollections (*vss.* 3, 4). — I. Of a father's care. II. Of a mother's tenderness. III. Of early parental instruction. IV. How do we regard these things now? V. All this care, tenderness, and instruction are for our advantage. VI. Our present treatment of parents will embitter or gladden future recollections.

Maternal influence. — I look back to the period when I stood on the side of a river, a broad river, about to shake hands with a beloved mother, and hear a long farewell. I still think that I hear her pleading; I still think that I hear that gentle voice saying, "O my son! make me happy by promising me a promise." I still think I see the tears trickling over her venerable cheeks, which I saw again only a few weeks ago, when I bade her a last earthly farewell. I still think I see that venerable form pleading with a naughty son, when he refused to promise that he would read the Word of God every morning and every evening. When I look back to that period (and all my feelings are still the same), I see the spot where we stood; I still imagine I hear the tones of her voice, though now her lips tremble with age when she speaks; I still think I see her countenance brightening up, when I said, "Yes, mother, I shall do what you wish." In obedience to that promise, I read the Word of God, and God poured out His spirit from on high. My dark heart was enlightened; I saw the Saviour — that Saviour that died for me; and from that day to the present, I have lived in the faith of the Gospel. — *Moffat.*

5, 6. (5) **Get,**[b] as a permanent possession, a ruling principle. **understanding,** discretion to choose between the right and the wrong, *discernment.* **forget not,** according to the fixedness of the attention will be the safe holding in memory. **neither decline,** turn not back from. Temptations to turn from the principles established in a pious youth-time are sure to come. (6) **Forsake her not,** Wisdom is here personified as a queen. She represents the "chief good" for man[c] (ch. iii. 13–18). **preserve thee,** like a watchman. She stands sentry over us.

Get wisdom. — 1. Because of the excellency of it. Things of high birth are excellent. This wisdom is from above (James iii. 17). Things rare are precious. True wisdom is not found in many. 2. Because of the pleasure of it. No content in the world like that wisdom gives. 3. Because of the profit of it. Every trade will tell you that wisdom thrives, and folly beggars men. So in spiritual things. 4. Because of the necessity of it, which is the strongest argument. Without it die, nay be damned. — *Francis Taylor.*

Avoiding temptation. — It is said that a Quaker, having to engage a coachman, was anxious to secure a competent and trusty person. Three candidates presented themselves, and the same question was put to each. "Friend, how near canst thou drive to the edge of a precipice without upsetting the coach?"

and the object of his father's counsels and warnings. The aim was to present the example of the one son before the many sons."—*Otto Zöckler.*

"If a man falls overboard from the deck of a vessel, he will not remain long at the level of his first fall. If he is not rescued he will sink to such a depth as will be out of all comparison with it. He will go lower and lower till his body finds the bottom of the ocean."—*Preachers' Com.*

[a] "Noteworthy is the prominence given to the mothers' share in training the child. Among the Israelites and Egyptians alone, of the nations of the whole world, was the son's reverence for the mother placed side by side with that which he owed to his father."—*Spk. Com.*

"The home is the most potent institution in the world. Parental roofs are more influential institutions than cathedrals. 'The old arm chair' where parents sat is mightier to me than any pulpits ever have been or ever will be."—*David Thomas*

For the term *only comp.* Ge. xxii. 2, 12; Jno. i. 3; Eph. i. 6.

[b] "*Lit. buy.* An imitation of the exclamation of a merchant who is offering his wares."—*Umbreit.*

[c] "The 'chief good for man' must be intellectual, or adapted to the higher and nobler part of our nature; attainable by all of whatever sex, age or mental conformation; unimpaired by distribution; independent of the circumstances of time or place; incapable of participation to excess; composed

essentially of the same elements as the good to be enjoyed in a future state."—*Quoted by D. Thomas.*

"Within a foot," was the reply of the first. "Within an inch," was the reply of the second. The third, who was the successful candidate, answered, "I always endeavor to keep as far off from a precipice as possible." The moral is plain.

7—9. (7) **Wisdom . . thing,** *lit. as the height of wisdom get wisdom.* — *Miller.* **thy getting,** "if it cost thee all thy wealth get wisdom." **understanding,** here as usual in the sense of practical discernment. (8) **Exalt her,** set her high in thine esteem. Extol her as thy greatest good.[a] **promote thee,** responding by doing for thee what it is in thine heart and effort to do for her.[b] **embrace her,** as a loved and trusted wife, with fond affection. (9) **an ornament,** ch. i. 9. **deliver,** or compass thee with, for thy protection. Wisdom shall be to thee beauty and strength.

The principal thing (*vs.* 7). — I. What this wisdom is not — mere knowledge, scientific, metaphysical, *etc.* Many have this kind of knowledge who are not wise unto salvation. II. What it is — religion in the broad and personal sense. Fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom. III. Why the principal thing — 1. We may have all else and not be saved; 2. We may have none else but this, and then shall be saved; 3. It is the principal thing in life, death and forever.

Wisdom. — Knowledge is the treasure of the mind, but discretion is the key to it, without which it is useless. There are no such safeguards as virtue and wisdom. The one secures the soul, the other the estate and body. "Fortune first fools the man she means to foil." She dares not, she cannot hurt us while we continue wise. Discretion sways the stars and fate. The witty Horace says:

> "In short, the wise is only less than Jove,
> Rich, free, and glorious; nay, a king above
> All earthly kings."

Sin can no more be without folly than fire without dryness or water without moisture. It is folly that opens the door and lets it into the heart and retains it there.

a The LXX. render "place thou stakes about her," to lift her up as if she were a tree.

b *Comp.* Gal. vi. 8.

"Make religion thy business, other things do by the bye. As Cæsar, swimming through the waters to escape his enemies, carried his books in his hand above them, but lost his robe."—*Trapp.*

Wisdom is of two kinds: there are those who are deemed wise, and those who are really such; viz., those who are wise "after the flesh," and those who are wise "after the Spirit."

10—12. (10) **life,** the word here used is a plural, *i. e.* life in the abstract. **shall be many,** multiplied. (11) **led thee,** caused thee to tread, referring to childhood. Now that youth was come, the wise man was anxious that his son should go willingly in the way in which childhood's steps had been led. **right paths,** or "paths of loveliness," or righteousness. (12) **not to be straitened,** there shall be ample room; in thy life-journey the path shall be clear and open, and obstacles shall disappear.[c] **runnest,** in thy times of activity or haste.

The truth of God secures safety.— The follower of Divine wisdom will not stumble. 1. He will not run in the way of danger. The narrow path is the safe path. There are gins and snares in the broad road. 2. God will remove the greatest impediments out of his path. He is in the King's highway. God is with His people while they are treading the path of righteousness, and He will prepare their way for them. 3. There will be light to see the difficulties of the way. God's truth is a lamp to guide us over such difficulties. With the light of heavenly wisdom we safely pass them. 4. There will be help at hand. Christ is with His people on their pilgrimage.— *Pul. Com.*

c Ps. xviii. 36; xci 11.

"On the great highway of life the only free traveler is he who is spiritually wise. Others are so burdened and fettered that there is no spring of liberty in their steps."—*Dav. Thomas.*

Men are running after wisdom; none find it but those who find Christ.

13. **Take fast hold,** strictly, "fasten, and do not let slack."[d] Hold the lesson of wisdom with a firm and unrelaxing tenacity. **keep her,** or keep watch over her. **thy life,** exactly, "she is herself thy life," *i. e.* wisdom is the bestower of long life.

Hold fast (*vs.* 13).— I. To what? Instruction, *i. e.* in the truth that makes wise to salvation — heavenly wisdom. II. When? At once — more especially in the time of youth. Youth the time for learning, books, trade, *etc.* III. How? With desperate earnestness, firm grasp; continue holding, by prayer, thought, *etc.* IV. Why? She is thy life. 1. She will bless thy present life; 2. Save thee to life eternal.

Taking fast hold.— Often a ship's crew at sea are obliged suddenly to betake themselves to their boats, and abandon the sinking ship. Such a case was recently reported of an American whale-ship in the South Seas. The huge leviathan of the deep, wounded by the art of man, ran out the distance of a

d "One rough grapple is not enough. Wisdom glides away, if we give time to the arch deceiver."—*Miller.*

Pr. iii. 18.

Remember, Christian soul, that thou hast this day, and every day of thy life, "God to glorify, a soul to save, heaven to gain, eternity to prepare for, passions to

mile by way of getting a run-race, and thence came on with incredible velocity against the devoted ship. She began to fill, . . . the word was given. All hands went to work, and soon all the seaworthy boats were loaded to the gunwale with the prime necessaries of life. The deck was now nearly level with the water, and the boats shoved off for safety. After they had pulled a hundred yards away, two resolute men leaped from one of the boats into the sea, and made towards the ship. They disappear down a hatchway. In a minute they emerge again, bearing something in their hands. As they leap into the water the ship goes down; the men are separated from each other and their burden in the whirlpool that gathers over the sinking hull. They do not seem to consult their own safety. They remain in that dangerous eddy until they grasp again the object which they had carried over the ship's side. Holding it fast, they are seen at length bearing away to their comrades in the boat. What do these strong swimmers carry, for they seem to value it more than life? It is the compass! It had been left behind, and was remembered almost too late. Now they have taken fast hold of it, and will not let it go. Whatever they lose, they will at all hazards keep it, for "it is their life." When shall we see souls, shipwrecked on the sea of time, take and keep such hold of the truth as it is in Jesus?—*Arnot.*

14—15. (14) **Enter not,** avoid the very entrances and beginnings of evil ways. **go not,** or walk not; a word that indicates the bold, arrogant walk of the presumptuous. **evil men,** the godless, the habitually wicked, as ch. i. 10–19.[a] (15) **Avoid it,** abhor it as one well instructed in its way, and not enticed by attractive appearances. **turn from it,** so as to free thyself from its fascination, to get as far as possible away fr. it.

Curiosity a temptation to sin (*vss.* 14, 15). — Curiosity strangely moves us to disobedience, in order that we may have experience of the pleasure of disobedience. If Satan can get us to sin once, he can easily make us sin twice or thrice, till at length we are taken captive at his will. The great thing in religion is to set off well — to flee temptation. 1. Because it is hardly possible to delay our flight without rendering flight impossible; 2. Familiarity with evil thoughts must be the consequence of allowing them to be present with us, even if we do not admit them into our heart; 3. Sinning once makes continuance in sin easy; 4. This leads to spiritual slavery. —*Newman.*

Running from sin. — A little girl in the days when the conversion of children was not the subject of as much prayer as now, applied for membership in a Baptist church. "Were you a sinner," asked an old deacon, "before this change of which you now speak?" "Yes, sir," she replied. "Well, are you now a sinner!" "Yes, sir; I feel I am a greater sinner than ever." "Then what change is there in you?" "I don't quite know how to explain it," she said; "but I used to be a sinner running after sin, and now I hope I am a sinner running from sin." They received her, and for years she was a bright and shining light, and now she lives where there is no sin to run from. — *Anec. Illus. of O. T. Test.*

16, 17. (16) **sleep,** *etc.*, strong figure to express the excited zeal of sinners in doing evil.[b] **cause . . fall,** *R. V.*, "have done mischief." (17) **eat . . violence,** their food has been obtained by dishonesty and violence,[c] *comp.* Job xv. 16.

Living for sin (*vss.* 16–17). — We have here a sad description of the desperately wicked — I. Finding his joy in life in ill-doing. II. In causing the ruin of others. III. Living on ill-gotten gains. Few of the ungodly reach to this height of wickedness suddenly; they began by consorting with the wicked, and hence their final character.

The godless home. — The unfortunate child whose infancy was passed in the midst of baleful example, whose heart received no instruction from parents' lips, grows up like one stumbling in the dark, and the darkness deepens as he advances. There is the old ingrained vice which comes out again and again after every attempted reformation; there is the old unhallowed set of the thoughts and the tastes. It is all like the damp in the walls of an ill-built house. In dry weather there are only the stains, but those stains are the prophecy of what will be again when the wet weather returns. — *Exp. Bib.*

18. just, the man who ever seeks to do *right:* not the "justified" man of the New Test. **shining light,** of the morning. **shineth,** brightens, clears,

subdue, death perhaps to suffer, and judgment to undergo."

"'Tis not yet too late; seize Wisdom ere she seizes thee."—*Young.*

"I called upon God and the Spirit of Wisdom came to me. I preferred her before sceptres and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither compared I unto her any precious stone, because all gold, in respect of her, is as a little sand; and silver shall be counted as clay to her. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light: for the light that cometh from her never goeth out."—*Wisdom of Solomon.*

a Ps. i. 1.

"Venture not into the company of those that are infected with the plague, no, not though thou think thyself guarded with an antidote."—*Matt. Henry.*

"If the child's heart is surrendered to God, and molded by heavenly wisdom, the man will walk securely; an instinctive aversion will lead them to decline the way of the wicked."—*Exp. Bib.*

b "The fearful stage of debasement, when the tendency to sin is like the craving for stimulants, as a condition without which there can be no repose."—*Spk. Com.*

c Comp. De. xvi. 3; Ps. cxxvii. 2; Am. ii. 8

Another interpretation is suggested, "They eat wickedness as bread, and drink violence as wine."

Comp. Job xv. 16; xxxiv. 7.

or grows, on to the noontide fullness.[a] **more and more,** ever advancing and increasing. **perfect day,** *i. e.* high noon. "The path of the just is, by an extremely beautiful image, likened to the light at dawn, which goes on increasing in brightness and intensity as the day advances, until at length it reaches its meridian splendor and glory."

A shining light. — 1. It has all the great leading characteristics suggested by light, *viz.*, truth, purity, joy, life. 2. It is open to the day. They that do evil love the darkness that hides their deeds. Goodness fears no exposure. 3. It is bright with reflected Divine light. Christ shines on the soul, and it brightens under His love as the dark hills and darker valleys take on the colors of life before the rising sun. 4. It is always giving out light around it. It is a shining light, a glistening light. The true Christian is a light of the world. — *Pul. Com.*

The path of the just. — Many a man has sadly failed and clouded, if he has not totally darkened, the close of his life history; because he was not just, he lacked courage to defend the truth against obloquy. Erasmus, who might have been a star of the Reformation, was but a comet, because he was too timid to place himself beside Luther and other champions of Protestantism. Far different was the career of such a man as John Huss. In his boyhood we see the small but glowing spark, which could prompt him to thrust his hand into the flames, when he had been reading a martyr's life, to see how far he himself could endure. We do not wonder that on his way to the stake, Huss could calmly smile as he witnessed the burning of his books; and when fastened thereto, sing a Bohemian hymn, until his voice was stifled by the smoke. A blind man may have a full belief in the brilliancy of a daylight he cannot behold, and the course of Christian life is at times similar. As Sir H. Vane wrote to his wife not long before his execution, "This dark night and black shade which God hath drawn over us may be, for aught we know, the ground color of some beautiful piece that He is not exposing to the light."

Growth. —

Upward the soul forever turns her eyes;
The next hour always shames the hour before;
One beauty, at its highest, prophesies
That by whose side it shall seem mean and poor.
No Godlike thing knows aught of less and less,
But widens to the boundless perfectness. — *J. R. Lowell.*

19. as darkness, "a perpetual sunset." Comp. Job iii. 6; x. 22, thick darkness; midnight gloom. **know . . stumble,**[b] "they do not know wickedness as wickedness, nor do they apprehend the destruction wh. it involves." — *Pul. Com.*

The way of the wicked (*vs.* 19). — It is in every point the converse of that which has just been sketched. 1. It is his own way: not God's way, not the way in which he was destined to walk. 2. It is a way of darkness, because it is a way of blindness. Blindness puts a man in the dark, and, being in the dark, he has only the experience that springs from darkness. It follows of necessity that such a path is one of danger. 3. Like the path of the just, it is a progressive path. No man stands still in it. The darkness thickens as the blindness increases, and the blindness grows the longer men refuse to "come to the light." 4. It is a path which is destructive to others. As the good man, by walking in God's path, blesses his fellow-creatures as well as himself, so the wicked man, in his path of darkness, is a curse to others as well as himself. — *Preacher's Com.*

The improvident traveler. — A certain traveler, who had a distance to go, one part of his road leading through green fields, and the other through a tangled road of brambles and thorns, made great preparations for the first part of his journey. He dressed himself in light and gay clothes, and put a nosegay in his bosom, and taking a light, slender cane in his hand, nimbly proceeded on his way along the beaten path across the green meadows. The sun shone in the skies, and on went the traveler, comfortably, pleasantly, and delightfully. After a while, the road became rugged, and, by the time night drew on, the traveler was in a pitiable plight. His provisions were exhausted; his clothes wet through, and partly torn from his back by the briars; his flowers were faded, and, weary as he was, his slender cane would not bear his weight; a stream of water was before him, and darkness around him. "Alas!" said he, smiting his breast, "I am hungry, and have no food;

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a "The Orient light of dawn, wh. goes forth and shines to the steadfast day"- *Wordsworth.*

"That grows and brightens even to the establishing of the 'day,' alluding to the supposed stationary position of the sun at noon." — *Otto Zöckler*

"Very rarely, indeed, do we receive any good gift out of the spiritual treasures of our God, in ripe completeness at the first. It would be as difficult to put a full-grown grace into the soul as to transplant a full-grown tree."— *Sarah F. Smiley.*

"The top of one summit forever becomes the foot of another."

Comp. fig. in 2 Sa. xxiii. 4.

"The saint, on to all eternity, is to be the ever-ripening man."-*Phillips Brooks.*

"The wise and active conquer difficulties by daring to attempt them."—*Rowe.*

b 1 Sa. ii. 9; Job xviii. 5, 6, 18; xxiv. 13; Is. lix. 10; Jno. iii. 19; xi. 10; xii. 35, 36.

"All sin and wickedness in man's spirit hath the central force and energy of hell in it, and is perpetually pressing down towards it as towards its own place. True godliness is a winged thing, and travels, bears itself upwards on its own wings, soaring aloft towards God." — *Old Author, quoted by Thomas.*

"It is a traveler's tale which tells that the Indian spiders weave webs so strong that men are sometimes imprisoned by them; but it is no fable that from the gossamer threads of ungodly thoughts, and slender trans-

wet to the skin, and have no dry clothes; weary, and have no staff to rest on; I have a stream to cross, and here is no boat; I am bewildered, and have no guide; it is dark, and I have no lantern. Fool that I am!—why did I not provide for the end of my journey, as well as the beginning?" Time is hastening away. We are all travelers. Life is the beginning, death the end of our journey.

20—22. (20) **My son,** some think that in the prev. *vss.* the wise man has been repeating the instructions he received fr. his father, and that in the 20th *vs.* he begins again his own counsels to his son. **incline,** *etc.*, as *vs.* 10. (21) **not depart,** or escape by being neglected.[a] **keep them,** in the inmost recesses, *i. e.* with internal affection. (22) **health,** *marg. medicine* or *healing.* This they become, as they preserve the young man from the vices destructive of health.

Divine principles (*vss.* 20-22).—I. The method of gaining them. There must be—1. The attentive ear; 2. The steadfast look; 3. The enshrining heart. II. The blessedness of having them. 1. They are life; 2. Health—health of all kinds.—*Thomas.*

God's law in the heart.—"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." (Deut. vi. 6, 8.) Amongst the Jews there was a sad propensity to take the latter injunction literally and externally. Hypocrites and formalists satisfied themselves with having little scraps of the law written on parchment, and worn as frontlets on the forehead. But this was a delusion. The laws of God are never rightly "before the eyes" unless they are "in the heart." The meaning of the former clause of the verse is, that the commandments of God should be kept constantly in view as the guides of the whole conduct. And this will be the case when they are kept "in the midst of the heart."—*Wardlaw.*

23—24. (23) **Keep,** or keep watch, and guard. **heart,** regarded as the central citadel.[b] **all diligence,** "above all keeping." "The heart, as the chief object of moral watchfulness, is plainly nothing but the conscience, the moral consciousness of man."—*Zöckler.* **issues of life,**[c] fig. from the fountains and wells of the East, wh. were watched over with jealous care. Moral conduct is conditioned by the state of the heart. (24) **froward mouth,** crookedness of mouth, crafty deception. **perverse,** or swerving; *i. e.* wh. utter falsehood.

How the heart is to be kept.—1. Pure. Let us see that the heart above all things is cleansed from sin and kept holy. By faith in Christ and the indwelling of the Divine Spirit, the heart can be cleansed and preserved in purity. 2. True. The Christian is to be a servant of God. Let him be loyal—frank, too, and ingenous and simple. 3. Tender. There is much in the world to harden them. Let us seek to have them soft to receive Divine influences and to feel human compassions. Keep the heart thus by watchfulness, by self-control, by prayer, above all by entrusting it to the keeping of God. "My son, give me thy heart."—*Pul. Com.*

Keeping the heart.—The heart is a *lamp,* which the High and Holy One has entrusted to our care: keep it well trimmed then, keep it with all diligence: let it not resemble those of the foolish virgins, who took no oil with them: but rather look unto God for fresh supplies of His grace.—The heart is a *ship;* keep it with all diligence. Look to the hull and the rudder, the masts, the sails, and the rigging. Have an eye to the crew, and take especial care what merchandise you put aboard; mind that you have plenty of ballast, and that you carry not too much sail. Mind that you have a heavenly Pilot at the helm. Be prepared for storms.—The heart is a *temple.* Have a care that you keep it with all diligence: keep it pure and undefiled. Let the ark of the covenant be found within it. Let your prayers be set forth as incense, and the lifting up of your hands as the evening sacrifice. Dedicate the temple of your hearts to the Lord of lords and King of kings, and use all diligence in seeking that it may be filled with His glory.—The heart is a *besieged city,* and liable to attacks on all sides. While you defend one part, keep a good look-out on the other; while you build up the bastion here, let not the gateway be left defenseless there. Be alive! be diligent! post your sentinels! have a watchword! take care whom you let in, and whom you allow to go out. Muster your troops, and see that there be no traitors among them. You

gressions, come at length dark convictions and habits which hold men in most cruel bondage."—*Hom. Com.*

[a] "'Let them not be withdrawn'"—*Bertheau.*

Pr. iii. 8.

"Still he calls for attention. It fares with many of us as with little children, who, though saying their lessons, must needs look off to see the feather that flies by them"—*Trapp.*

"Men of wit and parts need never be driven to indirect courses."—*Ottway*

"Many think it great to have a strong, determined will. Few think it greater to have none."

[b] "Regard the heart as the very citadel and acropolis of thy being. The importance of keeping the heart is shown in the fact that the Heb. word (*leb*) heart occurs in the Bk. of Prov. ninety times."—*Wordsworth.*

[c] "All vital principles are lodged there (in the heart), and only such as are good and holy will give you pleasure. The exercises of religion will be pleasant when they are natural and flow easily out of their own fountains."—*J. Howe.*

"Guard thy heart as the great central 'guard-post,' and no out station will be cut off."—*Miller.*

"No action will be considered as blameless unless the 'will was so;' for by the will the act was dictated."—*Seneca.*

have plenty to do, and plenty to attend to; keep, then, your heart with all diligence. — *Old Humphrey.*

25—27. (25) **right on,** the fig. for pursuing a direct and straightforward course. The restless, wandering eye leads to evil, and shows that there is no fixedness of purpose. (26) **Ponder,** or well consider, *R. V.*, marg. "weigh carefully." "Make smooth each foot-planting." — *Miller.* **established,** *marg.* "ordered aright." (27) **Turn not,** De. v. 32. Avoid all by-paths.

The eyes. — The eye is one of the chief gateways of knowledge. According to the objects on which we fix it, the class of our knowledge will be determined. It is the guide in our actions. Now, it is requisite that the Christian have: 1. A straight and "single" sight (see Matt. vi. 22), looking only at the truth, with no stray glances at the innumerable deceptions of low self-interest. 2. A long sight, looking at the end of the race — the Celestial City, neither allured by the fascinations of Vanity Fair nor distracted by the horrors of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. 3. An upward gaze fixed on God and Christ rather than on worldly loss or gain. — *Pul. Com.*

Beginning well. — It is of vast moment to be "just right" when starting. At Preston, at Malines, at many such places, the railway lines go gently asunder; so fine is the angle that at first the paths are almost parallel, and it seems of small moment which you select. But a little further on one of them turns a corner, or drives into a tunnel, and now that the speed is full the angle opens up, and at the rate of a mile a minute the divided convoy flies asunder. One passenger is on the way to Italy, another to the swamps of Holland: one will step out in London, the other in view of the Irish Channel. — *Hamilton.*

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1, 2. (1) **my wisdom,**[a] learnt by actual, and poss. dear, experience. **bow,** or "incline." (2) **regard discretion,** or, maintain a wise, prudential consideration; a circumspect demeanor.[b] **lips,** *etc.*, *lit.* "and thy lips shall keep," *etc.* Thou shall have the prompt, wise answer, at thy tongue's end, whenever temptation comes.

True wisdom. — Study hard and search diligently and deeply, and that with unwearied patience and delight. Unpleasant studies tire and seldom prosper. Slight running thoughts accomplish little. If any man think that the Spirit is given to save us the labor of hard and long studies the wise man hath spent so many chapters in calling them to dig, ay, search, labor, wait for wisdom, that if that will not undeceive them I cannot. They may as well say that God's blessing is to save the husbandman the labor of ploughing and sowing, and that the Spirit is given to save men the labor of learning to read the Bible, or to hear it, or to think of it, or to pray to God. Whereas the Spirit is given us to provoke and enable us to study hard, and read, and hear and pray hard, and to prosper us herein. — *Baxter.*

3, 4. (3) **strange woman,**[c] "either as being of foreign extraction or as being the wife of another man;" ch. ii. 16. — *Pul. Com.* **drop . . honeycomb,** drop sweetness, or what seems to be sweetness; distil honey. **smoother than oil,** and therefore insinuating and persuasive. But her enticing promises are deceitful. (4) **her end,**[d] *i. e.* the ultimate consequences brought about by her. When the gloss is removed the real thing is bitter and ruinous. **wormwood,** De. xxix. 18. "Your tongues are placed in honey and your speech is milk; your hearts are besmeared with gall and sharp vinegar." — *Terence.* **two-edged sword,** *lit.* as a sword of edges.

Results of sin. — The laborer can hope to reap a harvest only of the same nature as the seed he has sown. Pleasures, human consolations, indulgencies of sense, the satisfactions of our own wills, are the seeds of all those miseries, which attain the full expansion of their deadly fruits in hell. But, on the contrary, whilst the indulgence of an evil nature yields these unhappy fruits, a spiritual submission, for Christ's sake, to crosses, to humiliations, self-denials and contradictions, are those seeds which bear their full and blessed fruits of holiness and happiness in the world to come. — *M. de St. Marthe.*

5, 6. (5) **go down,** and so lead her votaries down. **hell,**[e] *Sheol*, not here Gehenna. *Sheol* equals *Hades*, the lower world, the place of departed spirits;

"I wish you would change my heart," said the chief Sekomi to Livingstone. "Give me medicine to change it, for it is proud, proud and angry, angry always." — *Harper.*

"A life of integrity requires attention to heart, eyes, speech, conduct." — *Fausset.*

"He who reigns within himself, and rules passions, desires, and fears, is more than a king."—*Milton.*

"When the Word of God enters the heart, it will banish all pollution from the tongue." *Lawson.*

a "The connection of wisdom and understanding is frequent; the first denotes the use of wise means for wise ends; the other the exercise of a proper discrimination in their discovery." —*Fausset.*

b "The wise man's lectures are not designed to fill our heads with notions, with matters of nice speculation, or doubtful disputation, but to guide us in the government of ourselves, that we may act prudently, so as becomes us, and so as will be for our true interest."—*Matt. Henry.*

c "The following description has been regarded by ancient expositors as having a double sense. 1. As a portrait of a harlot, especially one of foreign extraction; and 2. As being a representation of the allurements of unsound doctrine and corrupt worship." — *Wordsworth.*

d Ps. xxxvii. 37, 38; lxxiii. 17.

e "Take hold on hell, as if to pull it swiftly and sud-

but here, significantly, the place of those dying unblessed. (6) Trans. "*she walks not in the path of life, her ways fluctuate, she knows not,*" descriptive of the singularly fatuous conduct of "the strange woman." — *Pul. Com.*

Realism.— Holiness describes the ways of sin in detail to create a horror and a hatred of them; she describes exactly what is within the tempting doors, — all the glamor, all the softness, all the luxury, all the unhallowed raptures, — and shows distinctly how these chambers are on the incline of death, in order that curiosity, the mother of prurience, may be stifled, and the unwary may be content to remove his way far from the temptress, and to come not nigh the door of her house. But this, it may be said, is the plea urged by a certain school of modern realism in art. Yes, but to counteract vice by depicting it is so hazardous a venture that none can do it successfully who is not fortified in virtue himself, and constantly led, directed, and restrained by the Holy Spirit of God. Just in this point lies the great difference between the realism of the Bible and the realism of the French novel. In the first the didactic purpose is at once declared, and the writer moves with swift precision through the fascinating scene, to lift the curtain and show death beyond; in the last the motive is left doubtful, and the writer moves slowly, observantly, even gloatingly, through the abomination and the filth, without any clear conception of the Divine Eye which watches, or of the Divine Voice which condemns. — *Exp. Bib.*

7—9. (7) **ye children,** *R. V.*, "my sons." *Comp. my son, vs.* 1. This advice concerns all young men, not the one son only. It is invaluable advice for all. (8) **Remove,** *etc.*, avoid the very approaches of her allurements. "Let thy way in life be far off from her." **not nigh,** avoid the very scenes of temptation. (9) **honour,** the bloom or splendor of youth. **thy years,** *i. e.* the best, most valuable years. **cruel,** the cruel one; such the temptress is sure to become in the end. Zöckler suggests: "the husband of the adulteress who will deal mercilessly towards the paramour of his wife."

"*Loss of years.*"— He will "give his years to the cruel, his strength to the stranger." The loss of youthful strength and energy is the loss of years, the youth becomes old before he is a man. The vessel or the mansion that is charred by fire before it is completed presents a strange contrast. The newness and freshness of the walls or the timbers that have escaped make the destruction of the rest more lamentable. The building has been marred just upon the verge of completion, the ship has been spoiled when she was all but ready for the voyage. It is sad to see an old tree blasted by the lightning, but it is a greater misfortune when the tree is in its prime, when it is laden with fruit about to come to perfection. But these are faint shadows of the sad spectacle which is presented by a youth who has become prematurely old by unlawful indulgence before he has reached his prime. He is unfit to battle with the sea of life at the very time when he ought to be setting out on his voyage. He falls short of fulfilling the demands of God and man at the moment when he ought to be bringing forth abundant fruit. Surely such a consciousness must be as bitter waters to the spirit.—*Hom. Com.*

10, 11. wealth, *marg.* "strength:" but equivalent to property, possessions, the results of the putting forth of strength. *Comp.* the prodigal, who "wasted his substance with riotous living." The goods and business of the sensual man are soon "sold up," his earthly prospects are ruined through his bad companions and self-indulgent ways. **labours,** "painful toil."— *Stuart.* (11) **mourn,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, *marg.* "groom" in an agony of remorse. Eccl. vii. 26. **flesh,** *etc.*, sensual vices being productive of miserable and shameful diseases.

The doom of the libertine (*vs.* 10, 11).— I. Waste of wealth. It is spent to garnish the house of sin; is so much taken from home scenes, and legitimate pleasures, and benevolence. II. Waste of health. Note the corruption of licentious nations, as the Turks, *etc.* III. Waste of tears. Mourning at the last is too late for proving the repentance to be genuine.

Come not nigh her (*vs.* 8).— He that is farthest from fire is safest from the burning of it; he that is most remote from the way and course of the river is in less danger from the overflowing of it. It argues too much mind to be in the house, for anyone to come near the door of it. It is more safe not to be in danger of perishing, than being in danger not to perish. Chrysostom, speaking of Joseph, saith, "It doth not seem so wonderful to me, that the

denly upon the sinner." — *Matt. Henry.*

"Possession of hell is taken by the wicked before they come into it; the devil giveth them that when he by wickedness possesseth their hearts." —*Jermin.*

"Strong figs. of misery are these; but not too strong. The horrid memories, the self-remorse, the ruined health and reputation, the blasted hopes,— what misery are these!" — *Dav. Thomas.*

The licentious never love; and when even levity preponderates, there is seldom any pure and ardent passion.

"'Tis beauty that doth oft make women proud; 'tis virtue that doth make them most admired; 'tis modesty that makes them seem divine!" — *Shakespeare.*

Ro. vi. 23.

A British nobleman, seeing his nephew leaving a house of ill-fame, said to him, "Do not be ashamed to come out of that place; rather, in future, be ashamed to go in."

"There is not a single thing that hinders the reception and supremacy of the truth within us that will not become a thorn to pierce us."—*W. O. Lilley.*

"A benighted Chilian came to a Protestant missionary with an offer to sell his soul, saying that he wanted to use the money to set himself up in business. The thought shocks us; but how about the man in this country who selects the kind of business that ensures the barter of his soul?" —*C. E. World.*

"When a young man starts out to 'see life,' he may see death instead." —*J. E Pounds.*

three children in the furnace overcame the fire, as that Joseph, being indeed in a more grievous furnace than that of Babylon, came forth untouched."—*Jermin.*

12—14. (12) **And say,** in the language of bitter and hopeless remorse. **How,** *i. e.* in what an inexcusable way. (13) **not obeyed,** warnings that after a while are seen to have been full of wisdom and full of love. (14) **all evil,**[a] the fact wh. the ruined youth laments is not his hypocrisy; but the extent and boldness of his sins. **midst . . assembly,** he has not been restrained by the fact that his sin was generally known.

The sinner's retrospect (*vss.* 12, 13). — I. The sinner's retrospect. Two classes of men. 1. Those who feel some painful consequences of their past conduct; 2. Those who are sensible that they have not answered the great ends of life. II. The sinner's alternative. We must either attend to the voice of instruction in the Gospel, or carry remorse into eternity. Advice: 1. Endeavor to view everything in the light of eternity; 2. Spend each day as you will wish you had spent it in the future. —*Simeon.*

Hated instruction. — "During my residence in India," says one, "I frequently visited a British soldier, who was under sentence of death, for having, when half intoxicated, wantonly shot a black man. In some of my visits to the jail, a number of other prisoners came and sat down with this man, to listen to a word of exhortation. In one instance I spoke to them particularly on the desirableness of studying the Bible. — 'Have any of you a Bible?' I inquired; they answered, 'No.' 'Have any of you ever possessed a Bible?'— a pause ensued. At last the murderer broke silence, and amidst sobs and tears confessed that he once had a Bible; 'But O,' said he, 'I sold it for drink. It was the companion of my youth. I brought it with me from my native land, and have since sold it for drink! O, If I had listened to my Bible, I should not have been here.'" —*Anec. on Old Test.*

"The public scandal of the sin is brought in as its last aggravating feature." —*Spk com.*

"The sun, powerful as it is, cannot discover what is at the bottom of a muddy pool, so God cannot be revealed to a sinful, muddy, depraved heart." —*Thomas Jones.*

"The Nazarites, who might drink no wine, were also forbidden to cut grapes whereof wine is made; so we must not only avoid sin in itself, but also the causes and occasions thereof, amongst which is bad company."—*Spencer.*

15—17. (15) **own cistern,** seek thy satisfaction within thy circles of pure family relationships.[b] **running waters,** which flow freshly into the cistern.[c] "Only the natural fountain-head can pour forth purling waters, living, fresh, cool for drinking." (16) **thy fountains,** fig. for thy children. Or more prob. the verse should be made interrogative, and read thus, "Shall thy streams flow abroad as water-brooks in the streets?" *i. e.* confine thyself to thy wife. (17) **only thine own,** *R. V.*, "for thyself alone."

Images of wifehood. — The wife is described: 1. As a spring, and as a cistern. Property in a spring or well was highly, even sacredly esteemed. Hence a peculiar force in the comparison. The wife is the husband's peculiar delight and property; the source of pleasures of every kind and degree; the fruitful origin of the family; 2. As "wife of one's youth." One to whom the flower of youth and manhood has been devoted. Her image, in this case, is associated with the sunniest scenes of experience; 3. As a "lovely hind, or charming gazelle." A favorite Oriental comparison, and embodied in the names Tabitha and Dorcas, which denote "gazelle." There are numberless uses of the figure in Arabian and Persian poets. The beautiful liquid eye, delicate head, graceful carriage of the creature, all point the simile. Nothing can surpass, as a husband's description of a true wife, Wordsworth's exquisite stanza beginning —

> "She was a phantom of delight,
> When first she gleam'd upon my sight;
> A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food;
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles."
> — *Preacher's Com.*

"The wife is appropriately compared with a fountain . . . In antiquity, and esp. in the East, the possession of a spring was regarded as a great and even sacred thing. Thus the mother of Sarah is compared to a well-spring" Is. li. 1. —*Umbreit.*

"Do not steal water from others, as the strange woman entices thee to do."—*Wordsworth.*

"It is folly to believe that one can faithfully love, who does not love faithfulness."—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

"To get rid of laziness is civilization, to get rid of selfishness is Christianity."

18, 19. (18) **be blessed,** in offspring and in family prosperities attending conjugal fidelity.[d] **rejoice,** in her society. (19) **hind . . roe,**[e] the most tender, gentle, and beautiful creatures of the East. **ravished,** *lit.* intoxicated, *i. e.* fully satisfied.

Meaning of wife. — And now let us see whether the word wife has not a lesson. It literally means a weaver. The wife is the person who weaves. Before our great cotton and cloth factories arose, one of the principal employments in every house was the fabrication of clothing: every family made its

"Tender, well-regulated domestic affection is the best defense against the vagrant desires of unlawful passions." — *Dav. Thomas.*

"In the whole circle of Arab. and Persian poety, the

own. The wool was spun into thread by the girls, who were therefore called spinsters; the thread was woven into cloth by their mother, who, accordingly, was called the weaver, or the wife; and another remnant of this old truth we discover in the word heirloom, applied to any old piece of furniture which has come down to us from our ancestors, and which, though it may be a chair or bed, shows that a loom was once a most important article in every house. Thus the word wife means weaver; and as Trench well remarks, "in the word itself is wrapped up a hint of earnest, in-door, stay-at-home occupations, as being fitted for her who bears this name."

20, 21. (20) **strange woman,** the harlot, who will entice both to sensuality and profligacy. (21) **before . . Lord,**[a] taking the highest ground of persuasion. Not merely for prudential reasons, but in the "fear of the Lord," we should live chastely, soberly, and godly. The Lord observes and weighs all our actions.

God the all-seeing Judge.—"Before Jehovah's eyes are man's paths, and all his tracks he surveys." I. Cynical proverbs concerning secrecy are condemned, such as "What the eye sees not, the heart does not grieve over," "Never mind so long as you are not found out." II. Nothing is really secret or unknown. We are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. The whisper, the inarticulate thought, will come back one day in thunder.—*Johnson.*

Indulgence of passions.— As in individuals, so in nations, unbridled indulgence of the passions must produce, and does produce, frivolity, effeminacy, slavery to the appetite of the moment; a brutalized and reckless temper, before which prudence, energy, national feeling, any and every feeling which is not centred in self, perishes utterly. The old French noblesse gave a proof of this law which will last as a warning beacon to the end of time. The Spanish population of America, I am told, gives now a fearful proof of this same terrible penalty. Has not Italy proved it likewise for centuries past? It must be so. For what national life is grounded on, is the development of, the life of the family. And where the root is corrupt the tree must be corrupt likewise. — *Kingsley.* — *Keeping the heart.* — Nothing but unceasing watchfulness can keep the heart in harmony with God's heart. It was a stormy, boisterous night. The dark clouds hung over us, and the wind came with tenfold fury. The sea rolled in mountains, and the proud ship seemed but a toy amid those tremendous billows. Far up on the mast, on the look-out, the sailor was heard to cry, "An iceberg on the starboard-bow!" "An iceberg on the larboard-bow!" The deck-officer called to the helmsman, "Port the helm steadily!" and the sailors at the wheel heard and obeyed. The officers were roused, for there was danger on board to three hundred precious souls. The captain spent a sleepless night, pacing the deck or cabin. Gigantic icebergs were coming against the vessel, and eternal vigilance was the price of our safety in that northern sea. And so it is all through human life. How grand is he who keeps his heart! Fortunes may depart, loved ones pass away, but blessed the man or woman who keeps the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

22, 23. (22) **iniquities,** *etc.*, illus. in Saul, Ahithophel, Haman, *etc.*[b] **cords of his sins,** the sins constantly indulged become at last enslaving cords, as is seen in the case of the drunkard.[c] (23) **without instruction,**[d] *i. e.* without having gained it. Or better, "for lack of correction." The wicked man has had instruction offered, but has refused to receive it. **go astray,** as if he were drunk. We may trans. "stagger to ruin."

The cords that bind the sinner are spun out of his own sins. — Satan does not need to build any massive prison walls, or to call upon Vulcan to forge fetters for his captives. He has but to leave them to themselves, and their own misdeeds will shut them in, as the rank new growth of a tropical forest encloses the rotting trunks of the older trees, from the seed of which it sprang. 1. This results from the force of habit. All conduct tends to become permanent. The way wears into ruts. Men become entangled in their own past. 2. This is confirmed by wilful disregard of saving influences. If the sinner repented and called for deliverance, he might be saved from the fearful bondage of his sins. But proudly choosing to continue on his own course, he has consented to the tightening of the cords that bind him.— *Pul. Com.*— *Victory over self.* — A man that is born a conqueror over his own corruptions and over himself, is greater than ever was the greatest conqueror; and it is

antelope and the gazelle are the chosen images of beauty — lithe of limb, graceful in motion, dark and lustrous of eye, fleet and strong, they served with equal fitness for the masculine and feminine types of it."—*Spk. Com.*

a Job xxxi. 4; Pr. xv. 3; Jer. xvi. 17. "The Evil One often gets into a home, and the neighbors do not find it out for a long time; but just as soon as Jesus Christ comes in, everybody knows it."

A father said to his son, who was at a Sabbath school, and had attended to what he heard there, "Carry this parcel to such a place." "It is Sabbath," replied the other. "Put it in your pocket," replied the father. "God can see in my pocket," answered the child.

"He who hath many friends, hath none."—*Aristotle.*

b "Habit hath so vast a prevalence over the human mind that there is scarce anything too strange or too strong to be asserted of it The story of the miser, who from long accustoming to cheat others, came at last to cheat himself, and with great delight and triumph picked his own pocket of a guinea to convey to his hoard, is not impossible or improbable."—*Fielding.*

c "Secrecy is the study and hope of the wicked. A sinner's chief labor is to hide his sin; and his labor is all lost. Sin becomes the instrument of punishing sinners — retribution in the system of nature, set in motion by the act of sin."—*Arnot.*

d Job iv. 21.

better to be made in this kind a victor over his own passions than to be universal emperor over all the world. Saith Seneca, there are many men that have subdued principalities, kingdoms, cities, towns and countries, and brought them under their own mastery; but there are few that have guided themselves, but still there is a tiger within them that disgraceth and obscureth their outward conquest by reason of foul seethings and corruptions in their own flesh; therefore, for a man to get the victory, and to overcome himself, is to get the victory, and to overcome all the world; for man is a microcosm, a little world, as St. Austin saith.— *Day.— Hall Caine's legend.*— Our strongest temptations are those that are re-enforced from within, which take hold of our very natures. Our hardest work is to conquer our own selves. "There is a northern legend of a man who thought he was pursued by a troll. His ricks were fired, his barns unroofed, his cattle destroyed, his lands blasted, and his firstborn slain. So he lay in wait for the monster where it lived in the chasms near his house, and in the darkness of night he saw it. With a cry he rushed upon it and gripped it about the waist, and it turned upon him and held him by the shoulder. Long he wrestled with it, reeling, staggering, falling, and rising again; but at length a flood of strength came to him and he overthrew it and stood over it, covering it, conquering it, with its back across his thigh and his right hand set hard at its throat. Then he drew his knife to kill it, and the moon shot through a rack of cloud, opening an alley of light about it, and he saw its face, and lo! *the face of the troll was his own!*"

"The teacher offers to save the young and inexperienced from the slower and more painful process of learning by experience."—*Plumptre.*

"We die, morally speaking, of a complication of diseases — pride and self-love seldom being absent from the inquest."

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1, 2. (1) **surety,**[a] if thou hast given thy name as security. Jewish law was very severe on sureties. **friend,** *R. V.*, "neighbour." **stricken thy hand,** the form or sign by which a pledge was taken,[b] just as we shake hands to-day to seal a bargain. **stranger,** prob. the alien money-lender, either Phœnician or Egyptian, who will be sure to demand the literal execution of his bond. (2) **snared,** *etc.*, prob. in some fixed form of words, and not by writing, the contract was made.

Suretyship.— I. It is wrong for a man to come under engagements that are beyond his actually existing means. Such a course is one not merely of imprudence, but there is in it a threefold injustice. First, to the creditor for whom he becomes surety. Secondly, to his family, if he has one, to whom the requisition of payment must bring distress and ruin. Thirdly, to those who give him credit in his own transactions, with the risks of his own trade. II. The same observations are applicable to the making of engagements with inconsideration and rashness. The case here supposed is evidently that of suretyship for a friend to a stranger. And the rashness may be viewed either in relation to the person or to the case.— *Wardlaw.*

The custom of striking hands at the conclusion of a bargain has maintained its ground among the customs of civilized nations down to the present time. To strike hands with another was the emblem of agreement among the Greeks under the walls of Troy, for Nestor complains, in a public assembly of the chiefs, that the Trojans had violated the engagements which they had sanctioned by libations of wine and by giving their right hands. Another striking instance is quoted by Calmet from Ockley's *History of the Saracens.* Telha, just before he died, asked one of Ali's men if he belonged to the Emperor of the Faithful, and being informed that he did, "Give me, then," said he, "your hand, that I may put mine into it, and by this action renew the oath of fidelity I have already made to Him."— *Paxton's Ills. of Scripture.*

a "The word used in *A. V.* primarily means to *interweave.* A man *interwoven* with a stranger is one implicated in the same account."

Ge. xliii. 9.

b Job. xvii. 3; Eze. xvii. 18.

"Aristotle defineth friendship to be a love of another, not for any good we get, but merely for the party's sake who is beloved."—*Anthony Burgess*

"You have no right to pledge what you do not possess. Give; give liberally if you can; give heartily and promptly, but never come under enslaving conditions."—*Parker.*

3—5. (3) **now,** *i. e.* at once, and earnestly. **when,** *R. V.*, "seeing" thou hast given him a right to exact payment. **humble thyself,** bow thyself down, offer thyself to be trodden upon, supplicate the friend to whom the pledge is given. **make sure,** or press hotly upon.[c] The idea is that by persuasion and importunity the bond should be got back.[d] (4) **Give,** *etc.*, make it a matter of absorbing interest. (5) **roe,** ch. v. 19. The gazelle. He is to exercise unwearied diligence.

My son, deliver thyself.— This he is to do— 1. By means purely moral. There are other means which a man might try. He might use threatening; he might employ falsehood; but these would be sinful. The only lawful means are those here implied, viz., words of persuasion and entreaty. 2.

c Be importunate.

d "The wise man here advises the man who has made himself surety for a friend, to urge that friend importunately to pay his debt to the creditor, and so to deliver him who was surety for him."—*Bede.*

Without delay. He must endeavor to rectify his error at once; every day that passes over his head may be bringing nearer the day when he may be called upon to redeem his promise, and so he is to give "no sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids."— *Preacher's Com.*

6–8. (6) **ant,** a creature whose restless, unwearied activity is very remarkable. A proverbial emblem of industry.[a] (7) **no guide,** *etc.*, there were all the signs and results of organization, yet no leadership; all depended on the diligence, skill, and activity of each individual.[b] (8) **Provideth,** *etc.*, this has been questioned, but it has been the fixed opinion of all ages. The argument is: if the ant is so provident, how much more should man be.

A secular sermon on foresight (*vss.* 6–11).—Creation full of teachers. Here we gather round an insect. Lesson taught by the ant is foresight. Foresight a faculty almost Divine. A wise foresight makes life pleasant—I. By economizing time. II. By systematizing duties. III. By diminishing difficulties. Apply—Every life has a summer, so also a winter: prepare.—*Parker.*

Foresight in secular things.—"Here is a person who prides himself on his foresight. He bears a high repute for range and intensity of vision in all secular concerns. Yet by the very sweep and clearness of his foresight I brand him as a fool! He never missed a train, yet he was never in time for public worship; he never failed to keep an appointment with man, yet he never made an appointment with God; he was never too late for the post, yet he is in danger of being too late for heaven; he never failed to see gold in any bargain, yet he has turned away the fine gold of the gospel! He has foreseen everything but the chief thing: he has seen the shadow, not the substance; he has made a covenant with the servant and let the king pass by! Here is folly in the very midst of wisdom; and if the very wisdom be folly how great is that folly—if the light be darkness, how terrible is the gloom!" — *Parker.* — *Ants storing up food.*—"The country between Linyanti and Sesheke is perfectly flat, except patches elevated only a few feet above the surrounding level. There are also many mounds where the gigantic anthills of the country have been situated, or still appear; these mounds are evidently the work of the termites. No one who has not seen their gigantic structures can fancy the industry of these little laborers; they seem to impart fertility to the soil which has once passed through their mouths, for the Makololo find the sides of anthills the choice spots for rearing early maize, tobacco, or anything on which they wish to bestow especial care." On the banks of the Chobe he tells us he found some of the anthills thirty feet in height, and of a base so broad that trees grow on them. "The white ant keeps generally out of sight, and works under galleries constructed by night to screen them from the observation of birds. At some given signal, however, I never could ascertain what, they rush out by hundreds, and the sound of their mandibles cutting grass into lengths may be heard like a gentle wind murmuring through the leaves of the trees. They drag these pieces to the doors of their abodes, and after some hours' toil leave off work, and many of the bits of grass may be seen collected around the orifice. They continue out of sight for perhaps a month, but they are never idle. . . . At some of their operations they beat time in a curious manner. Hundreds of them are engaged in building a large tube, and they wish to beat it smooth. At a signal they all give three or four energetic beats on the plaster in unison. It produces a sound like the dropping of rain off a bush when touched. These insects are the chief agents employed in forming a fertile soil. But for their labors the tropical forests, bad as they are now with fallen trees, would be a thousand times worse. Ants surely are wiser than some men, for they learn by experience. They have established themselves, even on these plains, where water stands so long annually as to allow the lotus and other aqueous plants to come to maturity. When all the ant-horizon is submerged a foot deep, they manage to exist by ascending to little houses, built of black tenacious loam on stalks of grass, and placed higher than the line of inundation. — *Livingstone.*

9. **How long,** *etc.*, it is the same as if it were said, "What infatuation is this which makes you lie and sleep as if you had nothing else to do?" The double question stigmatizes the sluggard's utter indolence, and suggests the

"He that has no friend and no enemy, is one of the vulgar, and without talents, power or energy." — *Lavater.*

[a] Improvident sluggards usually want sureties. Hence such are advised to industry by the ant's example.

[b] "When I began to employ workmen in this country (Syria) nothing annoyed me more than the necessity to hire also an *overseer* or to fulfil this office myself. But I soon found that this was universal, and strictly necessary. The workmen, every way unlike the ant, will not work at all unless kept to it, and directed in it by an overseer, who is himself a perfect specimen of laziness."— *Thomson, Land and Book.*

"The Arabians hold the wisdom of the ant in such veneration that they place one of these insects in the hand of a newly-born infant, repeating these words, 'May the boy turn out clever and skilful.'"

"In some parts of South America they march periodically in armies, such myriads together, that the sound of their coming over the fallen leaves may be heard at some distance. The inhabitants, knowing the season, are on the watch, and quit their houses, which these tremendous but welcome visitors clear of centipedes forty-legs, scorpions, snakes, every living thing; and having done their work, proceed upon their way."— *Southey.*

"Epaminondas, finding one of his sentinels asleep, thrust him through with his sword.

and, being chidden for so great severity, replied, 'I left him but as I found him.' It must be our care that death serve us not in like sort, that we be not taken napping."—*Trapp.*

picture of his prolonging his stay in bed long after every one else is abroad and about his business. Comp. ch. xxiv. 30-34.

Idleness not enjoyment. — Count Caylus, the celebrated French antiquary, spent much time in engraving the plates which illustrate his valuable works. When his friends asked him why he worked so hard at such an almost mechanical occupation, he replied, "*Je grave pour ne pas me pendre,*" — "I engrave lest I should hang myself." When Napoleon was slowly withering away, from disease and *ennui* together, on the rock of St. Helena, it was told him that one of his old friends, an ex-colonel in his Italian army, was dead. "What disease killed him?" asked Napoleon. "That of having nothing to do," it was answered. "Enough," sighed Napoleon, "even had he been an emperor." Nature has beneficially provided that if the greater proportion of her sons must earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, that bread is far sweeter from the previous effort than if it fell spontaneously into the hand of listless indolence. — *Potter.* — *Success dependent on diligence.* — Few conceive, or are taught to conceive, that by a law of God as fundamental as the law of gravitation, and as universal as human society, success in life is the equivalent of industry, knowledge, prudence, and perseverance, and not the result of chance. The exceptions are few and rare and occasional, in which it would be found to come from anything in the nature of real luck. It is the effect of definite causes; and happiness would make great strides if there could be a conviction settled in the hearts of the young throughout the land that to make one's fortune means to give a fair equivalent of thought or skill or labor for that fortune. Ten thousand young hearts are to-day looking at New York as the goal of their ambition, without asking whether they have health to bear its strains; without pausing to consider whether they have virtue to withstand its temptations. They see only the great and glowing picture of their fancy, and by night and by day they think that all would be well if they could but rid themselves of their country clogs, and enter the Elysian fields of city life. This vision attracts multitudes, as by-and-by it will mock them. — *Beecher.*

"Idleness is the bane of body and of mind; the nurse of naughtiness; the stepmother of discipline; one of the seven deadly sins; the cushion upon which the devil chiefly reposes; a great cause not only of melancholy, but of many other diseases; for the mind is naturally active; and if it be not occupied about some honest business, it rushes into mischief, or sinks into melancholy." — *Burton.*

10, 11. (10) **a little sleep,** graphic description of the feeling and wishes of the sluggard.[a] **folding . . sleep,** the well-known attitude of one who is settling himself down to sleep.[b] (11) **travelleth,** *R. V., marg.* "rover," *i. e.* poverty is to overtake him, as a swift traveler reaches his goal. **armed man,** *lit. a man of a shield.* "The habit of indolence is more fatally destructive than these marauders."

Idleness. — "Two things are denoted in this imagery. 1. That idleness will quickly bring poverty. 2. That it will come as a destroyer." — *Stuart.*

Idleness. — Among the Egyptians idleness was a capital crime. Among the Locrians, he that lent money to an idle person was to lose it. Among the Corinthians, idle persons were delivered to the carnifex. By the laws of Solon, idle persons were to suffer death. The ancients call idleness the burial of a living man: and Seneca had rather be sick than idle. Now, shall nature do more than grace? Shall poor blind heathens be so severe against idle persons, and shall Christians embrace them? Should they not rather turn their backs upon them and have no intercourse with them who think themselves too great, or to good, to hold the plough? — *Brooks.*

a "An ironical imitation of the language of the lazy man." — *Otto Zöckler.*

b "The Heb., richer than the English, employs 3 synonyms for sleep. A little sleep, slumber, folding of the hands, as for a *siesta.*"—*Spk. Com.*

"God will not support thee without work, but by work that is His holy ordinance: Do thy part, and God will do His."—*Egard.*

12—15. (12) **naughty person,** *lit. man of Belial. R. V.,* "worthless person." **wicked man,** man of vanity, deficient in moral consciousness. De. xiii. 13. **walketh,** *etc.,* "he walks" (*lit.*) *in crookedness of mouth*; the speech of such a one is tortuous and crafty.[c] (13) **winketh,**[d] using mute signs to convey his meanings, and so deceiving those who do not know the signs. **speaketh . . feet,** making significant gestures. "All the means by wh. man holds intercourse with man are turned to instruments of fraud and falsehood."[e] (14) **Frowardness,** the heart is the workshop where he prepares his villainy, Pr. ii. 14. **deviseth mischief,** cunning being the talent of the weak and lazy. **soweth,** *i. e.* bet. neighbors and friends; he shattereth the framework of society. (15) **calamity,** *lit. crushing weight.* **suddenly,** *i. e.* unexpectedly. **broken,** shivered to pieces. **without remedy,**[f] his destruction is beyond recovery, *see* ch. v. 22.

A bad man (*vs.* 12.) — We have here — I. The portrait of a bad man. He is 1. Perverse in speech; 2. Artful in conduct; 3. Mischievous in purpose. II. The doom of a bad man. It is — 1. Certain; 2. Sudden; 3. Irremediable. — *Thomas.*

"Idleness and vice are allied. Though indolent in acts, he actively and habitually is ill-natured in speech."—*Fausset*

c "Idleness and vice are allied. Though indolent in acts, he actively and habitually is ill-natured in speech."—*Fausset*

d Pr. x. 10; Ps. xxxv. 19.

e "He suggests wickedness to others by ungodly signals, winks, innuendoes and gesticulations." — *Wordsworth.*

f Da. xi. 45.

Speaking with the feet and fingers. — It should be remembered that when people are in their houses they do not wear sandals, consequently their feet and toes are exposed. When guests wish to speak with each other so as not to be observed by the host, they convey their meaning by the feet and toes. Does a person wish to leave a room in company with another, he lifts up one of his feet, and then suddenly puts it down on the ground. — *He teacheth with his fingers.* — When merchants wish to make a bargain in the presence of others without making known their terms, they sit on the ground, have a piece of cloth thrown over the lap, and then put each a hand under, and thus speak with the fingers. When the Brahmins convey religious mysteries to their disciples, they teach with their fingers, having the hands concealed in the folds of their robes. — *Roberts.*

16, 17. (16) **These . . hate,** a common *Heb.* form of climax.[a] **yea, seven,** this number usually represents *completeness,* either for good or evil. **abomination,** De. vii. 25. These evil things are all found in the "man of Belial" (*vs.* 12), specially regarded as a man who sows discord. (17) **proud look,** *lit. eyes of loftiness.*[b] The spirit that leads men to *overvalue* themselves, and *undervalue* all about them. "Pride is put first bec. it is at the bottom of all disobedience and rebellion against God's laws." — *Pul. Com.* **lying tongue,** a sure sign of the corrupt heart. **hands . . blood,** heartlessly cruel, Is. lix. 7.

Seven abominable things (*vss.* 16–19). — Here is a catalogue of evils specially odious to God. I. Haughty bearing implies — 1. Self-ignorance; 2. Unkindness; 3. Irreverence. II. Verbal falsehood. 1. Which implies a wrong heart; 2. Has a bad social tendency. III. Heartless cruelty implies — 1. Lack of sympathy with God's creatures; 2. With God's mind. IV. Vicious scheming. V. Mischievous eagerness. VI. Social slander. VII. Disturbing strife. Subject shows — 1. The moral hideousness of the world; 2. The immaculate purity of God; 3. The true mission of the godly. — *Thomas.*

Two views of sin. — As it is with two children, the one forbears to touch a coal, because it will black and smut his hand, the other will not by any means be brought to handle it, because he perceives it to be a fire-coal, and it will burn his fingers; thus all ungodly men, they will not touch sin because it will burn; they may be, and often are, troubled for sin, but their disquietness for sin ariseth more from the evil of punishment, the effect of sin, than from the evil that is in the nature of sin; they are troubled for sin, but it is because sin doth destroy the soul, and not because sin doth defile the soul; because God pursueth sin, and not because He hates sin; more, because it is against God's justice that is provoked, than because it is against the holiness of God which is dishonored; because God threatens sin, not because God doth forbid sin; because of the hell for sin, not because of the hell in sin. But now, on the other side, all good and godly men they hate and loathe sin, because it is of a smutting and defiling nature, because it is against the nature of God, because God loathes and hates it, more because it is against God's command than because God doth punish it; not because of the damning power of sin, but because of the defiling power of sin. — *Inchinus.*

18, 19. (18) **deviseth,** *etc.*,[c] "there are evil thoughts in all men's hearts: but the devising, fabricating of them, and thus making the heart into a devil's workshop, is the mark of utter depravity and wickedness, and is abhorrent to God." — *Pul. Com.* **feet . . mischief,** Ro. iii. 15. Not only doing mischief, but doing it *eagerly.* (19) **false . . lies,** "much hurt," says Muffet, "doth the deceitful and lying witness, for he corrupteth the judge, oppresseth the innocent, suppresseth the truth, and in the courts of justice sinneth against his own soul and the Lord Himself most grievously." **soweth discord,** by tale-bearing, ill-natured stories, the look or shrug of the shoulders, *etc.* Making mischief between friends and neighbors.[d]

The brand of God. — God placed a brand on the first murderer's brow, and he carried the curse with him to his grave. He does not mark us thus now with such signs of guilt; nevertheless, he has made it clear as the day that there are some men who are the objects of his very high displeasures. We know from the text that among these are — I. Men of a proud heart. II. Men of a false spirit. III. Men that are responsible for others' death. IV. Men that devise mischief. V. Cruel executioners of wrath. VI. False witnesses. VII. Men that disturb harmony. — *Clarkson.*

God's blessings and curses. — There is one parallel well worthy of notice

"Rather do what is nothing to the purpose, than be idle; that the devil may find thee doing. The bird that sits is easily shot, when fliers 'scape the fowler. Idleness is the dead sea that swallows all the virtues, and the self-made sepulchre of a living man."— *Quarles.*

a Comp. Job v 19; Pr. xxx. 15, 18, 24; Am. i. ii.

b Ps. cxxxi. 1; Pr. xxx 13.

One author calls idleness "The most corrupting fly that can blow on the human mind."

Arnot notices the parallel between the 7 cursed things here and the 7 blessed things in the v. chap. Matt.

"As thou desirest the love of God and man beware of pride. It is a tumor in the mind that breaks and poisons all thy actions; it is a worm in thy treasure, wh. eats and ruins thy estate; it loves no man — is believed of no man; it disparages virtue in another by detraction; the friend of the flatterer, the mother of envy, and the devil of mankind, it hates superiors; it scorns inferiors; it owns no equals; — in short, till thou hate it, God hates thee." — *Quarles.*

c "The Div. eye penetrates the heart. He sees all that passes there, not only the deep plots of evil, the elaborate schemes of thought, and the deliberate purposes, but ideas and emotions in the most incipient and fugitive forms. He judges the man as He sees Him there."— *Dav. Thomas.*

d A crime, which would be much more common and much more fatal in a primitive state of society. — *Exp. Bib.*

"The slanderer does harm to three persons at once; to him of whom he says the ill, to him to whom he says it, and most of all to himself, in saying it."

between the seven cursed things here and the seven blessed things in the fifth chapter of Matthew. In the Old Testament the things are set down in the sterner form of what the Lord hates, like the "Thou shalt not" of the Decalogue. In the New Testament the form is in accordance with the gentleness of Christ. There we learn the good things that are blessed, and are left to gather thence the opposite evils that are cursed. But making allowance for the difference in form, the first and the last of the seven are identical in the two lists. — *Arnot.*

20, 21. (20) **father's,** *etc.*, the usual formula at the beginning of a new section, ch. i. 8, this the twelfth admonitory discourse. (21) **Bind them,** like a charm, or amulet.[a] **tie . . neck,**[b] as ornaments were worn. A figure for the beauty of moral character.

Mother's law (*vs.* 20). — The injunction is in form addressed to a grown son, that he forsake not in manhood his mother's law. In the pliant time of childhood the character is molded chiefly by the mother. The mother should be much with her children. In the case of mothers who live in affluence, perhaps trifling is the most pressing danger. But the command of this passage is directly addressed to the child. — *Arnot.*

Influence of a Christian mother.— There was once an obscure and pious woman living in a city in the south of England. History is silent respecting her ancestry, her place of birth, or her education. She had an only son, whom, in his infancy, she made it her great business to instruct, and train up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. At seven years of age his mother died, and a few years after he went to sea, and became at length a common sailor in the African slave trade. He soon became a great adept in vice — a swearer most horribly profane; and though younger than many of his companions in years, he was the oldest in guilt. But he could not shake off the remembrance of his pious mother's instructions. Though dead and in her grave, she seemed speaking to him still. After many alarms of conscience, and many pungent convictions, he became a Christian, and subsequently one of the most successful ministers of the Gospel our country ever produced. Of course, through the labor of the converted son, we may now trace the influence of the pious mother. In addition to his great ministerial labors, he wrote many evangelical works, and few authors have done more to extend the power of religion. He was highly eloquent and greatly useful in religious conversation; and his hymns, whose use in divine worship is almost commensurate with the extension of the English language, are of the most elevated and evangelical character. Follow that mother's influence further. Her son was the means of the conversion of Claudius Buchanan, who subsequently became a minister of the Gospel, and went to the East Indies. Here he occupied a responsible station; and his labors in behalf of the English population, and for the improvement of the moral and spiritual condition of the natives, are deservedly ranked among the noblest achievements of Christian philanthropy. His little work entitled *The Star in the East*, was the first thing that attracted the attention of Adoniram Judson to a mission in the East Indies.

Such are some of the glorious results of one holy woman's efforts to educate her son for God — a wide and mighty posthumous influence which an angel might feel honored to exert. Who was she? The mother of Rev. John Newton.

22—24. (22) **When,** *etc.*, evidently referring to the "law of obedience" to parental counsels, not to the mere amulet. **goest . . sleepest . . awakest,** terms representing the variety of the experiences of the traveler, through all which high moral principles will keep and bless.[c] (23) **lamp,**[d] "the 'commandment' is any special or particular injunction which commands what is to be done and forbids what is to be left undone. The 'law' is the whole law of God in its entirety; not here the Law of Moses technically, but the whole system of generalized instruction. They stand, therefore, in the same relation to each other as 'a lamp' and 'light,' the one being particular, and the other general. 'Light' is light in general, as the light of the day and the sun, while 'lamp' is a particular light which is enkindled at some other source."— *Pul. Com.* **the law,** of moral purity. **light,** revealing temptation, and the paths of sin. **reproofs,** or convictions of error.[e] **way of life,** *i. e.* conduce to length of life. (24) **evil woman,** woman of evil, ch. ii. 16. **flattery,** that would entice thee to evil ways,[f] *lit. from the smoothness of the tongue of the strange woman.*

"Mother! How many delightful associations cluster around that word! The innocent smiles of infancy, the gambols of boyhood, and the happiest hours of riper years! When my heart aches at the world's wickedness, and my limbs are weary, and my feet bloody, traveling the thorny path of life, I am accustomed to sit down and close my eyes, and send my spirit back to the days of early life." — *Thomson.*

"The mother's heart is the child's school-room." — *Beecher.*

[a] Like the fillets of the law, prayer-bands.

[b] "Perhaps the superstition most common at present is that of charms. People of every rank and station in society, and of every creed and sect, employ them. They are hung round the neck, or hid away in the bosom." — *Thomson.*

[c] "The word of God will be our guide, guard, and companion." — *Matt. Henry.*

[d] Ps. cxix 105.

[e] "*Trans.* "And in the way of life is admonitory discipline." — *Miller.*

[f] "The description of the young man's temptress and her beguiling and fascinating methods is so life-like and minute, that it needs neither ex-

God's word. — I. In action, our guide. II. In danger, our defense. III. In loneliness, our companion. — *Clarkson.*

The fisherman and the light. — There was a fisherman whose hut was situated on high and rock-bound coast. Near by was a snug cove, with a smooth, sandy beach, where he was accustomed to draw up his little boat, and from which he went forth, day by day, to engage in his toilsome occupation, on the waters of the stormy sea. One day he went out, as usual, to spend the day in fishing. He toiled on, till towards the close of the afternoon, he saw threatening signs of an approaching storm. With a brave and trusting heart, he turned the bow of his boat in the right direction, and began to row towards home. But darker and darker grew the heavens above him; and soon all traces of daylight had disappeared. The outline of the coast had faded from his view, and he could no longer see any of those well-known landmarks by which he was accustomed to direct his course. The storm raged fiercer, and the night grew darker. Hope died away within him, and death stared him in the face. But just then a faint ray of light met his eye. It renewed his strength. He rowed on more heartily. Very soon he found that it proceeded from the window of his own little hut. It guided him to the cove he was accustomed to enter. He drew his boat up safely on the sand, and, grateful for his own deliverance, before he went to bed that night he trimmed the lamp, and filled it with oil, and set it in the window of his humble dwelling, that its friendly light might shine out upon the stormy sea, and perhaps guide some other tempest-tossed voyager to a place of safety. And as long as he lived he continued this practice. It was very proper that he should do this. He made a right use of the lamp himself, and then he tried to extend the benefit of it to others. And this is just what we should do. We have God's wonderful lamp. It is shining all about our path. It shows us how we may sail over life's stormy sea, so as to reach the haven of enduring rest and safety at last. But there are multitudes of our fellow-creatures who are tossed on this tempestuous sea, without a single ray of light to guide their way. What is our duty? Should we not send this wonderful lamp to them? This is all they need. It is abundantly able to guide them to the only place where they can find safety. — *Rills fr. Fountain of Life.*

25, 26. (25) **Lust,** the term for vehement and unbridled desire.[a] **take thee,** as in a trap. **eyelids,** wh. Eastern women paint to enhance their beauty.[b] "With which she throws amorous and captivating glances at her lover." — *Zöckler.* (26) **whorish,** strictly one who sells herself for hire. **piece of bread,** the sign of uttermost poverty. **adulteress,** the abandoned woman who is unfaithful as a wife is ever more violent and ruinous than the harlot. **hunt,** lay snares for; take, as fish, with a hook, *i. e.* "allures to that wh. may cost a man his life." — *Stuart, cf.* De. xxii. 22.

Note on verses 24-35. — The arguments against the sin in question are cogent in their dissuasiveness, and none stronger of a purely temporal nature could be devised. It may be objected that the sin is not put forward in the higher light, as an offense before God, and that the appeal is made simply on the lines of self-interest: but who will deny that the scope of the teaching is distinctly moral, or that mankind is influenced and dissuaded from sin by such a category of evils as includes personal beggary, dishonor and death? — *Pul. Com.* — *Evil.* — As a man that cutteth with a dull knife is the cause of cutting, but not of the ill-cutting and hacking of the knife — the knife is the cause of that: or if a man strike upon an instrument that is out of tune, he is the cause of the sound, but not of the jarring sound — that is the fault of the untuned strings; or, as a man riding upon a lame horse, stirs him — the man is the cause of the motion, but the horse himself of the halting motion; thus God is the author of every action, but not of the evil of that action — that is from man. He that makes instruments and tools of iron or other metal, he maketh not the rust and canker which corrupteth them, that is from another cause: nor doth that heavenly workman, God Almighty, bring in sin and iniquity; nor can he be justly blamed if his creatures do soil and besmear themselves with the foulness of sin, for he made them good. — *Spencer.*

27—29. (27) **take,** breaking physical laws absolutely insures physical penalties; quite as certainly moral woe follows on moral transgressions.[c] (28) **go,** or walk. (29) **So,** *etc.*, "so inconceivable is it that the adulterer should follow his unlawful intercourse without evil consequences and just retribution."[d] **innocent,** *R. V.*, "unpunished."

planation nor comment." — *Dav. Thomas.*

"'All God's biddings are enablings,' says an early Christian writer. An obedient soul is like a crystal glass with a light in the midst, which shines forth through every part thereof." — *T. Brooks.*

"'How is it,' said a friend to a learned physician, 'that amidst much employment and continual exercise of mind you preserve such unruffled tranquillity?' 'It is,' said he, 'because I give the first hour of every morning to the Holy Scriptures and to prayer'" — *Bullar.*

"For character groweth day by day, and all things aid it in unfolding, and the bent unto good or evil may be given in the hours of infancy" — *Tupper.*

a Matt. v. 28.

b "This probably refers to the care with which women in the East paint their eyelids, in a great measure in order to captivate the men, who, from the manner in which they are muffled up can often see no more of their person than their eyes — which may, indeed, be one reason why so much pains are taken to set them off." — *Hom. Com*

2 Ki. ix. 30.

"We begin to die when we begin to do wrong. Every step we take in a wrong direction disqualifies us from advancing in an upward movement." — *People's Bib.*

c Ga vi. 7, 8.

d "He that keeps company with those of ill-fame, that goes in with

them and touches them cannot long preserve his innocency, he thrusts himself into temptation, and so throws himself out of God's protection."—*Matt Henry.*

"Even God is said to be unable to use force against necessity."—*Plato.*

"Necessity is stronger far than art."—*Æschylus.*

Evil associations corrupting. — On the moors of Yorkshire there is a stream of water, which goes by the name of the "Ochre Spring." It rises high up in the hills, and runs on bright and sparkling for a short distance, when it suddenly becomes a dark and muddy yellow. What is the reason of this? Why, it has been passing through a bed of ochre, and so it flows on for miles, thick and sluggish, useless and unpleasant. The world is full of such "beds of ochre." Sinful companions, bad books — all such things are just like beds of ochre; connection with them is pollution. — *Old Test. Anecs.* — *Effects of evil habits.* — At the first arrival of the Europeans in America it was not uncommon to find Indians who were above a hundred years old. They lived frugally and drank pure water. Brandy, rum, wine, and all the other strong liquors, were utterly unknown to them. But since the Christians have taught them to drink these liquors, and the Indians have found them but too palatable, those who cannot resist their appetites hardly reach half the age of their parents. — *Whitecross.*

30, 31. (30) **despise a thief,** regard him, *i. e.* with the same feeling as they do the other sinner.[a] **hungry,** the assumption is that hunger is the great impulse to stealing. But this is only the most mitigated form of stealing. (31) **found,** found out. **sevenfold,** Ex. xxii. 1-4. **all the substance,** if that is necessary to provide ample restitution.

Motive and responsibility. — I. Guilt is to be measured by motive. The starving pick-pocket is not so wicked as the well-to-do house-breaker. Even in the low depths of crime moral distinctions need to be observed, lest we do grievous injustice to our most unhappy fellow-men. The principle that guilt is commensurate with motive rests on the Christian conception of it as an inward fact. — *Pul. Com.*

a "The laws of modern society have reversed the maxims of the wise man and, to the dishonor of Christian nations, an adulterer, who steals what is most precious to a man, and what is irretrievable, is treated by the law with more lenity than a thief, who robs him of what is of comparatively little value, and may easily be replaced." — *Wordsworth.*

32, 33. (32) **But whose,** *etc.*, "if men do not overlook but severely punish a crime which has been committed under extenuating circumstances, much less will they do so where the crime is of a much graver character and has nothing to excuse it." — *Pul. Com.* **understanding,** destitute both of moral principle and of prudence. **destroyeth . . soul,** *lit.* "whoso will destroy his life, he will do this." "The fol'g *vss.* seem to indicate that it is the temporal life wh. is referred to." (33) **wound and dishonour,** better *stripes and disgrace;* stripes from the insulted husband, and shame from the people, who hoot the detected man. **wiped away,** he bears a perpetual brand of disgrace.

"This image would hardly occur to us, who never go barefoot, and are never or rarely exposed to any liability of *treading* upon burning coals. If we desired to express the same sentiment by a similar image, we should say, 'Can one *handle* hot coals and not be burnt?'" — *Kitto.*

The foolish flies. — A dervish once went into a confectioner's shop. The confectioner, to honor him, poured some honey into a dish before him. Immediately a swarm of flies settled, as was their wont, upon the honey; some upon the edge of the dish, but the greater number in the middle. The confectioner then took up a whisk to drive them off, when those upon the side flew away with ease, but the others were prevented from rising by the honey clinging to their wings, and were involved in ruin. The dervish noticed this, and remarked, "That honey-dish is like the world, and the honey like its pleasures. Those who enjoy them with moderation and contentment, when the whisk of death approaches, not having their hearts filled with the love of them, can with ease escape its snare; while all who, like the foolish flies, have given themselves wholly to their sweetness, will meet with destruction." — *Fr. the Hindustani.*

"Believers do not regulate their marriage relation by caprice. They do not ask divorce at every gust of passion, as one does not amputate a limb bec. it is convulsed with pain"—*Augustine.*

34 35. (34) **jealousy,** that of the man whose home is ruined by the adulterer. **not spare,** when his chance of avenging himself may come. (35) **ransom,** to buy off from punishment the detected sinner: *lit.* "*He will not accept the face of any ransom.*" **gifts,** in hope of appeasing his wrath.

"Trifles light as air, are to the jealous confirmations strong as proofs of Holy Writ." — *Shakespeare.*

The agony of jealousy. —

But through the heart
Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,
'Tis then delightful misery no more,
But agony unmix'd, incessant gall,
Corroding every thought, and blasting all
Love's paradise. Ye fairy prospects then,
Ye beds of roses, and ye bowers of joy,
Farewell! — ye gleamings of departed peace,

"With groundless fear he thus his soul deceives, what frenzy dictates, jealousy believes." — *Gay*

Shine out your last! The yellow-tinging plague
Internal vision taints, and in a night
Of livid gloom imagination wraps. — *Thomson.*

"The cold plunge into duty is momentary, the reaction is eternal."

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1, 2. (1) **My son,** *etc.*, the usual commencement of a new section: recalling the attention of the listeners. **lay up,** so as to be ready for use when temptation comes (2) **apple . . eye,** *lit. as the little man in thine eye.*[a] Obs. how carefully this is guarded by Nature with the eyelid, so carefully should instruction be treasured.

Love to the Holy Scriptures (*vss.* 1–4). — Show — I. The respect we should pay to the counsels of Divine wisdom. 1. They should be treasured up with diligence; 2. They should be watched over with care; 3. They should be kept ready for use; 4. They should be guarded with tenderest affection. II. The benefits which we shall derive from a due attention to them. 1. We shall be delivered from evil; 2. We shall be carried forward in safety to everlasting life. — *Simeon.*

The Bible a guide. —

Star of Eternity! the only star
By which the bark of man can navigate
The sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss
Securely, the only star which rose on time,
And on its dark and troubled billows still,
As generation, drifting swiftly by,
Succeeded generation, threw a ray
Of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God —
The eternal hills — pointed the sinner's eye. — *Pollok.*

a "The pupil of the eye is the emblem of a precious possession guarded with peculiarly watchful care. See De xxxii. 10; Ps. xvii. 8." — *Otto Zöckler.*

"The instruction of the Word is the same to the soul which the eye is to the body. For as the body without the sight of the eyes runneth upon many things that hurt it, and falleth at every little stumbling-block, so the soul most fearfully runneth into sins if it want the light and direction of the Word." — *Muffet.*

3–5. (3) **Bind . . fingers,** as were the words of the law to be bound by the Mosaic injunction.[b] Or, as inscriptions upon rings, which they could take with them everywhere. **tables,** *i. e.* tablets, so as not to be erased. (4) **wisdom,** wh. had previously been personified as a *woman*, a queen. **sister,**[c] the word suggests simple and pure relationship and intercourse. **kinswoman,** or friend: the one known by thee, in familiar intercourse. (5) **keep thee,** by engaging and absorbing all thine interests, and by giving thee timely warnings and good advice. **strange woman,** ch. v. 3.

Authenticity of the Bible. — There are four grand arguments for the truth of the Bible. I. The miracles it records. II. The prophecies it contains. III. The goodness of the doctrine. IV. The moral character of the penman. The miracles flow from Divine power, the prophecies from Divine understanding, the excellence of the doctrine from Divine goodness, and the moral character of the penman from Divine purity. Thus the Bible stands upon four immovable pillars — the power, the understanding, the goodness, and the purity of God. — *D. Simpson.*

Adaptation of the Bible. — It is indeed an admirable evidence of the truth and Divine origin of the sacred volume, that for its important practical purposes — especially for the great end of the soul's salvation — it is just as intelligible to the humble but pious cottager as it is to the most learned and cultivated among mankind. The rough Greenlander and Esquimaux, the untutored inhabitant of New Zealand or Otaheite, the wandering North American Indian, the superstitious and degraded Hindoo and Chinese, the Hottentot of South Africa, the negro and Malagassee — ignorant and uncultivated man in almost every part of the world — have all been found capable, with the aid of the most simple Christian teaching, of understanding the Holy Scriptures, so far as relates to their main purpose — I mean that of instructing us in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord; and the same book has been the means of imparting the same knowledge to the polite and civilized Greek and Roman, as well as to the Bacons, Lockes, Boyles, Addisons and Newtons of the modern times — the most refined and philosophical of our species. — *J. J. Gurney.*

b De. vi. 8; xi. 18.

c Matt. xii. 50.

"There is not a son of Adam, whatever his condition may be, whether in prosperity or in adversity, in temptation or deliverance, in health or sickness, but he may find in this Book some balmy comfort to the quieting of his conscience and to the advancement of his salvation." — *T. Banks.*

"The father exhorts the son to bind the paternal commandments upon his fingers. It appears that the thong of the phylactery for the left arm was wound seven times round it and as many times round the middle finger. This represents the idea of trusting to other than merely human power, and being well prepared against the day of danger."—*Parker.*

6–9. "To show the greatness of the danger the writer gives an actual example of what had passed before his own eyes." (6) **window,** "the latticed

opening of the kiosk of an Eastern house, overlooking the street." This latticed arrangement was necessary for the circulation of fresh air. **casement,** *R. V.*, "lattice." (7) **simple ones,** young and thoughtless persons, inexperienced and idling, who too easily put themselves in the way of temptation. **void of understanding,** better, *discernment.* (8) **corner,** street-corners being always favored meeting-places. **went,** *etc.*, sauntered along the way by her house: like buzzing moth, putting himself in the way of temptation.[a] (9) **twilight,** the later evening, fr. nine to twelve o'clock.[b] **in . . night,** *lit.* "in the pupil of the eye of night," *i. e.* midnight.

A word in season. — One Sabbath morning, while the late Rev. Dr. Bedell, of Philadelphia, was preaching, a young man passed by with a number of companions as gay and thoughtless as himself. One of them proposed to go into the church, saying, "Let us go and hear what this man has to say, that everybody is running after." The young man made this awful answer, "No, I would not go into such a place if Christ Himself was preaching." Some weeks after, he was again passing the church, and being alone, and having nothing to do, he thought he would go in without being observed. On opening the door, he was struck with awe at the solemn silence of the place, though it was much crowded. Every eye was fixed on the preacher, who was to begin his discourse. His attention was instantly caught by the text — Prov. vii. 7. His conscience was smitten by the power of truth. He saw that he was the young man described. A view of his profligate life passed before his eyes; and for the first time he trembled under the feeling of sin. He remained in the church till the preacher and congregation had passed out, then slowly returned to his home. He had early received infidel principles; but the Holy Spirit, who had aroused him in his folly, led him to a constant attendance on the ministry of Dr. B., who had been the instrument of awakening his mind. He cast away his besetting sin, and gave himself to a life of virtue and holiness. He afterwards declared openly his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and his desire to devote himself to His service.— *Courting temptation.* — Those who carry gunpowder upon their persons ought never to go into a blacksmith's forge, ought never even to approach the door lest some sparks fall upon them. How much more foolish is he who, knowing that there is a tendency to sin within him, seeks out the place where the spark will be fanned into a flame. — *Preacher's Com.*

10—12. (10) **met . . woman,** in the East women are kept secluded and do not appear at night, or unattended. **attire,** peculiar in form and colors, so as to attract attention. **harlot,** Ge. xxxiv. 31. **subtil,** Ge. iii. 1, wary, cunning, "one whose heart is guarded and inaccessible, who locks up her plans and counsels deep in her breast." (11) **loud,** prob. bustling, or bold. **stubborn,** fretting against the pure restraints of home, not submissive. **in her house,** where every right-minded, modest housewife ought to be in the night time.[c] (12) **streets,** where we might be sure she only intends wantonness and mischief. **lieth in wait,** figure of one hunting for prey.

Profligacy. — I. It is a desecration of the temple of God. It is a sin against God as well as an offense against society. But they who are in danger of falling should remember the solemn words of St. Paul, and the lofty point of view from which he regards the subject (1 Cor. vi. 18, 19). The Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit, II. It is ruinous to any one who succumbs to it. Its ruins the mind, degrading the whole tone and energy of thought. It is the most gross and disastrous *dissipation.* It ruins the physical health. It ruins wholesome interest in pure delights. It ruins business prospects. It ruins reputation. It ruins the soul. III. It is heartlessly cruel. The heaviest guilt lies with the tempter. When a man has deluded and ruined a woman, society regards the woman with loathing and contempt, while the man often escapes with comparative impunity. This is one of the grossest instances of injustice that the future judgment will surely rectify. But in any case of profligacy great selfishness and cruelty are shown. IV. It is fatal to sound social order. It is a gangrene in society, eating out its very heart. Nothing more surely undermines the true welfare of a people. It is fatal to the sanctities of the home. — *Pul. Com.*

13—15. (13) **caught him,** as if in playful joke. **kissed him,** as if she cared for him. **impudent face,** or "she strengthened her face;" putting on a most bold and brazen look. (14) **peace . . me,** *lit. peace offerings are upon*

a "The verb used is fairly chosen, as it always expresses a certain care and intention in his going. We say, substantially, 'he measures his steps, he paces before her door.'"—*Umbreit.*

b. "Young, 'simple,' in the bad sense of the word; *open* to all impressions of evil; empty-headed and empty-hearted; lounging near the house of ill-repute, not as yet deliberately purposing to sin, but placing himself in the way of it, wandering idly to see one of whose beauty he had heard."—*Spk. Com.*

"God is ever at His window, His casement is always open to see what thou dost."—*Jermin.*

"Foolish men think to hide themselves from God, by hiding God from themselves."—*Trapp.*

c Tit. ii. 5.

"There is not a more tried shaft in all Satan's quiver than this: a persuasion to men to bear themselves too bold upon the favor of God. 'Thou art the elect and redeemed of God; sin because grace hath abounded; sin, that it may abound. Thou art safe enough though thou offend; be not too much an adversary to thine own liberty.'"—*Hall.*

"Dress drains our cellar dry, and keeps our larder lean."—*Cowper.*

"Begin, then, first with little things,
The smallest sin avoid and hate."—*Spitta.*

me.[a] Her way of saying she had a religious feast on that night, and would be glad for him to come and share. (15) **to meet thee,** so as to give thee a personal invitation.

[a] "The harlot uses the technical word (Lev. iii. 1) for the 'peace-offerings,' and makes them the starting point for her sin. They have to be eaten on the same day that they are offered."—*Spk. Com.*

Modesty. —

In distant climes a plant there grows,
Which from the touch its leaves will **close,**
And trembling turn itself away
If aught approach its fragile spray;
Its kindred plant they say abides
Unseen our northern clime beneath.
From ev'ry idle gaze it hides,
And shrinks at ev'ry ruder breath;
Amid the snows it thrives the best
Which guard the virgin's spotless **breast.**
'Tis Modesty! a lovelier flow'r
Than spring's first snowdrop, born 'mid **February's show'r.**

— *Holford.*

"To trample on what is finest in ourselves is to clothe all life with mourning." — *W. H. Thorne.*

16–18. (16) **coverings,** *etc.*, *R. V.*, *marg.* "cushions." **carved,** this word is better connected with the previous sentence, "variegated coverings of tapestry," or with the following.[b] **fine linen,** for wh. Egypt was noted. (17) **perfumed,** *etc.*, the Eastern love of strong scents is remarkable, and they are used as incentives to passion. **cinnamon,** imported prob. fr. Ceylon.

[b] "Striped coverlets of linen of Egypt."

Eastern beds. — The time for taking our repose was now come, and we were conducted into another large room, in the middle of which was a kind of bed, without bedstead or curtains. Though the coverlet and pillows exceeded in magnificence the richness of the sofa which likewise ornamented the apartment, I foresaw that I could expect but little rest on this bed, and had the curiosity to examine its make in a more particular manner. Fifteen mattresses of quilted cotton, about three inches thick, placed one upon another, formed the groundwork, and were covered by a sheet of Indian linen, sewed on the last mattress. A coverlet of green satin, adorned with gold embroidered in embossed work, was in like manner fastened to the sheets; the ends of which, turned in, were sewed down alternately. Two large pillows of crimson satin, covered with the like embroidery, in which there was no want of gold or spangles, rested on two cushions of the sofa, brought near to serve for a back, and intended to support our heads. The taking of the pillows entirely away would have been a good resource, if we had had any bolster; and the expedient of turning the other side upwards having only served to show they were embroidered in the same manner on the bottom, we at last determined to lay our handkerchiefs over them, which, however, did not prevent our being very sensible of the embossed ornaments underneath. — *Baron du Tott.*

"Her coverings of tapestry could not cover her naughtiness, her carved work could not embellish her own deformed work, her white Egyptian linen could not make white her black Egyptian soul" — *Jermin.*

"That modest grace subdu'd my soul, that chastity of look which seems to hang, a veil of purest light, o'er all her beauties, and by forbidding most inflames desires."—*Young.*

19, 20. (19) **goodman,** or husband. So she assures him that there is safety from fear of detection. (20) **a bag of money,** so plainly intends to be away a long time. **day appointed,** *R. V.*, "at the full moon;" *vs.* 9 indicates that it would be some while before that time.

Pleasures that end in death. — There are some pleasures that bring pain as their fruit, just as things standing in the sunshine throw from them a black shadow. They are like the smooth, beautiful serpent, they carry a sting. Fable tells of a bee that found a pot of honey ready made, and thought it would be fine to save all the trouble of flying about the meadows and gathering its sweet stores, little by little, out of the cups of flowers, and began to sip out of the dish. Then it went on and reveled in the sweets: but when it began to get tired and cloyed, it found, poor bee! that its wings were all clogged and would not open, nor could it drag its body out of the mass. So it died, buried in pleasure. — *Edmond.*

Jerome writes of a brave woman, who being upon the rack, bade her persecutors do their worst, for she was resolved to die rather than lie.

"But what if death draw the curtains, and look in the while? If death do not, yet guilt will." — *Trapp.*

21–23. (21) **fair speech,** the word employed is that usually *trans. doctrine.* "The use of the same word has a keen irony about it wh. it is difficult to convey in another language." **forced him,** to get over all his prudence, his virtue, and his fears. **caused . . yield,** "she netted him." — *Jerome.* (22) **straightway,** as by a sudden impulse. **as an ox,** blindly, not thinking that he is going to his destruction. **as a fool,** goes on his foolish way, never thinking that the penalties must come. (23) **liver,** put for the vitals gener-

"Our only security is in high and useful employment We ought to be able to say with Nehemiah to every tempter and to every enemy, 'I am doing a great work, and cannot come down'" — *Peop Bib.*

"Think'st thou there are no serpents in the world but those who slide along the grassy sod, and sting the

luckless foot that presses them? There are who in the path of social life do bask their spotted skins in fortune's sun, and sting the soul."—*Joanna Baillie.*

"No man means to go the whole length. A man's will is not destroyed in an instant; it is taken from him, as it were, little by little, and almost imperceptibly; he imagines that he is as strong as ever, and says that he will go out and shake himself as at other times, not knowing that the spirit of might has gone from him."—*Parker.*

"I can bear scorpions' stings, tread fields of fire; be toss'd aloft through tracts of endless void, but cannot live in shame."—*Joanna Baillie.*

"It is better to learn by the awful example of others than by our own suffering. Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other."—*Fausset.*

As the nature of trees and plants, of their roots, stocks, stems, and boughs, is in the seed; so the cause of our transgressions is our own corruption, whereby we are moved to do evil, and hindered to do good.

a "The publicity and universality of the call contrast with the secrecy with intrigues of the wicked."—*Fausset.*

"Wisdom is seen everywhere in the material universe, but her sublimest revelation is in the person of the Son of God."—*Dav. Thomas.*

ally, *i. e.* "this youth followed the adulteress till his liver is thoroughly inflamed."—*Pul. Com.*

A life of degradation.—Degradation means the application of a thing to purposes lower than that for which it was intended. It is a degradation to a man to live on husks, because they are not his true food. We call it degradation when we see the members of an ancient family, decayed by extravagance, working for their bread. It is not degradation for a born laborer to work for an honest livelihood. And, therefore, for a man to be degraded, it is not necessary that he should have given himself up to low and mean practices. It is quite enough that he is living for purposes lower than those for which God intended him. He may be a man of unblemished reputation, and yet debased in the truest meaning of the word. We were sent into this world to love God and to love man; to do good; to fill up life with deeds of generosity and usefulness; and he that refuses to work out that high destiny is a degraded man. He may turn away revolted from everything that is gross. His sensuous indulgences may be all marked by refinement and taste. His house may be filled with elegance. His library may be adorned with books. There may be the sounds in his mansion which can regale the ear, the delicacies which can stimulate the palate, and the forms of beauty which can please the eye. There may be nothing in his whole life to offend the most chastened and fastidious delicacy; and yet, if the history of all this be, powers frittered upon time which were meant for eternity, the man is degraded; if the spirit which was created to find its enjoyment in the love of God has settled down satisfied with the love of the world, then that man has turned aside from a celestial feast to prey on garbage. — *Robertson.*

24, 25. (24) **Hearken,** making a most impressive application. (25) **decline,** from the counsels and the principles of wisdom and of purity.

Warnings. — A certain Jew had formed a design to poison Luther, but was disappointed by a faithful friend, who sent Luther a portrait of the man, with a warning against him. By this, Luther knew the murderer and escaped his hands. Thus the word of God, O Christian, shows thee the face of those lusts which Satan employs to destroy thy comforts and poison thy soul. — *G. S. Bowes.* — *Care of our hearts.* — We strive to have in our gardens the most beautiful flowers, and the finest flavored fruit, but we are careful to have no poison vine, however brilliant its colors, trail over the flowers, no poison berries, however tempting to the sight, hang side by side with the fruit. Let us take at least as good care of our minds and hearts as we do of our gardens. — *F. S. Schenck.*

26, 27. (26) **cast down,** as on a field of battle. **strong men,** better, *mighty host. LXX.*, "innumerable are her slain." *Stuart,* "if even the mighty are destroyed by her, how can the mere youngling expect to come off with impunity." (27) **to hell,** *R. V.*, "sheol," ch. ii. 18, v. 5.

Hell. — That there is a hell no man of experience can deny, — a hell here; a hell of remorse, self-reproach, appalling memory, hopelessness — a despair compared with which all darkness is as midday. How difficult to forewarn men with any success! The exhorter himself has been overwhelmed, the teacher victimized, the saintliest soul is conscious of a ministry not divine. Still on every hand the word of exhortation and persuasion must be spoken, and the prayer of entreaty must be breathed with eagerness and passion if haply one soul may be rescued from the way to hell and the chambers of death. — *R. F. Horton.*

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1—3. (1) **cry,** making also her good and gracious invitations to the young. **put . . voice,** loudly and persuasively.[a] (2) **high places,** fr. which the passers-by may be observed. **places of the paths,** *R. V.*, "where the paths meet." (3) **gates,** where so many are coming and going. **coming . . doors,** at the very entrance of the city, so as to secure all.

The voice of Divine wisdom (vss. 1–14). — I. It is a voice striving for the ear of all. She cries — 1. In the most commanding scenes of life; 2. In the ordinary thoroughfares of life; 3. In the most crowded districts of life. II. It is a voice worthy of the ear of all; because her communications are — 1. Perfect; 2. Intelligible; 3. Precious; 4. Exhaustless; 5. Rectifying; 6; Original. — *Thomas.*

Note on verse 1. — It is one thing to be ignorant: another to have refused to learn. For not to know is only ignorance; to refuse to learn is pride. And they are the less able to plead ignorance in excuse, the more that knowledge is set before them, even against their will. We might, perhaps, be able to pass along the way of this present life in ignorance of this Wisdom, if she herself had not stood in the corners of the way. — *St. Gregory.* — *Note on verse* 3. — It is a fine picture of the comprehensiveness of the Gospel, which is meant for high and low, prince and peasant; which is proclaimed everywhere, in the courts of kings, in the lanes of the country, in the hovels of the city; which sets forth the infinite love of God, who is not willing that any should perish, but would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Pet. iii. 9). — *Pul. Com.* — *Wisdom described.*—Wisdom, unlike the vicious woman who lurks in the twilight at the corner of the street which contains her lair, stands in the open places; she makes herself as manifest as may be by occupying some elevated position, from which her ringing voice may be heard down the streets and up the cross-ways, and may attract the attention of those who are entering the city gates or the doors of the houses. As her voice is strong and clear, so her words are full and rounded; there is no whispering, no muttering, no dark hint, no subtle incitement to secret pleasures; her tone is breezy and stirring as the dawn; there is something about it which makes one involuntarily think of the open air, and the wide sky, and the great works of God. — *Exp. Bib.*

"A very vivid instance of personification is this. Wisdom and understanding are represented as living agents, ministries that can be seen, apostles sent from the hills of light that they may speak of glory and beauty and pureness to the children who dwell in the valleys of darkness. What answer can we make to this interrogation? A distinct and emphatic reply that it is even so." — *Peop. Bib.*

4—6. (4) **men . . sons of man,** a distinction is perhaps designed between the stronger and experienced, and the weaker and inexperienced. (5) **simple,** "those not yet perverted, but easily influenced for good or evil." **wisdom,** or subtlety in a good sense; prudence; rules of self-restraint, and pure ordering of life. **fools,** the intellectually heavy and dull. **understanding,** or *discerning.* (6) **excellent things,** princely things, such as are suitable for a prince.[a] **right,** and tending to righteousness.[b]

A scoffer. — A scoffing infidel of considerable talents, being once in the company of a person of slender intellect, but of genuine piety, and supposing no doubt that he should obtain an easy triumph in the display of his ungodly wit, put the following question to him: "I understand, sir, that you expect to go to Heaven when you die: can you tell me what sort of a place Heaven is?" "Yes, sir;" replied the Christian; "Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; and if your soul is not prepared for it, with all your boasted wisdom you will never enter there."

a "The sense is — I will speak of the mysteries of the *kingdom of heaven.*" — *Wordsworth.*

b "This wisdom is ever in the world. Her voice is everywhere; it rings through the ages. It is high above all the tumults of the nations. The voices of generations are hushed in graveyards and in seas, but this voice sounds on; it cannot be silenced."— *Dav. Thomas.*

7—9. (7) **speak,** *R. V.*, "utter." **wickedness,** not untruth only, but all kinds of enticement to wrong-doing. (8) **froward,** *lit. wreathed*: twisted, contradictory to truth. (9) **that understandeth,** who is wise enough not to despise, but to open his heart to receive, the counsels of wisdom. The man who wishes to order his life by the teachings of wisdom.[c] **right,** *lit.* "before one's eyes," *i. e.* they make the path straight, without stumbling blocks.

The word "froward." — Froward is used by our translators for five Hebrew words, of which two have the force of turning aside, and the other three of being twisted or perverted. The majority of instances are in the Proverbs. According to Wedgwood it properly means "from-ward," as opposed to "toward." Hence "toward" as an adjective is used in a favorable sense. The two words are opposed in *Taming of the Shrew*, act. v., scene 2:

Vincentio. — 'Tis a good hearing, when children are toward.

Lucentio. — But a harsh hearing, when women are froward.

Preaching self, and Christ. — When Bernard had once preached a very eloquent sermon on a public occasion, the people greatly applauded him; but his own mind was much dejected. On the following day he again preached, but with the utmost simplicity, which did not so well please his audience. When spoken to on the subject, he declared his conviction that in the latter instance only had he discharged his duty; "for," added he, "yesterday I preached Bernard, but to-day Jesus Christ."

c "Those who discern things that differ, who know good and evil, readily subscribe to the rectitude of all Wisdom's dictates, and therefore without murmuring or disputing, govern themselves by them."— *Matt. Henry*

Is. xxxv. 8.

"If aught in God's Word does not seem to us right, it is because we have not found true knowledge. He who would have the sealed book opened to him must ask it of the Lamb who opens the book."— *Fausset.*

10, 11. (10) **not silver,** *i. e.* as being preferable to gaining silver. **knowledge,** practical knowledge for the guidance of life is meant. **choice gold,** tried, selected, precious. (11) **wisdom,** *etc.*, comp. Job xxviii. 15; Ps. xix. 10; Pr. iii. 15. **rubies,** *peninim*, prob. pearls.

"Some persons proceed as if they expected to obtain wisdom as some Chinese philosophers thought oysters got their pearls, by gaping."

Worth of wisdom. — If the mountains were pearl, if every sand of the sea were a diamond, it were not comparable to wisdom. Without wisdom a person is like a ship without a pilot, in danger to split upon rocks. The price of wisdom is above rubies. The ruby is a precious stone, transparent, of a red, fiery color. It is reported of one of the kings of India, he wore a ruby of that bigness and splendor, that he might be seen by it in the dark ; but wisdom casts a more sparkling color than the ruby, it makes us shine as angels.

"All arts among men are the rays of Divine wisdom falling upon them. Whatsoever wisdom there is in the world, it is but a shadow of the wisdom of God."—*Charnock.*

12, 13. (12) **prudence,** or *subtlety*, the wisdom of the serpent, wh. our Lord commended.[a] **of witty inventions,** *R. V.*, "and discretion," *i. e.* "wisdom presides over all well-considered designs. She has and uses the knowledge of them."—*Pul. Com.* (13) **fear . . evil,** hating evil is one sure sign of it. (Job i. 1). **pride,** opposed to the supreme virtue of humility. **evil way,** *i. e.* sins of conduct, in contrast with the spiritual sin of pride. **froward,** perverse, ch. ii. 12 ; vi. 14.

[a] Mat. x. 16.

"The godly avoid evil and do good — from hatred of evil and love of goodness.—*Cartwright.*

Fear of the Lord.—

Lord, for the erring thought
Not into evil wrought ;
Lord, for the wicked will
Betrayed and baffled still ;
For the heart from itself kept,—
Our thanksgiving accept.

For ignorant hopes that were
Broken to our blind prayer;
For pain, death, sorrow sent
Unto our chastisement ;
For all loss of seeming good,—
Quicken our gratitude.—*W. D. Howells.*

"Wisdom is the olive that springeth from the heart, bloometh on the tongue, and beareth fruit in the actions."—*Grymestone.*

"Knowledge may not be as a courtesan, for pleasure and vanity only; or as a bond-woman, to acquire and gain for her master's use; but as a spouse, for generation, fruit, and comfort."—*Lord Bacon.*

14—16. (14) **sound wisdom,** *Heb. tushiyyah*, the very *essence* of things, whence they derive their soundness and strength.—*Wordsworth. Comp.* ch. ii. 7. **have strength,** as a possession, result, or attribute of wisdom. Understanding is a constant source of power, *cf.* Is. ix. 6 ; xi. 2. (15) **By me,** or in the exercise of wisdom only can rulers maintain authority. **princes,** *lit.* those who engrave just decrees. (16) **princes,** a different word from that in former *vs.*[a] This means leaders, commanders. **judges,** judgment was one of the prin. duties of a king.

[a] *vs.* 15, Heb. *rozenim; vs.* 16, Heb. *sarim.*

Da. ii. 21; Ro. xiii 1-6.

Authority of Divine wisdom.— This language may be considered as implying (1) that human government, in all its branches, is the appointment of Divine wisdom. 2. That all who sustain positions of authority and power should be habitually under the influence of Divine wisdom. 3. That no authority can be rightly exercised, and no judicial process successfully carried out, without the direction of wisdom. 4. That Divine wisdom exercises control over all human agents in the administration of public affairs.—*Wardlaw.*

"This wisdom is ever in the world. Her voice is everywhere; it rings through the ages. It is high above the tumults of the nations. The voices of generations are hushed in graveyards and in seas; but this voice sounds on; it cannot be silenced."—*Dav. Thomas.*

The all-wise God. — He is best able to counsel, none like Him. He is a wonderful Counselor. He is furnished with knowledge, wisdom, faithfulness ; He sees, observes, considers, understands all things, with their consequences and causes. He is engaged to counsel. His goodness engages Him; this will not suffer poor souls blindly to run upon their own ruin. His truth engages Him: He must be as good as His word ; He has promised to guide the meek.— *Barker* (1659).

[b] Comp. Jno. xiv. 21; Mat. vii. 7, 8.

17. I love, "Div. wisdom has heart as well as intellect ; it glows with sympathies as well as radiates with counsels. Love is its genius, its root, its essence."[b] **love me,** bec. love secures the devotion of the whole being. We give ourselves wholly to those whom we love. **seek me early,** *R. V.*, "diligently," as one who rises early to accomplish a purpose.[b]

[b] Illus. of early seekers after God, Joseph, Samuel, David, Obadiah, Josiah, Daniel.

Motives to early piety (*vs.* 17).— I. God has given you peculiar encouragements to seek Him while you are young. II. Youth is for many reasons incomparably the best time for seeking the Lord. III. God has a right to your best services. IV. Let me urge upon you the happiness you will secure by having God for your friend. V. Let me urge upon you the danger of delay. VI. A distinguished place in heaven is the certain result of early piety. — *Payson.* — *Finding for seeking.* — 1. We must seek Christ if we would possess Him. He offers Himself to all as a Saviour and Master. But He must be

"Give God the blossom of your life; put Him not off with the fallen leaves."—*Nicholls.*

"Early life is the time to seek wisdom. Our moral metal is fluid in youth, and we can

followed and found. 2. The search for Christ must be earnest if it is to be successful. He will not answer a half-hearted call. Till we seek Him with determination, reality, persistency, we shall meet no response. 3. This earnest seeking will be rewarded by the receiving of Christ. Better than any thing that Christ could send us will be His own coming to dwell in our hearts. This will be the satisfaction of anxious inquiry in a full response, the blessing of love with love and close communion. — *Pul. Com.*

Early conversions. — This is the image of the text: They that seek Me in the dawn shall find Me; they that seek Me at daybreak; they that come after Me ere the dew be risen shall find Me, and we shall have a long morning talk together: when the soul is young, when the life is free, when the heart is unsophisticated, they that seek Me in the dawn shall find Me, for I have been waiting for them, yea, standing by them whilst they were sleeping, and hoping that at the moment of waking they would see Me, and exclaim, Blessed Spirit, take charge of my poor, frail life all the day, and tell me what I ought to do. Fool is he who begins the day prayerlessly, who takes his own life into his own hand; verily in doing so he puts his money into bags with holes in them, and at night he shall have nothing. — *Parker.* — *Youthful piety.* — Samuel was a little child when he ministered unto the Lord, and heard His voice. "And he grew, and the Lord was with him; and the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh." Paul, speaking of little Timothy, says, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." These are examples left on record by the spirit of grace, to teach us what may be done, in the strength and wisdom of the Most High. The Holy Spirit never strikes more powerfully than in early childhood. The late Countess of Huntingdon was only a little child when she gave her heart to Christ; and she was not only rich in this world, but eminently "rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom." Who can read the early conversion and life of the wife of President Edwards, and doubt her being a child of God? or the thrilling narrative which he gives of Phœbe Bartlett, a child but five years old? For seventy years she testified to God's love in revealing Himself to a child. In the late memoirs of Rev. Dr. Justin Edwards it is stated that the heavenly conversion and Christian spirit manifested in her last sickness were the means of spiritual life to this eminent servant of Christ. One who had long been a "mother in Israel," and whose deep spirituality and holy life had given her an extended influence of the happiest kind, was wont to say, she could not remember the time when she did not love Christ and find her greatest delight in doing His will. In her life and in her death she has given the most satisfactory evidence of religion pure and undefiled.

18, 19. (18) **Riches,** *see* ch. iii. 16. **durable riches,** *lit.* "old," "long accumulated," hence enduring, in opposition to the fleeting char. of worldly riches. **righteousness,** *see vs.* 20. (19) **My fruit,** *comp.* fig. ch. iii. 14, 18. **fine gold,** or refined gold from the ore. **revenue,** or return to those who trade with me.[a]

Wisdom of incomparable value. — If the choice should lie between wealth and wisdom, it is better far to choose the latter: for: 1. While wealth will not buy wisdom, wisdom will lead to wealth, later if not sooner, of one kind if not of another. 2. Wisdom itself *is* wealth: it is the possession of the mind, it is the inheritance of the soul, it *is* "durable riches and righteousness."— *Pul. Com.*

Knowledge and wisdom. —

Knowledge descries alone, wisdom applies;
That makes some fools, this maketh none but wise.
In my afflictions, knowledge apprehends
Who is the Author, what the cause and ends;
It finds that patience is my sad relief,
And that the hand that caused can cure my grief.
To rest contented here is but to bring
Clouds without rain, and heat without a spring;
But sacred wisdom doth apply that good,
Which simple knowledge barely understood,
Wisdom concludes, and in conclusion proves
That wheresoever God corrects he loves. — *Quarles.*

be run into any mould; in age it becomes hard as the granite, or the steel. It must be sought to be obtained, and the sooner in life the better."— *Dav. Thomas.*

"Queenly as she is, she condescends to woo them. Her invitations are general, even universal. And therefore if any do not find her, it is because they do not seek her; if any do not share in her rich gifts and graces, it is because they will not take the trouble to claim them."— *Harper.*

"Industry has a firmer muscle, is less annoyed by delays and repulses, and, like water, bends itself to the shape of the soil over which it flows, and if checked, will not rest, but accumulates, and mines a passage beneath, or seeks a side-race, or rises above and overflows the obstruction. What genius performs at one impulse, industry gains by a succession of blows. In ordinary matters they differ only in rapidity of execution, and are upon one level before men, who see the result but not the process "—*H. W. Beecher.*

[a] Re. iii. 18.

"It is His love to us that makes us to love Him; and, doubtless, He that loves us so as to make us to love Him, cannot but love us when we do love Him."— *Jermin.*

When King Demetrius had sacked and razed the city of Megæra to the very foundations, he demanded of Stilpo, the philosopher, what losses he had sustained. "None at all," said Stilpo, "for war can make no spoil of virtue."

[a] "Wisdom being riches and honor, there is enough in wisdom's self to make a heritage of for them that love her. In fact, our eternal heirdom will be this peerless wisdom."—*Miller.* "Handfuls are gotten on the ground, but a soulful is not to be had except in Christ.

"The man of knowledge lives eternally after his death, while his members are reduced to dust beneath the tomb. But the ignorant man is dead, even while he walks upon the earth; he is numbered with living men, and yet existeth not."—*Anon.*

The noble personification of wisdom.

"Wisdom existing eternally in the Godhead, was said to be 'formed' or 'brought forth' when it operated in creation, and when it assumed human nature."

[b] "A world of waters, 'great deeps' lying in darkness, this was the picture of the remotest time of which man could form any conception, and yet the coexistence of the uncreated wisdom with the eternal Jehovah was before that."—*Spk. Com.*

"When we endeavor to discover the secrets of nature, we are searching out the wisdom of God. When we learn the laws and processes of nature, we are able to think the thoughts of God." *Pul. Com.*

"Knowledge always desires increase; it is like fire, which must be first kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself."—*Johnson.*

20—21. (20) **I lead,** or walk, inviting others to follow. **righteousness,** essentially right paths, so right towards God, and right towards man. **in the midst,** *etc.*, I swerve not to the one side or the other in the paths of equity. (21) **inherit substance,** all who seek wisdom are sure to find full satisfaction in wisdom herself.[a] But here earthly prosperity and success are promised.

Christ guides infallibly by—1. His word, It is all truth. 2. His spirit. Men mistake and think they are guided by God's spirit when they are guided by their own, or by a worse spirit. But certainly whom Christ's spirit guides He guides aright. 3. His example. All other men have their failings, and must be followed no further than they follow Christ. He is the original copy; others are but blurred extracts. — *Francis Taylor.*

The benefits of knowledge.— The more we extend our knowledge of the operations of the creative power, as manifested in the structure and economy of organized beings, the better we become qualified to appreciate the intentions with which the several arrangements and constructions have been devised, the art with which they have been accomplished, and the grand comprehensive plan of which they form a part. By knowing the general tendencies of analogous formations, we can sometimes recognize designs that are but faintly indicated, and trace the links which connect them with more general laws. By rendering ourselves familiar with the handwriting, where the characters are clearly legible, we gradually learn to decipher the more obscure passages, and are enabled to follow the continuity of the narrative through chapters that would otherwise appear mutilated and defaced. Hence the utility of comprehending in our studies the whole range of the organized creation, with a view to the discovery of final causes, and obtaining adequate ideas of the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God.— *Roget.*

22—24. (22) **possessed me,** the best word for conveying the idea that wisdom was of the very essence of God from the absolute beginning. *R. V., marg.* "formed." **in . . way,** *R. V., marg.* "as the beg." *Stuart,* "the firstling of his way," *i. e.* wisdom was the first act of God's creative agency. **before his works,** *R. V., marg.* "The first of" the things of the material creation. **set up,** *Spk. Com.* thinks should be, "I was anointed;" perhaps better is, "ordained," "inaugurated." "Wisdom was fr. everlasting exalted as ruler and disposer of all things."— *Pul. Com.* **from the beginning,** *i. e.* before God began the creation of this universe. (24) **no depths,** *see* Gen. i. At first there was but chaos, "emptiness and confusion."[b] **abounding with,** or laden with.

The Redeemer's delight in the children of men (*vss.* 23–31).— Define wisdom. I. The striking picture which is here presented. 1. Christ in His state of preexistence; 2. The mutual affection and joy between Him and His father; 3. The feelings with which He regarded this lower world, and the beings by whom it was to be occupied. II. The important precepts which are here enforced. 1. Listen to His voice; 2. Perseverence in the pursuit; 3. Reward attending it; 4. Sin of those who reject the authority of Christ.

The imperfection of knowledge.— Among the Romans, Nasica was called Corculum for his pregnancy of wit; among the Grecians, Democritus Abderita was called wisdom itself; among the Britons, Gildas was called the sage; among the Jews, Aben Ezra was called Hechachan. They said of him that if knowledge had put out her candle, at his brain she might light it again; and that his head was the throne of wisdom. Among the Israelites was Ahithophel, whose counsel was an oracle. Here, now, was a pack of wise men; but why the Nile should overflow in the summer, when waters are at the lowest; or why the lodestone should draw iron to it, or incline to the polestar, — which of them, with all their knowledge, can give a reason of either? And as in human, so in Divine knowledge: the most acute and judicious have and must acknowledge their ignorance, and deplore their errors on divers points. We know but in part. If He that learned His divinity among the angels, to whom the Holy Ghost was an immediate tutor, knew but in part, it is well with us if we know but part of that part. — *Spencer.*

25, 26. (25) **settled,** Job xxviii. 9, xxxviii. 6. **before the hills,** Ps. xc. 2, fig. for great antiquity. (26) **the earth, nor the fields,** "the distinction intended is land as cultivated and occupied by buildings, *etc.*, and waste uncultivated land outside towns." **highest . . world,** *R. V., marg.* "nor the scene," *i. e.* comprehensively for "all the mass of the earth's dust."

From everlasting. — It was in the last times, that the Eternal Wisdom was set forth unto us, but it was from everlasting, that He was set up to be a king over us. It was in the fulness of time that He offered Himself for us, but it was from the beginning that He was anointed to be priest unto us. It was upon the earth that His gracious lips taught us, but it was before the earth was that He was ordained to be a prophet for us. It is in Him that all are chosen who come unto eternity, and He Himself was chosen from eternity. From everlasting he was set up our King, to set us up an everlasting kingdom. From the beginning was He anointed our priest, to anoint us in a priesthood that shall never end. Before the earth was, He was ordained our prophet, to order our feet in that way which shall bring us from earth to heaven; He was chosen that we might be the chosen people of God. — *Jermin.*

"Knowledge hath two pillars, learning and discretion. The greatest scholar without his two eyes of discretion and honesty, is like blind Samson; apt to no good, able to much mischief."— *T. Adams.*

"To be wise too late is the exactest definition of a fool."—*Young.*

27—29. (27) **prepared,** established the firmament. **a compass,** or circle, referring to the great vault of heaven, which appears like a circle or a dome. (28) **established the clouds,** *lit. made firm, or strong.*[a] **strengthened,** *etc.* "the fountains of the abyss are the reservoirs of water above the firmament."—*Stuart.* (29) **decree,** *R. V.*, "its bound;" *comp.* Job xxxviii. 4, 10, 11.[b] **his commandment,** or the shore He fixed for their restraint.

Magnitude of creation. — This earth wanders not alone; but a sweet fellowship of sister-spheres is bound together, cheering each other from afar, and from one telling it to all of a mutual law and indissoluble bond. Within the limits of this smaller economy burns the sun, so that in the act of creation, from which our abode arose, we necessarily include all the planetary apparatus, knowing that there the centre was fixed, and that each globe was launched in its circlings around it. The mundane and sublunary form only a little fragment of the work, an inferior department of the great transaction. And what are the few worlds which sweep with us about the same source of life and light? Massive, ponderous in themselves; some of them immensely larger than our own, running wider revolutions, and drawing after them brighter trains. But even this one solar family, recognizing and claiming members in the outskirts of space,— it is as nothing to what the eye can command, nothing to the visible! What constellations are thrown over the firmament in all the profusion of beauty and magnificence! And when the unaided sense has roamed to its utmost ken, and gazed to its utmost strength, it may call the instruments of science to its assistance, and it shall look out on ampler territories, and take hold of larger notices. Now we leave our nook. We speak in no terms of exaggeration when we describe what we see as beds, and floors, and clouds, of stars. As we pierce the awful altitudes, we ascend to new wonders. Apertures constantly open, and we are just suffered a glimpse into them. Heaven spreads above heaven, new arrangements stand revealed, and celestial bodies, in shapes hitherto undeveloped, flame as at the portal of the Eternal Throne, to guard its access and proclaim its terribleness. Yet even there are proofs that discovery has not closed its researches; still avenue verges from avenue, and height rises into height. And after all, this is but the outer court of "His high and holy place." — *Hamilton.*

"Knowledge is proper to man, and the more he has of it the more he is a man. Ignorance is brutish, and the more of it the more brutish."—*Bp. Hall.*

"Who is wise "He that winneth," not riches, not honors, but "souls, is wise."

30, 31. (30) **one brought up,** or as directress of the work. "I was as His artificer."[c] *R. V.*, "as a master workman." **daily . . delight,** *comp.* the Divine complacency in the daily works of creation, Ge. i. 4, 10, 12, 31. *R. V., marg.*, "I had delight continually," *i. e.* "wisdom herself rejoiced in her power and her work." (31) **habitable part,** *lit.* in the world of His earth; *i. e.* in the whole of His creation, but with special reference to man as the crown of God's creation.[d] "When the inhabited earth appeared, she descended and abode upon it, mingling with men, and taking delight in counselling and guiding them." —*Stuart.*

The joy of Christ in the world (vs. 31).— Of all earthly creatures, Christ delights most in men. 1. Because man is the chief of God's creatures upon earth, made after God's image, and for whom all the rest were made. 2. Because He took on Him the nature of men, and not of angels (He. ii. 16). 3. He conversed most familiarly with men when He was incarnate. Men only had reason and wisdom to delight in Christ's company, and to give Him occasion to delight in theirs. 4. Because He gave His life for them, that they might live with Him forever. It seems, then, that He took great delight in them, and means to do so forever. — *Francis Taylor.*

a "The clouds are, as in Job xxvi. 8, xxxviii. 37, conceived of as bags, which only in case they are suitably secured and do not burst, prevent the mighty outpouring of the upper waters upon the earth."-*O. Zöckler.*

b Ge. i. 9, 10; Ps. civ. 9.

"In nature all is managed for the best with the utmost frugality and just reserve, profuse to none but bountiful to all; never employing on one thing more than enough, but with exact economy retrenching the superfluous, and adding force to what is principal in everything."— *Shaftesbury.*

c "This falls in best with the special point of the whole passage, the creative energy of wisdom."—*Spk. Com.*

d "Redemption is no afterthought in the Div. procedure. The world was built as its theatre, and Christ was foreordained before its foundation. Its redemption was contemplated by Him in eternity, and was then a source of joy." — *Dav. Thomas.*

Creation forever in progress.— How close does it bring the Creator to us to regard Him, not so much as having made the world, as still engaged in making it; *i. e.* by supplying the life on which its laws, and thus its being and incidents, depend. It is an ill-constructed theology which regards God as having created only in past ages. A gorgeous sunset, the leafing of a tree in the sweet spring-time, betokens the Divine hand no less palpably than did the miracles which provided the hungry multitudes of Galilee with food. Depend upon it (says an eloquent preacher), it is not the want of greater miracles, but of the soul to perceive such as are allowed us still, that makes us push all the sanctities into the far spaces we cannot reach. The devout feel that wherever God's hand is, there is miracle; and it is simply an undevoutness which imagines that only where miracle is, can there be the real hand of God. He who will but discern beneath the sun, as he rises any morning, the supporting finger of the Almighty, may recover the sweet and reverent surprise with which Adam gazed on the first dawn in Paradise; and if we cannot find Him there — if we cannot find Him on the margin of the sea, or in the flowers by the wayside — I do not think we should have discovered Him any more on the grass of Gethsemane or Olivet.— *Grindon.*

"If He loved, and rejoiced in them before they knew and loved Him, how will He love and rejoice in them, when He sees them surrounding His throne, perfectly resembling Himself, loving Him with unutterable love, contemplating Him with ineffable delight, and praising Him, as the author of all their everlasting glory and felicity."—*Payson.*

32, 33. (32) **unto me,** wisdom, now conceived as "wide as the universe, eternal as Jehovah, ordering all things; no longer merely as prudence, calculation, and human experience."— *Spk. Com.* **blessed,** *etc.*, *see* Ps. cxix. 1, 2, cxxviii. 1. (33) **refuse it not,** from any disposition of self-will or pride.

"Hell fire burns with rage, and meets with fuel fully prepared for it, when God dooms unto it a head full of light and a heart full of lust; those who know God's will but do it not, do but carry a torch with them to hell, to fire that pile which must for ever burn them" —*Bp. Hopkins.*

Fearing Christ (*vs.* 32).—No sight so lovely as a religious youth. I. To harken to Christ is to hear His voice, which deserves to be heard; is a kind voice, an entreating voice, a pardoning voice, a comforting voice. II. To hearken to Christ is to believe His Gospel; Christ speaks in the Gospel, speaks to you, that He died for you to receive all the blessings made known in the Gospel. III. To hearken to Christ is to obey His laws. In this obedience of faith true blessedness is found.— *Fletcher.*

"How often has wisdom knocked at human hearts but to repay their hospitality!" —*Young.*

Wisdom our master. — O sweet courtesy! as if it were but a small matter that the Eternal Wisdom should become our Master, and teach us as His scholars; or that, being our Lord, He should teach us as His servants; or that, being God, He should teach us as men; yet greater is His love, and, as a Father, He teacheth us as His children. And well may He call us His children, for it is He that teacheth us who, by adoption, hath made us to be His children, which by hearkening unto Him we show ourselves to be.— *Jermin.*

34—36. (34) **watching,** as eager students waiting for their teacher; as clients at a great man's portal. (35) **life,** the symbol of all good and blessing. **obtain,** *R. V., marg.* "drawforth." **favour,** or gracious acceptance. (36) **sinneth against,** better, *misseth me.* "He who takes a path that does not lead to wisdom, is guilty of moral suicide." **wrongeth . . soul,** "sin is folly, and the greatest sinner, whatever his talents and attainments may be, is the greatest fool." **love death,** or act as if they did.[a]

[a] Pr. iv. 13, 22; vii. 27; Eze. xviii. 31.

"Yes, in place of this ancient Wisdom, which, stately and lovely as she is, remains always a little intangible and unapproachable, Christ is made unto us Wisdom, and He speaks to us the old words with a deeper meaning, and new words which none but He could ever speak." — *Harper.*

The self-destroyer.— That is the subject,— that to do wrong is not only to do an injury to an unseen spirit, but to do a positive injury to the man guilty of that wrong himself. There is a plant, and I say to the sun, "I am not any longer going to be under obligation to you; I am going to keep this plant in the cellar," and I take down the plant that ought to be in the very middle of the garden, miles away from any shadow, and say to the sun, "I am going to do without you." Do I injure the sun? Not at all. What do I injure? The plant. The sun says, "I want to shine upon that plant, and to bring out of its juices all the beauty that is hidden there, and I would do so if you would allow me: whoso, plant of any kind, sins against me, or is made to sin against me, wrongs itself; does not wrong me, does not impair my shining. My light shall be as pure and lavish as ever, but the plant that is withdrawn from my shining shall die." And the sun blazes on, performing his circuit and accomplishing his appointed work. I say to Nature, "You have given me two arms; I am going to bind one of them to my side and never to use it. My purpose is to do as well as I can with one arm and one hand." What does Nature say? Nature says, "I meant you to use both arms; if you do not use both those limbs you will not injure me — Nature; you will set aside my purpose; you will destroy the limb." But cannot I bind my arm to my side and keep it there while I please, and allow it to hang there, and then let it grow as it may be able? "No," Nature says, "no." The everlasting ordinances of God, written on Sinai,

"Not watching awhile, and then going away if they be not let in presently, but waiting patiently till they be let in. Not only taking occasion of learning offered, but waiting to find occasions, as petitioners wait on great men till their causes be ended." — *Francis Taylor.*

written in the dust, written in the air, written everywhere, say "No." Whoso sinneth against physiological law wrongeth his own nature, his own flesh and blood, and he shall feel, in manifold penalty, in excruciating pain, in gradual and irresistible decay, that he has violated eternal law. That is the distinct teaching of the text. He that sinneth against wisdom, Christ, truth, light, purity, wrongeth his own soul, commits suicide, brings himself to an untimely death and a dishonored grave. — *Parker.*

"The special idea conveyed is that of a treasure piled up for many years, ancient wealth." — *Spk. Com.*

"Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop, than when we soar." — *Wordsworth.*

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1, 2. (1) **builded her house,**[a] where she may entertain all who seek her. **seven pillars,** seven, as usual, indicating completeness, perfection.[b] Pillars, as the emblem of strength. Roofs were usually, in ancient times, supported by pillars. (2) **killed,** *etc., lit.* killed her killing. Flesh was a part of the provision at Eastern banquets. **mingled her wine,** with water or milk to dilute it and preserve temperance. Some, however, think that allusion is here made to the custom of adding myrrh and other spices to wine to increase its flavor.

Wisdom's feast (*vss.* 1–6).—1. It is plain that the human spirit needs a feast from the fact that God has spread the board. Man's spiritual nature must starve without the feast which God's wisdom has prepared. The existence of the feast proves the existence of the need. 2. This feast is of the best quality. The man who prepares a feast for his guests prepares of his best. Christ, who declares Himself to be meat and drink to the spirit of man is the best gift that God had to bestow upon man — the best food that heaven could furnish. 3. Wisdom's feast is one in which there is variety. The human spirit, like the human body, craves a variety in its food, and God has satisfied that craving. The revelation of God in Christ (in other words, the gospel) reveals a great variety of spiritual truths upon which the spiritual nature of man can feed.— *Preacher's Com.*

Wisdom's feast. — All the details as to the feast of Wisdom would seem to be but so many anticipations of the parables and appeals of Jesus Christ. The idea of "building her house" runs through the Christian writings. "Upon this rock I will build my church;" "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets;" "Built up a spiritual house." We may speak of the house of Wisdom as we speak of the house of God. It is a sanctuary, a home, a centre of union, a bond and symbol of friendship. The invitation of Wisdom is the invitation of Christ: "Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." All we have to do is to go; we take with us nothing but our hunger; the feast is Christ's, the invitation is Christ's, the house is Christ's; the hunger alone is ours, and a blessed hunger it is if we feel that only Christ can satisfy it. Wisdom mingles the wine and flavors it with choice spices, and sends forth invitations rich with the music of hospitality: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price," — come and do what otherwise would be impossible; claim as a right what is given as a grace, and treat as a purchase what is bestowed as a gift. — *Parker.*

3, 4. (3) **maidens,** servants: the female word may be chosen bec. wisdom is represented as a queen, or bec. "females were the accustomed heralds of good news among the Hebrews."— *Stuart.* **highest places,** conspicuous places. (4) **simple,** imprudent and inexperienced, hence easily led astray.[c]

Wisdom's banquet; or, the call to salvation. — 1. The New Testament echoes the Old, and the Gospel is essentially the same in every way; 2. The Gospel of Christ is the unfolding, expansion, enrichment of the ancient spiritual lore; 3. The relation of the Divine to the human remains constant; it is that of supply to want, knowledge to ignorance, love and light to sorrow and darkness; 4. The invitation to the kingdom of heaven is free and general, conditioned by nothing except the need of its blessings. — *Pul. Com.*

Wisdom's invitation. — This may derive some illustration from a custom which Hasselquist noticed in Egypt, and which may seem to be ancient in that country. That it has been scarcely noticed by other travelers may arise from the fact that, although they may have seen the maidens on their way, they had not the means of knowing on what errand they were bound. He

[a] Note the similarities bet. this parable and some of those given by our Lord, *e g.* The Great Supper, the Wedding Feast.

[b] "Wisdom builded her house and erected seven pillars, wh. number designates the unity of the churches, inasmuch as seven expresses universality." — *St. Augustine.*

"The church is here called the house of Wisdom, who is said to have hewn out seven pillars, bec. they are supported by the strength of Him who is perfect, and bec. seven is the number of perfection." — *St. Gregory.*

Comp. Jas. iii. 17; Re. i 4, 12.

"All that is strong and lasting in the world has taken time in its formation. So is it in the refuge where that is found which will satisfy the soul of man. It was long ere it was completed, but it is a lasting edifice, built upon a sure foundation."— *Preacher's Com.*

[c] Plato had inscribed on the door of his school, "Let none but geometricians enter here;" but on the portals of the Christian school is written, "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither"

"The maidens are sent forth — not one, but many — that the message may go to all quarters. They cry in the highest places of the city,

that the message may have the greatest publicity, may spread over the widest area, may reach all classes. This is the character of the call of God to us in His truth. He seeks us before we seek Him."—*Pul. Com.*

says that he saw a great number of women, who went about inviting people to a banquet in a singular, and, without doubt, in a very ancient manner. They were about ten or twelve, covered with black veils, as is customary in that country. They were preceded by four eunuchs; after them, and on the side, were Moors, with their usual walking staves. As they were walking, they all joined in making a noise, which, he was told, signified their joy, but which he could not find resembled a joyful or pleasing sound. — *Kitto.*

5, 6. (5) **bread . . wine,** *i. e.* all needful nourishment. (6) **foolish,**[a] *R. V.*, "Leave off, ye simple ones." *Stuart*, "Forsake simplicity." **and live,** *i. e.* enjoy a long and happy life. **go,** not enough to leave off, the simple one must make progress towards knowl.

The morality of trade. — A carpenter, who was tired of making an honest living, came to a gentleman in Philadelphia with a petition for a tavern license, which he requested him to sign. The gentleman looked at him, and asked him why he did not stick to his plane and bench. The answer was, "Tavern-keeping is a more lucrative trade; I want to get richer." "Well, but do you not think you will be affording additional facilities to drunkards to destroy themselves?" "Perhaps I shall." "Do you not believe that at least five men every year will die drunkards if you succeed in getting a license?" "Why, I never thought of that before; but I suppose it would be so." "Then, if the Lord lets you keep tavern for ten years, fifty men will have died through your agency; now, what becomes of the drunkard? Does he go to heaven?" "I suppose not." "I am sure he does not, for no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. What becomes of him, then?" "Why, he must go to hell." "Well, do you not think it will be just if the Lord, at the end of ten years, sends you down to hell too, to look after those fifty drunkards?" The man threw down his petition, went back to his honest occupation, and was never tempted to desire a license again. — *Whitecross.*

a "No coming to this feast in the tattered rags of the old Adam: you must relinquish your former evil courses and companies."—*Trapp.*

"*Wonderful!* 'No,' we may answer in the terms of the negro woman to the missionary when he put the question, 'Is not this wonderful?' 'No, massa, it be *just like Him.*' It is in the true style of infinite benevolence." — *Preachers' Com.*

7, 8. (7) **reproveth a scorner,** *comp.* Mat. vii. 1–5. **a blot,** such a proceeding results in disgrace to himself. This is not said to discourage the virtuous from reproving transgressors, but states the effect which experience proves to occur in such cases. Prudence, caution, and tact are needed in dealing with these characters. Evil men regard the reprover as a personal enemy, and treat him with contumely. — *Pul. Com.* (8) **hate thee,** for pointing to his wilful ways, and spoiling his pleasure in walking in them. **love thee,** Ps. cxli. 5.

"Wisdom consists in the choice of the best ends, and the use of the most appropriate means to accomplish those ends." —*R. Watson.*

Reproof (*vss.* 7–9). — The text leads us to consider reproof in two aspects. I. As injuriously administered. II. As usefully administered. 1. By rebuking a wise man you enlist his affection; 2. By instructing a wise man you render him a benefit. — *Thomas.*

"Seldom ever was any knowledge given to keep, but to impart: the grace of this rich jewel is lost in concealment." — *Bishop Hall.*

Reproof. — There is a time to speak, using the language of strong and even severe reproach. On the other hand — this is the truth of the text — there is a time to be silent, to leave abandoned and guilty men to be condemned of God. Reproach would be lost upon them; it would only come back with a severe rebound, and wound the speaker. The practical point, then, is that we consider the character of a man before attempting to rebuke him, and that we be not so anxious to protest against sin as to counsel the sinner and guide him to better ways. — *Pul. Com.*—*A reproof.* — The Rev. John Maclaurin, of Glasgow, well known to the world by his valuable Christian writings, in passing one day along the street, was disturbed by the noise of some disorderly soldiers. One of them particularly, just as Mr. Maclaurin approached them, uttered an awful imprecation. The good man, shocked with hearing such blasphemous language, went up to him, and laying his hand on the shoulder of the man, spoke to him with peculiar mildness and solemnity. It was a word in season, and it came with power. The conscience of the soldier sunk under the reproof. He was led not only to reform the evil habit of swearing, to which he had long been addicted, but to reflect on his ways, and to turn to the Lord. He became a real Christian; and proved the soundness of his conversion by maintaining to the end of his life a conversation becoming the Gospel. — *Whitecross.*

b "The more a wise man learns the more he loves wisdom." — *Fausset.*

9. **yet wiser,** bec. he will wisely use the instructions. **just,**[b] wisdom being a moral and not merely an intellectual, quality, there is a natural interchange of "wise" and "just," referring to the same individual, in the two clauses.

A powerful sermon. — It is related of Dr. Manton, that having to preach before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, he chose a subject in which he had an opportunity of displaying his learning and judgment. He was heard with admiration and applause by the intelligent part of his audience; but as he was returning from dinner with the Lord Mayor, a poor man following him pulled him by the sleeve of his gown, and asked him if he was the gentleman that preached before the Lord Mayor. He replied he was. "Sir," said he, "I came with hopes of getting some good to my soul, but I was greatly disappointed, for I could not understand a great deal of what you said: you were quite above my comprehension." "Friend," said the doctor, "if I have not given you a sermon, you have given me one. By the grace of God, I will not play the fool in such a manner again." — *R. T. S.*

10, 11. (10) **fear,** *etc.*, ch. i, 7; Eccl. xii. 13. **of the holy** *R. V.*, "the Holy One," a plural epithet in apposition with Jehovah.[a] (11) **days,** *etc.*, ch. iii. 16; x. 27.

Character (*vss.* 10–12.) — Nothing so important to man as character. Here we have — I. The foundation and blessedness of a good character. 1. The foundation; 2. The blessedness. II. The solemn personality of character, whether good or bad. — *Thomas.*

A remarkable character. — During the session of Congress, Mr. Jefferson pointed out Roger Sherman to a friend, saying, "That is Mr. Sherman, of Connecticut, a man who never said a foolish thing in his life." Mr. Macon said of him, "He had more common sense than any man I ever knew." Fisher Ames said, "If I am absent during a discussion of a subject, and consequently know not on which side to vote, I always look at Roger Sherman; for I am sure if I vote with him, I shall vote right." He was a pious man, faithful in his closet, in his family, on the bench, and in the senate house. Such character is valuable as it is rare.

12. Wise for thyself, wisdom will bring its own reward, as also will folly.[b] "This verse asserts the great law of personal retribution. Whatever thou doest, thou, and none other, shall reap the fruits of it." — *Spk. Com.*

Carving character. — Did you ever watch a sculptor slowly fashioning a human countenance? It is not molded at once. It is not struck out at a single blow. It is painfully and laboriously wrought. A thousand blows rough-cast it. Ten thousand chisels polish and perfect it, put in the fine touches, and bring out the features and expression. It is a work of time; but at last the full likeness comes out, and stands fixed and unchanging in the solid marble. So does a man carve out his own moral likeness. Every day he adds something to the work. A thousand acts of thought and will and effort shape the features and expressions of the soul. Habits of love, piety, and truth, habits of falsehood, passion or goodness, silently mould and fashion it, till at length it wears the likeness of God, or the image of a demon. — *Oxenden.*

18—15. (13) **foolish woman,** *R. V., marg.* "Folly;" represented under the guise of an adulteress; representing the sensuous, self-indulgent life. *Comp.* ch. vii. **simple,** in the bad sense; no moral fibre with wh. to resist temptation. **knoweth nothing,** and careth to know nothing. Self-indulgence ruins intelligence, and plucks away all care for wisdom. (14) **door of her house,** "she like Wisdom has a house of her own, and imitates her in inviting guests to enter." **high places,** or conspicuous places; challenging attention, she seeks to rival Wisdom in gaining followers. (15) **go right on,** if so be she may induce them to turn aside from duty to indulgence.

The ministry of temptation (*vss.* 13–18).—I. As conducted by depraved woman. 1. She is ignorant; 2. She is clamorous; 3. She is audacious; 4. She is persuasive. II. As directed to the inexperienced in life. 1. All men are passengers; 2. Temptation is busy in the path of each. III. As tending to a most miserable destination. 1. This woman obtaineth guests; 2. They are ruined; 3. Ruined contrary to their intention. — *Thomas.*

The voice of woman. — There is one part of woman's education often forgotten or neglected — the culture and formation of a gentle voice. It is a great gift of nature to be aided by culture — an instrument of powerful influence for good. I speak not of singing hymns now, and of culture for harmony and musical purposes, though these tend to God's praise, or to give

"Wisdom's self oft seeks to sweet retired solitude; where, with her best nurse, Contemplation, she plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings, that in the various bustle of resort were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd."—*Milton.*

[a] "The knowledge of the holy, in whatsoever of God or creature, it may have an example or be made to appear." —*J. Miller.*

"The 'knowledge of the holy" is the knowledge of all that is involved in hallowing God's name; knowing experimentally all that tends to our sanctifying the Lord in our hearts and in life." — *Fausett.*

[b] *Comp.* Job xxii. 2, 3; xxxv. 6-9; Re. xii. 11, 12.

"Every man has in himself a continent of undiscovered character. Happy is he who acts the Columbus to his own soul."—*Sir J. Stevens.*

"Some of the true wisdom is a nucleus round which more will gather. A little island once formed in the bed of a great river, tends continually to increase. Such is wisdom from above once settled in a soul. It makes all things work together for good to its possessor." —*Arnot.*

"'Tis thine to curb the passions' madd'ning sway, and wipe the mourner's bitter tear away; 'tis thine to soothe, when hope itself has fled, and cheer with angel smile the sufferer's bed; to give to earth its charm, to life its zest, one only task —to bless, and to be blest." — *Graham.*

innocent amusement; but this gentle voice will be able to guide and persuade to good the manly heart of a faithful husband, will mitigate sorrow, lessen trial, and speak of hope and joy to her dearest friends and connections, in accents at once powerful and pleasing. Let us then be careful in our schools to cultivate this most valuable acquirement. How different, in all respects, for a family, for friends and neighbors, are the kind, gentle, persuasive accents I have described from sounds we sometimes (alas! too often) hear in the close abodes of poverty and trial — high, harsh, female treble tones of bitter import, scolding and reproaching, and driving away from the hearth and home (perhaps to sorrow and to sin) the husband and the children.—*Slaney.*

"'Clamorous,' that is, so bustling as to allow no time for repentance (see 5, 6), like Cardinal Mazarin, of whom it was said that the devil would never let him rest."—*Preacher's Com.*

a Ro. vii. 7; Pr. vi. 15.

16—18. (16) **simple,** *etc.*, obs. the foolish woman's imitation of the call of wisdom, *vs.* 4. (17) **stolen waters,** *etc.*, illicit pleasures are attractive bec. they are forbidden.[a] (18) **depths of hell,** sheol. "Behind the scene of voluptuousness is seen the world of the dead. The spectres of past transgressions haunt it."—*Spk. Com.*

"A proverb, meaning that forbidden delights are sweet and pleasant, as fruits of risk and danger."—*Fausset. Comp.* Pr. ii. 18, 19; vii. 27.

The pleasures of prohibited sin (*vs.* 17).—This argues not only a bold contempt but an impudent defiance—I. Of God's law—in that the waters are sweeter for being stolen. II. Of God's curse. The bread is eaten in secret for fear of discovery and punishment; and the sinner takes a pride in having so far baffled his convictions and triumphed over them, that, notwithstanding that fear, he dares commit sin, and can make himself believe that being eaten in secret it shall never be discovered or reckoned, for sweetness and pleasantness is the bait; but by the tempter's own showing, even that is so absurd, and hath such alloys, that it is a wonder how it can have any influence upon men that pretend to reason.—*Henry.*

"Even the highway of God, though a path of safety, is beset with temptation. Satan is so angry with none as with those who are going right on."—*Bridges.*

Queen's influence on the female character of Britain.—The unsullied purity of Her Majesty's private life, and the noble example she afforded to the women of Great Britain, was attended with an effect, the benefit of which was deeply felt through the whole of her reign, and may, as we trust it will, extend to ages yet unborn, since upon the conduct of the female sex mainly rests the edifice of the public as well as private morals. No woman, however elevated her rank or powerful her connections, if her reputation was known to have suffered the slightest taint, was permitted to appear in the presence of Her Majesty. Her fine reply to Lady ———, when soliciting permission to present Lady ———, and, when refused, saying she did not know what to tell her disappointed friend, will long be remembered and repeated: "Tell her," said the queen, "you did not dare to ask me."—*Percy Anec.*

"It is a great mistake to suppose that a woman with no heart will be an easy creditor in the exchange of affection. There is not on earth a more merciless exacter of love from others than a thoroughly selfish woman; and the more unlovely she grows, the more jealously and scrupulously she exacts love to the utmost farthing."—*Mrs. Stowe.*

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

From the beginning of the 10th chap. to the 16th vs. of the 22d chap. we have the first great collection of Solomonic proverbs.

1. proverbs, or collection of maxims; without any necessary connection. The two sentences composing one verse are often antithetical. **wise son,** one who is godly, ready to receive parental guidance, and the higher instructions of Divine Wisdom. **foolish son,** one who is willful, only seeking sensuous indulgences. **mother,** mentioned with no special purpose, only to vary the sentence from the previous one.

The child and the parent (*vs.* 1).—I. The holy character of the child gladdens the heart of the parent—1. Because he sees in such conduct the best results of his training; 2. And the best guarantees for his son's happiness. II. The unholy character of the child saddens the heart of the parent.—*Thomas.*

"What if God should place in your hand a diamond, and tell you to inscribe on it a sentence, which should be read at the last day, and shown there as an index of your own thoughts and feelings! Now, this is what God has done. He has placed before you the immortal minds of your children, more imperishable than the diamond on which you are about to inscribe every day

Reproofs from Dr. Waugh.—At one of the half-yearly examinations at the Protestant Dissenters' Grammar School, at Mill Hill, the head master informed the examiners that he had been exceedingly tried by the misconduct and perverseness of a boy who had done something very wrong; and who, though he acknowledged the fact, could not be brought to acknowledge the magnitude of the offense. The examiners were requested to expostulate with the boy, and try if he could be brought to feel and deplore it. Dr. Waugh was solicited to undertake the task, and the boy was, in consequence, brought before him. "How long have you been in the school, my boy?" asked the doctor. "Four months, sir." "When did you hear from your father last?" "My father's dead, sir." "Ay! alas the day! 'tis a great loss, a great loss, that of a father. But God can make it up to you, by giving you a tender, affectionate mother." On this the boy, who had previously seemed

as hard as a flint, began to soften. The doctor proceeded: "Well, laddie, where is your mother?" "On her voyage home from India, sir." "Ay! good news for you, my boy: do you love your mother?" "Yes, sir." "And do you expect to see her soon?" "Yes, sir." "Do you think she loves you?" "Yes, sir, I am sure of it." "Then think, my dear laddie, think of her feelings when she comes here and finds that, instead of you being in favor with every one, you are in such deep disgrace as to run the risk of expulsion, and yet are too hardened to acknowledge that you have done wrong. Winna ye break your poor mother's heart, think ye? Just think o' that, my lad." The poor culprit burst into a flood of tears, acknowledged his fault, and promised amendment.

and every hour, by your instructions, by your spirit, or by your example, something which will remain, and be exhibited for or against you at the judgment day."—*Payson.*

2. Treasures of wickedness, ill-gotten gains, *see* ch. xi. 4; *comp.* between the relative values of wealth and of character. **righteousness,** including generally good character, and specifically *benevolence.* **death,** the real sting of wh. is the sense of sin.[a]

Rectitude. — Righteousness before God is essential to all prosperity — 1. Because, if we deliberately choose the path of iniquity, we shall have to work against the arm of Omnipotence. "He casteth away the substance of the wicked." 2. Because, on the contrary, if we walk in moral and spiritual integrity, we may count on the direction and even the interposition of the Divine hand. 3. Because righteousness means virtue and prudence; it means those qualities which work for health and for security, which "relieve from death." 4. Because the gains of ungodliness are never satisfactory; they profit nothing. — *Pul. Com.*

David Hume. — Hume, the historian, received a religious education from his mother, and early in life was the subject of strong and hopeful religious impressions; but as he approached manhood they were effaced, and confirmed infidelity succeeded. Maternal partiality, however alarmed at first, came at length to look with less and less pain upon his declension, and filial love and reverence seemed to have been absorbed in the pride of philosophical scepticism; for Hume applied himself with unwearied, and, unhappily, with successful efforts, to sap the foundation of his mother's faith. Having succeeded in this dreadful work, he went abroad, and as he was returning, an express met him in London, with a letter from his mother, informing him that she was in a deep decline, and could not long survive; she said, she found herself without any support in her distress; that he had taken away that only source of comfort upon which, in all cases of affliction, she used to rely; and that she now found her mind sinking into despair. She did not doubt that her son would afford her some substitute for her religion; and she conjured him to hasten to her, or at least to send her a letter, containing such consolation as philosophy could afford to a dying mortal. Hume was overwhelmed with anguish on receiving this letter, and hastened to Scotland, traveling day and night; but before he arrived his mother expired. No permanent impression seems, however, to have been made on his mind by this trying event; and, whatever remorse he might have felt at the moment, he soon relapsed into his previous hardness of heart. Thus it is that false philosophy restores the sting to death, and gives again the victory to the grave. — *R. T. S.*

a "The highest opulence of the dead sinner is of no possible profit; but the righteousness of the saved sinner, even without any opulence at all, is a fortune; for, like the 'charm of the lamp,' it makes for him everlasting blessedness."—*J. Miller.*

"None thrive so well as those that stay God's leisure, and expect wealth in His way."

"Aristotle tells us of the sea-mew, or sea-eagle, that she will often seize on her prey, though it be more than she can bear, and falleth down headlong with it into the deep, and so perisheth. This fowl is a fit emblem of the unrighteous person, for he graspeth those heavy possessions which press him down into the pit of perdition."—*Preacher's Com.*

3, 4. (3) soul, put for life: *comp.* Ps. xxxvii. 25. **casteth,** *etc.*, better read, "He will repel the greedy desires of the wicked." The godly man may be sure of not wanting "any good thing;" but the cravings of the wicked are frustrated. (4) **slack hand,** careless, idle. The hand of one who does not feel the burden and responsibility of life.[b] **diligent,** *lit. sharpened.*[c]

Industry and contentment. — A noble instance of contentment is given in the life of the late William Roscoe, Esq. That gifted man was almost entirely self-taught, and indebted to his own efforts for his rise from a very humble station. In an account of his early days, written by himself, he says: "Having quitted school at twelve years old, I now began to assist my father in his agricultural concerns. In this and other laborious occupations, particularly in the care of a garden, in which I took great pleasure, I passed several years of my life, devoting my hours of relaxation to reading my books. This mode of life gave health and vigor to my body, and amusement and instruction to my mind; and to this day I well remember the delicious sleep which succeeded my labors, from which I was again called at an early hour. If I were asked whom I considered to be the happiest of the human race, I would

b The word used *lit.* means *deceitful*, in the sense of failing of its purpose.

c Pr. xii. 24.

"The Lord's visits of favor were never given to loiterers. Moses and the shepherds of Bethlehem were keeping their flocks. Gideon was at the threshing-floor. 'Our idle days,' as Bishop Hall observes, 'are Satan's busy days.' Active employment

answer, those who cultivate the earth by their own hands." — *Advantages of industry.* — The blessing of God doth so follow it, that more have been made honorable by their diligence than by their birth. From servants many have grown to be masters, from hirelings to be officers, through their diligence — as we see in Jacob, Joseph, David, with many more. Witness also the Romans, who raised their commonwealth thereby, and stood not upon terms of blood; some of them were fetched from the plough; some from other places mean and base. Cicero, Fabius, Quintius, and others, witness these things. Justinius, of a diligent herdboy became a diligent soldier; of a diligent soldier, a great commander: of a commander, the emperor of the world, and one of the best. And if we should come nearer home, how many judges and bishops of this land, of mean descent, have risen to honor by it! . . . Oh, then, let us fall in love with diligence! Which way can we cast our eyes and want arguments? Look up to heaven, and without diligence no getting thither; for that crown we must run and strive and work. Look upon the earth, and without diligence no blessing can be hoped for from it. God speed the plough! let the land miss his tillage, and where is the increase? but the oftener it is turned, compassed, and ploughed, the surer it proves to the husbandman's content. We read in story of one Furius Cresinus, a Roman, who was accused of witchcraft in drawing away the fat of other men's land into his own, for that every year he had great crops, and his neighbors small or none; this they thought came by enchantment, and thereof he was questioned in judgment. The poor man brings with him all his tools of husbandry — heavy mattocks, weighty ploughshares, full-fed oxen, all his irons much bigger and stronger than his neighbors, and, lastly, his daughter, a strong and big maid, who was his helper in his business, and setting all these before his judges and accusers, cried out in these words, "*Hæc sunt, Quirites, beneficia mea!*" "This daughter, these oxen, these tools, are the instruments of my witchcraft, and besides these I use none, and these with diligence I apply." It is good ground, a good husbandman, and God's blessing, that bring good crops, whether for soul or body. — *Arrowsmith.*

5. gathereth, the ripened harvest into threshing-floor or barn. **son,** or man Son may be especially used bec. these proverbs and counsels are addressed to the young. The wise son watches for opportunities, and does the work of the season. **sleepeth,** in mere listless idleness, or for mere enjoyment.[a] "Life is a short day, but it is a working day."

The day of grace (*vs.* 5). — It is — I. A short time, and therefore calls for diligence. The King's business requires haste. II. A limited time, beyond which there is no mercy, Eccles. ix. 10; Luke xiii. 9. III. A varying time, as summer days are longer than winter days, and there are sunny days and cloudy days; but the rainbow of God's mercy is seen only in the day of grace. We should look for it in vain in the night of eternal darkness. — *S. C. Bowes.*

Lingering. — There was a king of Sicily who was called "The Lingerer," not because he stayed till opportunity came, but because he stayed till opportunity was lost. There is a time to wait, and there is a time to act. Overlong waiting means loss of chance, for the king has passed by and the gates are closed; but to wait patiently until everything is ripe for action is the very last expression of Christian culture. "He that believeth shall not make haste;" he who only half believeth shall live in fretfulness and anxiety, shall always be clutching at prizes and never seizing them. — *Exp. Bib.* — *Harvest.* — When God opens a gate he means that we should go through it, and pass into all the inheritance beyond; when God sends autumn upon the earth, with all its golden wheat fields and purple vintages, it is that men may arise and gather in the fruits of the earth, so that when winter comes there may be a garden within the walls of the house, yea, an abundant store on the hearthstone. — *Parker.*

6, 7. (6) **Blessings,** praises and thanks. Benedictions. **violence,** *etc.*, may be read, "The mouth of the wicked covereth, or concealeth violence."[b] "The wicked conceal or keep secret a meditated injury that they may strike the surer blow." — *Stuart.* (7) **is blessed,** for a blessing, as an excellent and inspiring example; whenever he is remembered a blessing shall be invoked upon him. **rot,** be worm-eaten, useless, loathsome. He can only be used to point a warning.[c]

The memory of the just (*vs.* 7). — "The memory of the just is blessed (1)

gives us a ready answer to his present temptation. 'I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down.'"—*Bridges.*

"It would be a libel upon the Divine economy to imagine that the tender plant of grace would thrive in a sluggard's garden. The work is difficult. The times are bad. He who would gain in godliness must put his soul into the business. But he who puts his soul into the business will grow rich Labor laid out here is not lost Those who strive lawfully will win a kingdom. When all counts are closed, he who is rich in faith is the richest man"—*Arnot.*

"Compare thyself with those that are more learned or wise than thyself, and then thou will see matter to keep thee humble."—*Sir M. Hale.*

a "To sleep when the plenteous harvest lies ready for the sickle is the extremest sloth." *Spk. Com.*

"Every day is a little life, and our whole life is but a day repeated. Those, therefore, that dare lose a day are dangerously prodigal; those that dare misspend it, desperate." — *Bishop Hall.*

"Aspire, break bounds! I say;
Endeavor to be good, and better still,
And best! Success is naught, endeavor's all."—
Robert Browning.

b "The violence wh. the wicked has done is as a bandage over his mouth, reducing him to a silence and shame like that of the leper or the condemned criminal, whose 'face is covered.'" —*Spk. Com.*

c Ps. ix. 5, 6.

because of his winning friendship; (2) because of his unfeigned piety; (3) because of his steadfast patience; (4) because of his noble, public-spirited activity." — *Ziegler.*

The power of kindness.—Fénélon was a Roman Catholic, and Archbishop of Cambray, in France. He was a man of the finest feelings, of the greatest benevolence, and he uniformly practiced the law, "overcome evil with good." He was kind and affable to the lowly, mild and courteous to the ignorant, philanthropic to the miserable, and ever gentle both to friend and foe. The consequence was that he won all hearts. His diocese was often the theatre of war; but the English, Germans and Dutch even surpassed the inhabitants of Cambray in their love and veneration for him. At such times he gathered the wretched into his residence and entertained them: for his known goodness had surrounded him with a power which even contending armies could not resist: and the consequence was that his dwellings were safe, even when towns and villages were lying in smoking ruins around him. The following is an instance of his great kindness: He observed one day that a peasant, who had been driven from his home, and to whom Fénélon had given shelter, ate nothing. He inquired the reason. "Alas! my lord," said the poor man, "in making my escape from my cottage I had not time to bring off my cow, which was the support of my family. The enemy will drive her away, and I shall never find another so good." Fénélon, availing himself of his privilege of safe conduct, immediately set out, accompanied by a single servant, and drove her back himself to the peasant. By thus walking according to the law of overcoming evil with good, he gained the affection of all. The peasantry loved him as their father; and, long after his death, their tears would flow when they said, "There is the chair on which our good archbishop used to sit in the midst of us; we shall see him no more." What a crown of unfading glory the law of love gave him! — *Montgomery.*

"Just memories are flowers we cannot allow to fade; we water them with our tears; by them we enrich and ennoble our prayers, and by them we animate ourself as by a sacred stimulus. —*T. Parker.*

"One man has kindness deep within him; and when the occasion comes the rind or shell is cracked, and the kernel is found. Such a man's heart, too long clouded, like a sun in a storm-muffled day, shoots through some opening rift, and glows for a period in glory. But there are other natures that are always cloudless; with them a cloud is the exception, shining is the rule."—*Beecher*

8—10. (8) **receive,** *etc.*, be willing to submit to rules **prating fool,** *lit. fool of lips,* a braggart. **shall fall,** be brought to a humiliating downfall; or shall be beaten. (9) **walketh surely,** or securely, safely. **perverteth,** acteth deceitfully. **known,** found out and punished.[a] (10) **winketh,** ch. vi. 13. "In craft and malice behind a man's back." — *Wordsworth.* **prating fool,** *i. e.* "the garrulous fool is even more certain to bring ruin on himself and others than the crafty plotter." — *Pul. Com.*

The upright (*vs.* 9).—I. Observe a few paradoxes. 1. He who walks uprightly is he who leans upon God; 2. Who bears his own burden; 3. Who ever bows before God; 4. Who waits for God; 5. Who runs in the way of God's commandments. II. Call to mind a few truisms. 1. He never walks alone; 2. He is always safe; 3. He is comparatively free from alarm; 4. He is never neglected; 5. He is not disappointed at last. III. A few questions. 1. Is your heart changed? 2. Do you avoid all known sin? 3. Do you seek the approval of God? 4. Do you continually endeavor to do the right?—*Stems and Twigs.*

Underhandedness.—Have no part with men who give themselves up to tricks, to evil counsels, to the working of disappointment in the hearts of others; only believe the man whose voice is clear, simple, and direct; about whose words there is no moral mystery, whose word is his bond, whose words indeed may be few but not therefore unwise; the man who means what he says, and who having sworn to his hurt will still carry out his covenant. The man who can submit to a mean trick will certainly not shrink from carrying it out in its fullness when opportunity serves. To wink with the eye may seem to be innocent enough, and so it may be under some circumstances, but when it is an indication of moral depravity, when it indicates knavery, trickery, deceit, the issue thereof must be sorrow of the bitterest quality.—*T. Parker.*

[a] "He adopts crooked ways in order, as he thinks, to be able to practice iniquity more secure and unobserved: but he is ever known and exposed, he must himself always fear recognition, and this gives to his walk 'insecurity.'" — *Rucetschi, thro' Lange.*

"It is striking how often Solomon dwells upon sins of the tongue; no member is so hard to control; none more surely indicates the man."—*Fausset.*

"Such as thy words are such will thy affections be esteemed; and such will thy deeds as thy affections, and such thy life as thy deeds." — *Socrates*

"Great men's words, saith one, are like dead men's shoes; he may go barefoot that waiteth for them." — *J. Trapp.*

11. well of life, or fresh flowing spring, ever pouring forth healing, helpful words, Jer. ii. 13; xvii. 13; Pro. iv. 10. **violence,** *etc., see vs.* 6.

The speech of the good (*vs.* 11). — Speech is one of the most distinguishing faculties of man: here that a good man is compared to a well of life. I. It is natural. II. Clean. III. Refreshing. IV. Life-giving. — *Thomas.*

The good man. — In a hot summer's day I was sailing with a friend in a tiny boat on a miniature lake, enclosed like a cup within a circle of steep, bare Scottish hills. On the shoulders of the brown, sun-burnt mountain, and full in sight, was a well, with a crystal stream trickling over its lip, and making

"Kind looks, kind words, kind acts, and warm handshakes — these are secondary means of grace when men are in trouble, and are fighting their unseen battles."— *J. Hall.*

its way down towards the lake. Around the well's mouth, and along the course of the rivulet, a belt of green stood out in strong contrast with the iron surface of the rock all around. "What do you make of that?" said my friend, who had both an open eye to read the book of Nature and a heart all aglow with its lessons of love. We soon agreed as to what should be made of it. It did not need us to make it into anything. There it was, a legend clearly printed by the finger of God on the side of these silent hills, teaching the passer-by how needful a good man is, and how useful he may be in a desert world. . . . . The Lord looks down, and men look up, expecting to see a fringe of living green around the lip of a Christian's life-course. — *Arnot.*

a 1 Cor. xiii.

b "Love hath a large mantle." — *Trapp.*

12. hatred . . strifes, litigations, disputes, either family or social, **love,** one element of wh. is the Pauline charity, wh. "beareth all things, and seeketh not her own."[a] **covereth,**[b] "by ignoring them, by palliating words, by considerate and conciliatory demeanor." — *Zöckler.*

Hatred and love (*vs.* 12). — Here we have — I. The great mischief-maker — hatred. Consider the strifes it causes in nations, communities, families. II. The great peace-maker — love. It is an element; its home is the heart of God — the God of peace. It is an agent; its grand messenger is Christ — the Prince of peace. 1. It restores order; 2. It pardons offenses. — *Thomas.*

Pr. xvii. 9; Jas. v. 20; 1 Pe. iv. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

"It is in the nature of love not only to forgive an injury, but to forget that the injury has ever been done."

"When you speak to any, especially of quality, look them full in the face, other gestures betraying want of breeding, confidence, or honesty; dejected eye confessing, to most judgments, guilt or folly."—*F. Osborn.*

"In the use of the tongue God hath distinguished us from beasts, and by the well or ill using it we are distinguished from one another; and, therefore, though silence be innocent as death, harmless as a rose's breath to a distant passenger, yet it is rather the state of death than life."— *Jeremy Taylor.*

"No Christian can yield to the spirit of hatred. When he feels that that spirit is getting the upper hand of him he betakes himself to secret intercourse with God and fights the awful battle at the Cross."—*Parker.*

"He that is graceless in a day of grace will be speechless in a day of judgment." — *Mead.*

Speaking gently. —

Speak gently! It is better far
To rule by love than fear;
Speak gently — let no harsh words mar
The good we might do here!

Speak gently! Love doth whisper low
The vows that true hearts bind;
And gently Friendship's accents flow —
Affection's voice is kind.

Speak gently to the little child!
Its love be sure to gain;
Teach it in accents soft and mild:
It may not long remain.

Speak gently to the young, for they
Will have enough to bear —
Pass through this life as best they may,
'Tis full of anxious care!

Speak gently to the aged one,
Grieve not the careworn heart;
The sands of life are nearly run —
Let each in peace depart!

Speak gently, kindly, to the poor;
Let no harsh tone be heard;
They have enough they must endure,
Without an unkind word!

Speak gently to the erring: know,
They may have toil'd in vain;
Perchance unkindness made them so;
Oh, win them back again!

Speak gently! He who gave His life
To bend man's stubborn will,
When elements were in fierce strife,
Said to them, "Peace, be still!"

Speak gently! 'Tis a little thing
Dropp'd in the heart's deep well.
The good, the joy, which it may bring,
Eternity shall tell.— *Bates.*

13, 14. (13) **lips,** or spoken words. **rod,** *etc.*, punishment like that wh. comes to the idle and foolish schoolboy.[a] **void,** *etc.*, wh. is surely seen by his foolish talk. (14) **lay up,** store it in memory and in heart. **near destruction,** *R. V.*, "a present destruction;" *i. e.* the careless talk of the foolish brings them into trouble.[b]

Conscience and the rod. — An old writer says, "The guilty conscience conceives every thistle to be a tree, every tree a man, every man a devil, — afraid of every man that it sees, nay, many times of those that it sees not. Not much unlike to one that was very deep in debt and had many creditors, who, as he walked London streets in the evening, a tender-hook caught his cloak. 'At whose suit?' said he, conceiving some sergeant had arrested him. Thus the ill-conscienced man counts every creature he meets with a bailiff sent from God to punish him." Such a conscience is indeed a "rod for the fool's back." — *Preacher's Com.*

15. wealth . . city,[c] "wealth is a help in many ways, securing from dangers, giving time and opportunity for acquiring wisdom, making one independent and free in action (Eccles. vii. 12)." **destruction . . poverty,** the poor are crushed, exposed to all kinds of evil, moral and material, by their want of means. But all this is of course to be qualified. The simply meaning is: "There are times when the wealth of the rich will avert danger and suffering; and at such a time the poor may perish for want of money. — *Stuart.*

Rich for a moment. — The British ship *Britannia* was wrecked off the coast of Brazil, and had on board a large consignment of Spanish dollars. In the hope of saving some of them, a number of barrels were brought on deck, but the vessel went to pieces so fast that the only hope for life was by taking at once to the boats. The last boat was about to push off, when a young midshipman went back to see if any one was still on board. To his surprise there set a man on deck with a hatchet in his hand, with which he had broken open several of the casks, the contents of which he was now heaping up about him. "What are you doing there?" shouted the youth. "Don't you know the ship is fast going to pieces?" "The ship may go," said the man; "I have lived a poor wretch all my life, and I am determined to die rich." All remonstrances were answered only by another flourish of the hatchet, and he was left to his fate.

16, 17. (16) **labor,** his earnings, acquisitions.[d] The *Heb.* word includes the result as well as the process of labor. **to life,**[e] put for all success and blessing (ch. xi. 19). **fruit,** better, *profit.* **to sin,**[f] "all the profit that the wicked make they use in the service of sin, which tends only to death (Rom. vi. 21). — *Pul. Com.* (17) **way,** *etc.*, better read, "A way to life is he who heedeth correction;" *i. e.* such a man guides others to life. His example is efficacious. **erreth,** better as *marg. causeth to err,* puts others astray.

True labor. — The labor of the righteous tendeth to life or "serves as life." 1. Because it is a good thing in itself. 2. Because it procures good, each stroke earning its pay. 3. Because it increases, and that on forever, making us holier and happier, and making others holier and happier through the endless ages. — *Miller.*

The way of life. — To grow in life, what a heaven is that! Jesus Christ said He came to give life, and to give it more abundantly; to give it wave upon wave, and billow upon billow, until it should utterly drive out of the soul every remnant and shadow of death. To know whether we are in the way of life we must inquire whether we are keeping instruction, or whether we are yielding ourselves up to our own will, and allowing passion to dominate the soul. If we are prepared to accept reproof, we may be sure that the spirit of true wisdom is still within us. — *Peop. Bib.* — *The niggardliness of increasing wealth.* — A young man was in the receipt of a decent salary in some merchant's office — just enough to provide him with every comfort and some luxuries, but nothing to spare "worth saving," as we say. He was liberal to the full measure of his ability, and brought out his guinea to religious and benevolent objects as freely as any. He had a bequest from a distant relative (some three or four thousand pounds, I believe) suddenly left him. Now, mark the sequel, and see what a fool human nature can make of itself. My informant tells me that a gentleman who had been in the habit of receiving this man's annual contribution to some philanthropic society, con-

a Egyptian proverb — "A youth has a back that he may attend to his teacher."

b The greatest talkers have always the least to say.

"Words are often everywhere as the minute hands of the soul, more important than even the hour hands of actions" —*Richter.*

c "The facts of human society are not ignored. Below the surface of this *vs.* there perhaps lies a grave irony. The rich man, trusting in his riches, is tempted to make them his strong city — to have no other tower of strength. *Comp.* Pr. xviii. 11." — *Spk. Com.*

"Money buys transient rights; money buys the land, but it can never buy the landscape. He holds the title deeds who really and truly loves the estate."— *Peop. Bib.*

d 2 Jno. 8.

e "According to the constitution of things righteous labor tends to life, bodily, mental, and spiritual; the life of self, and the life of others."— *Dav. Thomas.*

f 1 Tim. vi. 10; Ro. vi. 21.

"Each day is a new life and an abridgement of the whole. I will so live as if I counted every day my first and my last; as if I began to live but then, and should live no more afterwards." — *Bishop Hall.*

"While high thinking does not always prevent low living, it is also most true that there can be no high and holy living without high and holy thinking." — *Jams McLeod.*

gratulated himself that on his next visit to the happy legatee he should probably get "first fruits," "thank-offerings," besides the annual guinea. A few months after the bequest he called, and, to his surprise, found the metamorphosed man would not give him a farthing. No representations of the astonished visitor could make the slightest impression. At last he said, "Why, Mr. ———, you always used to be most liberal, and I cannot account for your present mood at all. I thought that having, as I hear, come in for a considerable legacy, you would probably have doubled your subscription." "That," said the unhappy man, "is the very reason why I can give you nothing. While I was in receipt merely of my salary I could save nothing, but now that I have a larger sum, which I am not compelled to touch, and which will go on accumulating, every little I can add to it will tell." And from this he could not be beaten off.

"Man wants but little here below, nor wants that little long."—*Goldsmith.*

"The battle of life is worth all that it costs to those who are victors."—*The Christian Intelligencer.*

"All wickedness is weakness."—*Milton.*

18. with lying lips, better, *is of lying lips.* "It is often honey on the lips and venom in the heart."[a] **slander,** to slay reputations. **fool,** he injures his neighbor and gains everybody's illwill for himself.

Three degrees of moral foolishness. — I. A liar. 1. A liar is a fool because he fights for a weak cause; 2. Because he makes use of a weak weapon; 3. Because by lying he degrades his moral character. II. A liar who conceals hatred by lying. III. A liar who utters scandal. — *Hom. Com.*

Lying. — Among tribes ignorant of the methods of civilized warfare we find weapons which are little better than slim rods, and, although their points are sharp and poisoned, yet they proclaim their weakness when they come into collision with an experienced swordsman. Lying is such a weapon, and its use reveals the utter folly of him who wields it. It can no more stand against truth than the wooden spear of a savage can turn aside the thrust of a Damascus blade. — *W. Harris.*

[a] "Of all the vices to wh. hum. nature is subject, treachery is the most infamous and detestable, being compounded of fraud, cowardice, and revenge. The greatest wrong will not justify it, as it destroys those principles of mutual confidence and security by wh. only society can exist."—*Quoted by Dav. Thomas.*

19. multitude of words,[b] much talking puts a man in great danger of saying foolish and sinful things. **refraineth,** restraineth, holdeth in wise governance.[c]

Winged words (*vs.* 19). — I. The tongue's license. 1. Hyperbole; 2. Egotism; 3. Trifling; 4. Ribaldry; 5. Talebearing; 6. Slander. II. Its evil result. 1; The dissipation of religious life; 2. The uncontrollable diffusion of the slander; 3. The Satanic malignancy of the temper. — *W. W. Whythe.*

Speaking evil. — Consider, first, that though it is equally of bad consequence to society that men should have either good or ill characters which they do not deserve, yet when you say some good of a man which he does not deserve, there is no wrong done him in particular; whereas, when you say evil of a man which he does not deserve, here is a direct formal injury done to him. Secondly, a good man will, upon every occasion, and often without any, say all the good he can of everybody, but so far as he is a good man, will never be disposed to speak evil of any, unless there be some other reason for it besides barely that it is the truth. — *Bp. Butler.*

[b] Job xxxv. 16: 1. Ti. v. 13.

[c] "Never speak but when you have something to say. Wherefore shouldst thou run, seeing thou hast no tidings?"—*Bp. Butler.*

"He is wise that hath learned to speak little with others, and much with himself and God. How much might be gained for our souls if we would make a right use of this silence!"—*Arch. Leighton.*

20, 21. (20) **choice silver,** of exceeding value are the words he speaks. **little worth,**[d] *lit.*, "as a very little thing." (21) **feed many,** with sound instruction and guidance. **for want of,** some translate, "through him who wanteth understanding."[e]

Speech of wise and foolish (*vs.* 20). — I. The speech of the good man is valuable, that of the other is worthless. II. The speech of the good man is nourishing, that of the other is killing. III. The speech of the good man is wise, that of the other is foolish. IV. The speech of the good man is acceptable, that of the other is perverse. — *Thomas.*

Blessings of the tongue. — The lips of the righteous feed many because they supply a need. Man needs a medium by which to express the value of his labor or his merchandise, and silver supplies this want. And he likewise needs a medium by which to express his thoughts, and speech is this medium. But unless it is the speech of a just man it will be a curse and not a blessing. It must convey good thinking if it is to be as choice silver to a needy man. The prisoner who stands at the bar charged with a crime of which he is innocent feels that the tongue of the man who pleads his cause is more precious to him than much silver. To the man who is seeking after God, the tongue of one who can tell him "words whereby he shall be saved" is as choice silver (Acts. xi. 14). The words of Peter were so esteemed by Cornelius.

[d] "A popular and proverbial circumlocution for the idea of utter nothingness or worthlessness."—*O. Zöckler.*

[e] "The wise guide others to safety; the fool, empty-headed and empty-hearted, involves others like himself in destruction."—*Spk. Com.*

"A wicked man hath his worst side inward Though sinful persons make never so great a show on the outside, yet there is nothing within them worth

The heart of the Ethiopian eunuch was more rejoiced by the preaching of Philip the evangelist than it would have been by the possession of all the treasure of his mistress (Acts viii. 26–39). The words of Him who was "the Just One" (Acts iii. 14) are and ever will be "a strength to the needy in his distress" (Isa. xxv. 4); more precious to those who are conscious of their soul-poverty "than thousands of gold and silver" (Psalm cxix. 72); and it is in proportion as men are like Him in character and disposition that their speech will bless the world. — *Hom. Com.*

22. it maketh rich, not the fruits of man's toil, but the blessing wh. God makes to rest upon it is the true riches. **addeth,** trans. "and labor addeth nothing thereto,"[a] *i. e.* as supplementary to the Div. blessing. *Stuart* suggests: that sorrows are not of necessity increased by riches, when it is Jehovah who bestows them; but riches procured by unlawful means bring many sorrows.

God's blessing the greatest riches (*vs.* 22). — I. In what respects the blessing of God may be said to make rich. 1. Because it is in reality the source of all wealth; 2. Because it is in itself the greatest wealth. II. The peculiar happiness of the person so enriched. 1. With all other riches there is a mixture of sorrow to embitter them; 2. To the wealth God gives He adds no sorrow. Learn — (1) In what spirit to address yourselves to every duty in life; (2) What to look to as your chief portion. — *Simeon.*

Effects of wealth. — I have a rich neighbor who is always so busy that he has no leisure to laugh; the whole business of his life is to get money, and more money, that he may still get more and more money; he is still drudging on, and says that Solomon says, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." And it is true indeed; but he considers not that it is not in the power of riches to make a man happy: for it was wisely said by a man of great observation, that "There may be as many miseries beyond riches as on this side them." And yet God deliver us from pinching poverty, and grant that, having a competency, we may be content and thankful. Let us not repine, or so much as think the gifts of God unequally dealt, if we see another abound with riches, when, as God knows, the cares that are the keys that keep those riches hang often so heavily at the rich man's girdle, that they clog him with weary days and restless nights, even when others sleep quietly. We see but the outside of the rich man's happiness; few consider him to be like the silkworm, that, when she seems to play, is at the very same time spinning her own bowels, and consuming herself: and this many rich men do, loading themselves with corroding cares, to keep what they have probably unconscionably got. — *Walton.*

23—25. (23) **sport,** it is his pleasure and play.[b] **hath wisdom,** *R. V.*, "And so is wisdom to a man of understanding;" *i. e.* the wise man finds his refreshment in living a wise and prudent life, which is as easy and as pleasant to him as mischief is to the vicious. The wisdom intended is practical religion, the fear of God directing and showing itself in daily action. — *Pul. Com.* (24) **The fear,** *i. e.* the thing wh. he fears. "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap."[c] **be granted,** by God. (25) **whirlwind,** 2 Ki. ii. 1, *R. V.*, "When the w. passeth the wicked is no more." By the fig. of the great storm is indicated the *suddenness*, the *thoroughness*, and the *helplessness* of the sinner's ruin. — *Miller.* **everlasting foundation,** *comp.* Mat. vii. 24–27; Ps. cxxv. 1.

The desire of the righteous granted (*vs.* 24) — I. Who is the righteous man? 1. Whom God counts so; 2. Whom God makes so; 3. Who is practically righteous. II. What are his desires? 1. Communion with God: 2. Enjoyment of holy ordinances; 3. The personal presence of God. III. What is meant by their being granted? IV. Application. 1. There are other desires than those of the righteous; 2. Art thou righteous? — *Bunyan.*

26. vinegar, or the sour wine used by the peasants. **smoke,** of wood, wh. makes the eyes smart. **so,** causing like annoyance and vexation. **sluggard,** who loiters on his errands. "Laziness is bad for the man himself, but is most vexatious to those who are unfortunate enough to employ him in their service."

Idle people. — Idle persons are like wens in the face, which receive of the body's nourishment, but serve only to disfigure it. Those that are no workers in God's account are "disorderly walkers." Augustus built an Apragopolis, anything. Therefore, do not too much magnify and admire them, nor too far depend on them. For better things are not certainly to be expected from them than are in them." — *Dod.*

[a] "This is not to be taken literally, as though perchance labor were in itself cast aside, and the Oriental indolence commended; nor again is the privilege given to the pious of being released from ordinary human toils, and of folding their hands in reliance on their powerful Friend: the aim is only, after the emphatic and one-sided manner of the proverb, to make prominent the other side of the case overlooked by restless toilers." — *Hupfeld.*

Eccl. v. 19.

"The sluggard looks for prosperity without diligence; the practical atheist from diligence alone; the soundhearted Christian from the blessing of God in the exercise of diligence." —*Preacher's Com.*

[b] *Lit.* "It is like a laugh to the fool, to execute evil counsel."

[c] Ga. vi. 7; Job iii. 25; Pr. xi. 27; Is. lxvi. 4.

"Longings for holiness are fulfilled by painful affliction; prayers are answered by crosses. Our Father's dispensations are not what they seem to be, but what He is pleased to make them." — *Bridges.*

"Idleness is a constant sin, and labor is a duty. Idleness is the devil's home for temptation, and for unprofitable, distracting musings; while labor profiteth others and ourselves." —*Baxter.*

"He who is a Christian in little things is not a little Christian: he is the greatest Christian, and the most useful."—*Preachers' Com.*

"That is the true life — the life of active employment, whatever be the work God has given you to do, and the station He has appointed you to fill. I repeat, the busy, active life is always the happy one."—*Madcuff.*

"Let us learn to regard our life here as the school-time, the training-ground, the awful yet delightful threshold for the eternal ages of the life with God."—*Bishop Thorold.*

"Without prayer men are as flowers trying to grow in the dark. With prayer men are as flowers growing in the sunshine. The man who prays finds God — finds hope also, and eternal life."—*T. K. Beecher.*

"Great wants proceed from great wealth; but they are undutiful children, for they sink wealth down to poverty."—*Home.*

a Job viii. 13; xi. 20; Ps. cxii. 10.

"Hope is the daughter of Faith, but such as is a staff to her aged mother, and will produce a bold and wise profession of the truth before men, as also prayer to God. It is as the cork upon the net: though the lead on the one side sinks it down, yet the cork on the other keeps it up."—*J. Trapp.*

The more we do in the service of God, the more we are enabled to do. "The Atlantic Ocean is swept by a city void of business; but God made not the world to be the nursery of idleness. The Ethiopians (as the historian observeth) would acquaint their youth that they were born to labor, by accustoming them betimes to fling great stones. Amongst the Turks every man must follow some trade, the Grand Seigneur himself not excepted. The *censores morum* among the Romans were to observe who were diligent, and who negligent in their vocations, and accordingly to commend or condemn them. The Grecians, according to Solon's law, were great discouragers of them that, like vermin, lived only to eat what others earn. The council of the Areopagites inquired how every man lived, and punished such as they found idle. The devils themselves are diligent about their deeds of darkness; creatures void of life are serviceable in their places and stations; angels, nay, God Himself, is always working. An idle person cannot find, either in heaven or hell, a pattern. — *Swinnocke.*

27. prolongth days, *R. V., marg.* "addeth;" a statement frequently repeated in this book; here the antithesis may be thus expressed. "The fear of Jehovah makes great days, but the years of the wicked shall be made little."— *Miller.*

Long life. — The fear of the Lord prolongs life because, other things being equal, godliness tends to bodily health. A good man governs his life by some kind of law, his passions and inclinations do not play the lord over his conscience and will. This has a beneficial influence upon his bodily health. He has contentment with his present lot, trust in his God amid all the anxieties of life, and hope for the future. Such a state of mind tends to soundness of bodily health, whereas the manner of life of a godless man is opposed to health and consequently to long life. If a complicated machine is permitted to work with some of its parts improperly adjusted and fretting against each other at every turn of the wheel, the friction will soon wear away the parts, and ere long they will cease to act. A soul without godliness is a complicated mechanism which has never been rightly adjusted. There is no ruling principle, no guiding hand, one passion wars against another, the man bears the burden of life alone, he is at times a prey to the fears spoken of in *vs.* 24, and the rule of all these devils in the soul has a tendency to wear out the body before its time. This is a truth universally admitted. — *Hom. Com.* — *Long life.* — The Lord says He will multiply the days of those who love Him, and though that is not fulfilled in the letter it is more than fulfilled in the spirit. Days are not to be numbered always; they are to be measured and weighed. A day to the wise man is more than a day to the fool. The wise man makes the most of his time; every moment is a jewel, every hour is a crown, every day is an opportunity for securing blessings larger than can be contained within the limits of time. The years of the wicked are shortened, because there is nothing in them; though their number be many, their length is short; they come and go without improvement, and the wicked man is no wiser at the end than he was at the beginning. — *Parker.*

28. gladness, bec. it shall surely gain its fruition. **perish,**[a] that which the wicked eagerly hope for shall come to naught.

True and false hope (*vs.* 28).— I. All men cherish some sort of hope. II. True hope ends in happiness. III. False hope ends in disappointment.— *Whythe.*

False hope.— A "hope" is to some like a passport, which one keeps quietly in his pocket till the time for the journey, and then produces it. Or like life-preservers, which hang useless around the vessel until the hour of danger comes, when the captain calls on every passenger to save himself; and then they are taken down and blown up, and each man, with his hope under his arm, strikes out for the land; and so such men would keep their religious hope hanging until death comes, and then take it down and inflate it, that it may buoy them up, and float them over the dark river to the heavenly shore. Or as the inhabitants of Block Island keep their boats hauled high upon the beach, and only use them now and then, when they would cross to the mainland; so such men keep their hopes high and dry upon the shore of life, only to be used when they have to cross the flood that divides this island of time from the mainland of eternity.—*Beecher.*

29, 30. (29) **way of the Lord,** *i. e.* the way of His commandments. But some understand the Div. order of the world. In the long run it surely turns

out to be *for* the upright, and *against* the wicked. **strength,** *R. V.*, "strong hold;" "wherever he goes he is in a castle." **destruction,** *R. V.*, "But *it* is a destruction." The two effects of the Law of God are contrasted, according as it is obeyed or neglected. While it is protection to the righteous, it is condemnation and ruin to sinners. (30) **never be removed,** *comp.* ch. xiii. 3; Ps. xxxvii. 22. **inhabit the earth,** *R. V.*, "dwell in the land." The punishment of exile was threatened upon the Jews for their disobedience, and they are still suffering this retribution.

The Lord's way (*vs.* 29).—I. The Lord has a way for man to walk in. 1. He has a way for Himself; 2. He has a way for His creatures; 3. He has a way for man, the way of social justice and Divine worship. II. The man who walks in this way gets strength. 1. Intellectual strength; 2. Moral strength; 3. Increasing strength.—*Thomas.*

Jehovah's way of providence.— Faith in a personal God, in a Divine Saviour, makes this "way" also "strength to the upright." If a seaman has faith in his captain, this gives him strength for his duty even in the roughest weather. He feels that he is not altogether left to the mercy of the blind elements, but that there is a strong and wise will guiding the ship. So confidence in an All-wise Father, in a King who "can do no wrong," is the stronghold of the upright amidst all the apparent contradictions and mysteries of life. He knows who is at the wheel of all human affairs, that

> "When He folds the cloud about Him,
> Firm within it stands His throne;"

and the knowledge that "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all," makes what would otherwise overwhelm him in doubt, and consequently in weakness, a source of strength, a power of life.— *Preacher's Com.*

31, 32. (31) **bringeth forth,** "as a tree full of life and sap brings forth its fruit." **cut out,** *R. V.*, "cut off;" or cut down, as are unfruitful trees.[a] (32) **know,** find always, as if instinctively, what is acceptable. **frowardness,** all kinds of deceit and ill-nature.[b]

A gossiping tongue.—A man who, for a moment's gossiping gratification, drops an idle word affecting a neighbor's character, resembles that Scotchman who, from partiality to the flora of his native land, sowed a little thistle-down in the British colony where he had raised his tabernacle, and where that nuisance to agriculturists had been unknown up to that time. It grew and flourished; and breezes—like the active wind of talk, that soon propagates a slander—carried the winged seeds hither and thither, to found for their obnoxious species thousands of new homes. It is as unsafe to keep company with one whose tongue is hung too loosely as to ride in a vehicle whose linch-pins are loose. — *Robertson.*

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

1. false balance,[c] used literally, but also as representing all unrighteous dealings. With the keen bargaining spirit characteristic of the Jews, this must always have been to them a besetting sin.[d] **just weight,** *lit.* a *full stone*, bec. stones were used instead of metal weights.

Weights and measures (*vs.* 1).—I. The text brings before us this solemn and important truth, that God sees and takes notice of all business transactions. II. The just weight being the simple but expressive representation of all fair dealing, the words now before us mean that all fair dealing is God's delight. III. There must be just dealing towards God as well as towards man.—*Brown.*

Just weights.—The farthing kept back from the child, and the ounce taken from the pound, are as much marked by Him as the short wages given to the man, the unjust sentence passed upon the prisoner. Dr. Guthrie says "God sees the water in the milk, and the sand in the sugar." There are no great and small transactions in a moral sense, one action contains the sin as much as another. God, who here tells men that He abominates a false balance, declares by His condemnation of it that there is such a thing as a true weight: that there is that which He recognizes as justice between man and man. And much that men call "a full stone," a "fair day's wages," is not so regarded by God. It is not dealing truly with a man to give him the smallest possible

fearful storms, and mountainous billows traverse its surface, but scientific men say it is so quiet down in the depths that if you could stretch a rope of sand from one side of the ocean to the other, there is not disturbance enough to dissolve it. So amid the direst storms of life the believer's heart is kept in perfect peace, a peace which the world gives not, and which the world does not take away."—*Hom. Com.*

"The rod itself can only be useful where there is something within that can be quickened into beneficent activity."—*Parker.*

a "The abuse of God's gift of speech will lead ultimately to its forfeiture. There shall, at last, be the silence of shame and confusion."—*Spk. Com.*

b "When God's honor and the edification and improvement of one's neighbor is not the chief end of your speaking, it is a sign that Eternal Wisdom has not yet wholly sanctified our hearts."—*Starke.*

c Le. xix. 36; De. xxv. 13-16.

d Comp. Mat. vii. 12; Phi. iv. 8; 1 Th. iv 6.

"He is as much concerned with the manner in which we buy and sell as with the style in which we pray; nay, more so, for his chief interest is with our real, daily, practical life."—*Pul. Com.*

"That whereby thou takest from others shall add unto the weight of thine own punishment; that whereby thou addest in

measuring for thyself shall mak God to take away from the measure of His mercy towards thee."—*Jermin.*

"As the tree is, so is the fruit. As the man's heart is, so, with rare exceptions, are his words."

a Pr. xvi. 18; xviii. 12.

b "Lowly souls become full of wisdom as the low place becomes full of water."—*Rabbinical paraphrase.*

Lu. xiv. 10, 11.

"Everyone that is truly godly hath a faithful guide and an upright counselor in his own breast. A sound heart is the stern of the soul, and a good conscience is the pilot to govern it."—*Dod.*

c Eph. vi. 14; 1 Pe. iii. 13.

"Being 'humble' not only invites 'Wisdom,' and makes her feel at home; not only flows from Wisdom because she is at home, but actually '*is* Wisdom.' It would not do to say, Has humility entered? There also enters Wisdom; for humility *is* wisdom, and could not exist unless Wisdom had entered already."—*Miller.*

"A great part of life's labor consists in following a crooked course, and then trying to make it appear a straight one. The defense of it doubles the labor."—*Arnot.*

A mother explained to her little daughter, who could not comprehend her father's death, that God had sent for him, and would by-and-by send for them all, how soon they could not tell. "Well, then, mother," said the child, "if God is

amount for the work he does — to take advantage of his poverty or ignorance to beat him down to the lowest sum for which his need will induce him to give his labor, and thereby condemn him to all the evils of insufficient means "Behold!" says Carlyle, "supply and demand is not the one law of nature; cash payment is not the sole nexus of man with man — how far from it! Deep, far deeper than supply and demand are laws, obligations sacred as man's life itself!" This is the law of the Divine kingdom: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. vii. 12). Less than this is a "false balance," this is the "full stone," which is God's "delight."—*Hom. Com.*

2. pride cometh,[a] *lit.* "cometh pride, cometh also shame." **lowly,**[b] derived from the Chaldee *to conceal*, and denotes strictly those who hide themselves, or renounce self, the humble.

The advent and evil of pride (*vs.* 2). — I. The advent of pride. How does it come? 1. By associating only with inferiors; 2. By practically ignoring the true standards; 3. By a practical disregard to the majesty of God. II. The evil of pride. See Bible examples. 1. Shame of folly; 2. Shame of guilt. — *Thomas.*

Pride. — The foulest stain and highest absurdity in our nature is pride. It is the root of unbelief. Men cannot submit to the righteousness of Christ, and pride cleaves to them like a pitched shirt to the skin, or like leprosy to the wall. No sharp culture of ploughing and harrowing will clear the ground of it. The foul weed will be sure to spring up again with the next kindly rain. This diabolical sin has brought more scourges on my back than anything else; and it is of so insinuating a nature that I know not how to part with it. I hate it, and love it; I quarrel with it, and embrace it; I dread it, and yet suffer it to lie down in my bosom. — *Berridge.*

3. integrity, wholeness, simplicity, sincerity. **guide them,** by the quick sense of right and wrong,[c] as a shepherd leads his sheep in the path of security and peace. **perverseness,** or *slipperiness. Pul. Com.*, "putting a stumbling block in others' way." **transgressors,** *R. V.*, "the treacherous." **destroy them,** *lit.* "lay hold on them with violent force."

The value of integrity (*vs.* 3). — I. Direct attention to the intrinsic worth and excellency of integrity. 1. It is in exact correspondence with the character and mind of our Creator; 2. It is conformity to the Divine will; 3. It imparts stability and strength to all the other virtues and excellencies of the human character. II. The benefits and advantages which it confers upon the individual who possesses it. 1. It guides him in the affairs of life; 2. It saves from doubts and misgivings; 3. It secures the good wishes, assistance, and co-operation of others; 4. It produces peace and satisfaction of mind; 5. It has advantages also for the season of adversity. III. The benefits which it confers upon society at large. 1. Society makes efforts to secure integrity between man and man; 2. It confers the power to do good; 3. It commends religion and the Christian profession; It has great benefits in the final issue of things. — *Redpath.*

Putting off repentance. — A hermit was conducted by an angel into a wood, where he saw an old man cutting down boughs to make up a burden. When it was large he tied it up, and attempted to lift it on his shoulders and carry it away. But finding it very heavy, he laid it down again, cut more wood, and heaped it on, and then tried again to carry it off. This he repeated several times, always adding something to the load, after trying in vain to raise it from the ground. In the meantime the hermit, astonished at the old man's folly, desired the angel to explain what this meant. "You behold," said he, "in the foolish old man a representation of those who, being made sensible of the burden of their sins, resolve to repent, but soon grow weary, and instead of lessening their burden, increase it every day. At each trial they find the task heavier than before, and so put it off a little longer, in vain hoping that they will by-and-by be more able to accomplish it. Thus they go on adding to their burden till it grows too heavy to be borne, and then, in despair of God's mercy and with their sins unrepented of, they lie down and die. Turn again, my son, and behold the end of the old man, whom thou sawest heaping up a load of boughs." The hermit looked and saw him in vain attempting to remove the pile, which was now accumulated far beyond his strength to raise. His feeble limbs tottered over their burden, the poor

remains of his strength were fast ebbing away, the darkness of death was gathering around him, and after a convulsive and impotent attempt to lift the pile, he fell down and expired.— *S. S. Times.*— "*Honesty is the best policy.*" — *A poor but honest youth.*— A lad who was on his way to an uncle, to ask aid for a sick sister and her children, found a wallet containing a sum of money. The help sought was refused, and the distressed family was pinched with want. The boy revealed his fortune to his mother, but expressed a doubt about using any portion of the money. She confirmed his good resolution, and the pocketbook was advertised, and the owner found. Being a man of wealth, upon learning the history of the family, he presented the whole sum to the sick mother, and took the boy into his service, who ultimately became one of the most successful merchants of the day. Honesty always brings its reward,— to the conscience if not to the pocket.

going to send for us soon, and we don't know just when, hadn't we better begin to pack up and get ready to go?" This incident, related to the wounded and dying inmates of an army hospital, was the means of much good.

4, profit not, *i. e.* afford no security, **day of wrath,** any time of national calamity, such as a siege. Then riches rather increase the peril than provide a safeguard. **righteousness,** the men of character are always the men of influence and power in times of calamity. **from death,** peril of death.[a]

Riches.— What is there that the rich man hopes not to do? He can buy honors and offices, he can buy out faults and offenses, yea, foolish Magus thought the Holy Ghost Himself might be had for money; and Satan presumed that this bait would even catch the Son of God. Yet what can riches do? Can they put off the gout, assuage grief, thrust out cares, suspend death, prevent hell, or bribe Satan? A satin sleeve can as well heal a broken arm. Indeed this they can do; they can anger God, hurt men, bar the gates of heaven, open the gates of hell, and forward souls to confusion. They are false friends that will be sure never to fail men but when they have need of them. Sickness will besiege thee, death will summon thee, God will pass His doom upon thee; in all this, what can riches avail thee? Our manifold receipts shall but greaten our accounts; and the moderate estate will have the easier reckoning. Riches are a pit whereinto we soon slip, but can hardly scramble out. Æsop hath a fable of the two frogs that, in the time of drought, when the marshes were dry, consulted what was best to be done. One advised to go down into a deep well, because it was likely the water would not fail there. The other answered, "But if it do fail, how shall we get up again?" Small puddle, light gains, will not serve some; they must plunge into deep wells, excessive profits; but they do not consider how they should get out again. So it comes to pass that either they are famished for want of grace, or drowned in a deluge of riches. If this world be a sea over which we must swim to the land of promise, I do not see what use there is of this abundant luggage, unless it be to sink us in the waters.— *Adams.*

[a] "A good conscience will make death easy, and take off the terror of it; it is the privilege of the righteous only not to be hurt of the second death, and so not much hurt by the first."— *Mat. Henry.*

"It were no bad comparison to liken mere rich men to camels and mules; for they often pursue their devious way, over hills and mountains, laden with India purple, with gems, aromas, and generous wines upon their backs. Soon, however, they come to their evening halting-place, and they, stripped of their lading, show nothing but livid marks of stripes. So, also, those who glitter in gold, and purple raiment, when the evening of life comes rushing on them, have nought to show but marks and wounds of sin impressed upon them by the evil use of riches" — *St. Augustine.*

5, 6. (5) **perfect,** upright, blameless. **direct,** *marg. rectify;* make plain. **fall . . wickedness,** wh. thus is found to bear quite other fruitage than he expected. "The good man, not blinded by passion, follows a safe and direct path of life; but the wicked, led by his own evil propensities, and losing the light of conscience (John xi. 10), stumbles and falls." (6) **transgressors,** *R. V.*, "they that deal treacherously." **taken,** as if in a trap. **naughtiness,** greedy desire. 1 Sa. xvii. 28.

Character inherited. — An old man died a few years ago in the Massachusetts State prison. He was seventy-six years old, and had spent the last eight years of his life in a cell in that gloomy jail. His wife for years had been a prisoner there too, and so had his daughter, and seven of his sons. Were not "the iniquities of the father visited upon the children!" In that same State, seventy years ago, a good minister died, who for forty-one years had been a beloved pastor over the same church. He was the fourteenth eldest son of the same name and family who had been a preacher of the Gospel. Since his death, one hundred of his descendants have been Christians, and eight of his sons and grandsons have also been ministers. Through that blessed family, for many long years, the Great Father of love has been "showing mercy to thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments."

"Goodness and blessedness are actually identical, the reverse and the obverse sides of the same coin. If a man is made good he is made blessed; but if he is made blessed to all appearance, and not good, the blessedness proves to be an illusion. It could not possibly avail to be justified by faith, unless we were made just by faith; a sore body is not healed by covering it up, a dead man is not

Inner light. —

He that hath light within his own clear breast
May sit in the center and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,

quickened by a smiling mask." — *Harper.*

Benighted walks under the midday sun;
Himself is his own dungeon. — *Milton.*

7. expectation, "that which he hoped for and set his heart upon, worldly prosperity, long life, impunity, — all are out off, and the moral government of God is confirmed, by his death (Ps. lxxiii. 17–19)." **unjust men,** *lit., of vanities. i. e.*, men of vanity.[a] *R. V., marg.* "strong," *i. e.* self-confident.

The terrible in human history (*vs.* 7). — There are two terrible events here. I. Death meeting the wicked man. 1. Death does not wait for reformation of character; 2. The greatest enemies of God and His universe are overcome. II. Hope leaving the human soul. — *Thomas.*

Hope. — Men derive almost the whole of their happiness from hope. The wicked man laughs at the righteous because he lives by hope; but the wicked man himself does the same with this difference, that whilst the hopes of the one are coeval with eternity, those of the other are bounded by time. The present situation of the wicked man never yields him the pleasure which he wishes and expects, if his hope is deferred, his heart is sick; if it is accomplished, he is still unsatisfied; but he comforts himself with some other hope, like a child who sees a rainbow on the top of a neighboring hill, and runs to take hold of it, but sees it as far removed from him as before. Thus the life of a wicked man is spent in vain wishes, and toils, and hopes, till death kills at once his body, his hope and his happiness. — *Lawson.*

[a] "Immortality and a future retribution are presumptively suggested in this passage."—*O. Zöckler.*

"His most strong hope shall come to nothing. He thought he had taken hold of God; but it is but with him as with a child that catcheth at the shadow on the wall, which he thinks he holds fast. But he only *thinks* so."—*Trapp.*

8. is delivered, from calamities wh. fall upon the wicked.[b] **in his stead** takes his place, enters into the trouble. Thus Haman was hanged on the gallows which he had erected for Mordecai (Esth. vii. 10); Daniel's accusers were cast into the den of lions from which he was saved (Dan. vi. 24; *comp.* Isa xliii. 4).

Trouble in relation to the righteous and the wicked (*vs.* 8) — All men are in trouble. I. The righteous are going out of trouble. 1. Now partially; 2. In the future completely. II. The wicked are going into trouble. 1. The trouble they are going to is unmitigated; 2. Unending. — *Thomas.*

Rev. John Elliot, missionary among the American Indians, having been out at sea in a boat, it was overset by a larger vessel, when he immediately sunk, without the most distant expectation of rising any more. In this situation he was perfectly composed, and resigned to His Heavenly Father's will. He could say within himself, "The will of the Lord be done." His life, however, was spared. But the following circumstance, as closely connected with it, was rather remarkable. Many profane persons were exceedingly enraged against him for laboring among the Indians; and one of this description, hearing of his narrow escape, anxiously and profanely wished he had been drowned. But within a few days that very man was drowned, in the very place where Mr. Elliot found deliverance. — *Whitecross.*

[b] "This proposition cannot be the result of experimental observation, but only the fresh, vigorous expression of *faith* in God's justice, such as believes where it does not see."—*Elster.*

"I bless God," said Dr. Watts, "I can lie down with comfort to-night, not being anxious whether I awake in this world or another."

"When Alexander saw himself wounded and in danger of death, he then saw the vanity of those flatterers that would have persuaded him he was a god. So when we see those things upon which we set our hearts, as if our chief good, as if a deity were in them, to be wounded and ready to perish, let us learn to alter our thoughts of them, to take off our hearts from them." — *Jeremiah Burroughs.*

"Not one, but many blessings, are on the head of the righteous: the blessing of peace, the blessing of plenty, the blessing of health, and the blessing of grace, shall be upon them." — *Muffet.*

9. hypocrite, *R. V.*, "godless man;" Job viii. 13. **mouth,** the agent of his deceptions. "The artificer of that shrewdness which is the instrument of wickedness." **through knowledge,** or superior discernment.

Hypocrisy and knowledge (*vs.* 9). — From the text we may infer — I. That hypocrisy is destructive. It — 1. Implies the pernicious; 2. Employs the pernicious. II. That knowledge is restorative. — *Thomas.*

Universality of hypocrisy. — The Emperor Frederick III., when one said unto him he would go and find some place where no hypocrites inhabited, told him he must travel, then, far enough beyond the Sauromatæ, or the Frozen Ocean; for yet, when he came there, he should find a hypocrite if he found himself there. And it is true that every man is a hypocrite. Hypocrisy is a lesson that every man readily takes in. It continues with age, it appears with infancy: the wise and learned practice it: the duller and more rude attain unto it. All are not fit for the wars; learning must have the picked and choicest wits; arts must have leisure and pains; but all sorts are apt enough, and thrive in the mystery of dissimulation. The whole throng of mankind, the whole world, is but a shop of counterfeit wares, — a theatre of hypocritical disguises. Grace is the only antidote. — *Spencer.*

10, 11. (10) **goeth well with,** in the prosperity of. Perhaps meaning when the righteous are set in places of authority and honor. **shouting,** the shout of rejoicing at the loss of evil influence. (11) **blessing,** implying the active

benevolence: or the prayers he offers for the city's good. The term may, however, mean the blessing wh. God gives the city for the sake of the righteous who are in it. **exalted,** in a condition of security. **mouth of the wicked,** the medium for the expression of their evil advice and impious language.[a]

The city is exalted. — That community is blessed where each citizen enjoys freedom to live his life and do his best for himself and others without trampling on the rights of his fellows. Tyranny on the one hand provokes rebellion on the other, and misery to both parties is the issue. The head is intended to think and plan for the rest of the body, the limbs are intended to carry out the designs of the head; if either the one or the other fails to perform its work, suffering comes to the whole frame. So in the body politic. Righteous men strive for the union of all classes for the good of all, and this unity exalts a city — gives peace at home, and is the surest defense against foes without. . . . A more vivid illustration of what has been said here concerning a righteous man cannot be found than in the life and labors of William the Silent, Prince of Holland. This noble man gave his all to the liberation of the Netherlands from Spanish tyranny. Motley says: "The people were grateful and affectionate, for they trusted the character of their Father William," and not all the clouds which calumny could collect could dim to their eyes the one to whom they were accustomed, in their darkest calamities, to look for light. As long as he lived, he was the guiding star of a whole brave nation, and when he died, the little children cried in the streets."— *Hom. Com.* — *The death of the wicked.* — Illustrations of the latter clause of *vs.* 10 abound in history. "Memorable in the prison experiences of Herod Agrippa was the arrival of news that the tyrant of Capreæ was dead. Immediately on the death of Tiberius, Marsyas, Agrippa's faithful bondslave, hastened to his master's dungeon, and communicated the joyful intelligence, saying, in the Hebrew language, "The lion is dead." The centurion on guard heard the rejoicing, inquired as to the cause, ordered the royal prisoner's chains to be struck off, and invited him to supper. But more memorable was the exultation, widely felt and cruelly expressed, at Agrippa's own death — that loathsome death, so strange in its surroundings, of which a tale is told in the Acts of the Apostles. The inhabitants of Sebaste and Cæsarea, as we learn from Josephus and particularly Herod's own soldiers, indulged in the most brutal rejoicings at his death, heaping his memory with reproaches. . . . In his account of the death of the Emperor Maximin, Gibbon says, "It is easier to conceive than to describe the universal joy of the Roman world on the fall of the tyrant." The death of Richelieu is said to have been felt by France like the relief from a nightmare; from the king to the lowest rhymster, all joined in the burden of the couplets that proclaimed it — Il est parti, il a plié bagage, ce cardinal.— *Jacox.*

12, 13. (12) **despiseth,** showeth contempt for: reviles. Only the heartless man is unable to find some goodness in others. **holdeth his peace,** watchful lest he should make mischief. He is considerate of the reputation of others. (13) **talebearer,** "one trading as a pedler in scandal, whose propensity to talk leads him to betray confidence." — *Fausset.* **faithful spirit,** a steadfast, trusty man.[b]

Types of character in social life (*vs.* 12, 13). — Here four distinct types of character. I. The insolent. II. The respectful. III. The tattler. IV. The trustworthy. — *Thomas.*

Character formed by association. — A man's belief is not the only thing that works upon him. There is a great mistake in saying that as a man believes so is he, if you mean that his character depends upon his belief in any technical theological truth. What a man is depends in a great measure upon his father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and friends; that is, it depends partly on the things that he believes, and partly upon the influences that are working upon him in the family, in the society, and in the party to which he belongs. There are a thousand and one circumstances that have much to do with what a man is, and his character is not formed alone by His technical beliefs. — *Beecher.*

14. no counsel, *R. V.*, "wise guidance," power to steer or guide; no helmsmanship; *lit.* no piloting of a ship by ropes; ch. i. 5. **multitude of counsellors,** assuming that they are wise ones.[c]

[a] "The 'mouth of the wicked,' the channel of impieties, falsehoods, impurities, and innumerable pernicious errors, has caused in all ages, and is still causing, the overthrow of states."— *Dav. Thomas.*

"Whatever mitigates the woes or increases the happiness of others is a just criterion of goodness, and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, is a criterion of iniquity. One should not quarrel with a dog without a reason sufficient to vindicate one through all the courts of morality." — *Goldsmith.*

"Influence depends less on our activity than on the qualities that lie behind our activities, as the planet attracts, not by its motion, but by its weight."—*Thomas Starr King.*

Sheridan spoke in his day of a set of "malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it."

[b] "Faithfulness is shown not only in doing what a man has been commissioned to do, but in doing it quietly, and without garrulity."—*Spk. Com.*

[c] "In our private affairs we shall often find it to our advantage to advise with many. If they agree in their advice, our way will be the more clear: if they differ, we shall hear what is to be said on all sides, and be the better able to determine." —*Mat. Henry.*

"It is a penalty inflicted by God on a sinful state to give it princes void of counsel (Isa. iii. 4; chap. xv. 22)."—*Fausset.*

"When speech is given to a soul holy and true, time, and its dome of ages, becomes as a mighty whispering gallery, round which the imprisoned utterance runs, and reverberates forever." — *J Martineau.*

"A money-lender — He serves you in the present tense; he lends you in the conditional mood; keeps you in the subjunctive, and ruins you in the future."—*Addison.*

"The purity of woman is her 'hidden strength.' 'She that has that is clad in complete steel.'"

"Who would raise the foolish question whether grace or strength is the more desirable attribute? Each is desirable in its own way; a combination that is the very perfection of character. Strength and beauty are in the house of the Lord."—*Parker.*

Wisdom the want of states (*vs.* 14).— This verse implies three facts. I. The people require government. II. The government required must be that of intelligence. III. The necessary intelligence must be reached by consultation.— *Thomas.*

Multitude of counselors. — Probably one is more struck, on reflection and in reading, with the exceptions to the rule, than with confirmatory examples of it, that in the multitude of counselors there is safety. . . . A modern historian finds in the unlicensed discretion reposed by the Roman Senate in the general, the most efficient aid to the extent of Rome's early conquests, and he points by way of contrast, to the modern republics of Italy, as denying themselves scope for larger conquests by their extreme jealousy of their commanders. Anarchy in Antwerp is the heading of one of Mr. Morley's graphic pages, and a lively picture it offers us of the confusion that ensued when the hydra heads of the multitudinous government were laid together. In Drake's expedition of 1595, there were too many in command, and after losing time in debate which Sir Francis, if alone, would have spent in action, they were obliged to give up the attempt on the Canaries, with some loss. The otherwise unaccountable action of De Witt in 1671 is explained at once when the anarchical constitution of the Dutch republic is remembered — its want of a central authority, and the fact that, to raise money or troops, the consent of a number of petty councils was necessary, in the multitude of whose counselors was anything but safety. "In the multitude of counselors there may be safety," says Alison, "it is in general safety to the counselors, not to the counseled." The quality of the counsel, and the ability of the counselors, are elements of main import in the maxim of the king. — *Jacox.*

15. surety, strikes hands, as the sign of entering into a compact. *Stuart trans.* "an evil man showeth himself as evil when he giveth pledge;" *i. e.* bec. he does not redeem it. **a stranger,** perhaps a foreigner, one with whom he has only business relations. **smart for it,** by the exaction of his bond. **is sure,** or secure.

Sureties.— The melancholy instances of ruin, in consequence of becoming surety for others, are exceedingly numerous in the East. Against this they have many proverbs and fearful examples; but nothing seems to impart wisdom. Nearly all the Government monopolies, both among native and European rulers, are let to the highest bidders, and as the whole of the money cannot be advanced till a part of the produce be sold, sureties have to be accountable for the amount. But as men generally enter into these speculations in order to better a reduced fortune, an extravagant price is often paid, and ruin is the consequence both to the principal and his surety. This practice of suretyship, however, is also common in the most trifling affairs of life. "Sign your name," is a request preferred by every one who is desirous of obtaining additional security to a petty agreement. In every legal court or magistrate's office may be seen, now and then, a trio entering, thus to become responsible for the engagements of the other. The cause of all this is probably the bad faith which prevails amongst the heathen.— *Roberts.*

a 1 Pet. iii. 1-4.

16. gracious woman, prob. intended for personification of *grace.* A gracious woman is a sensible, God-fearing woman. **honour,** virtue and character being to her what riches are to men.[a] **and strong,** *etc.*, better, "Even as the mighty grasp at riches." The two clauses are parallel in form, not in sense, and imply that beauty is more effective than strength, and honor is better than wealth.

"Talk not of deeds of valor, nor of fame,
Nor of thy wealth and worldly greatness boast.
Remember this; though feeble be his frame,
And few his gifts and unextolled his name,
The greatest man is he that loves the most."
—*George H. Rowles.*

A contrast.— Here the sexes are put in beautiful apposition: woman is gracious, man is strong. Graciousness dissociated from strength has indeed an influence all its own; strength dissociated from graciousness is mere strength, and is wanting in all those attributes which excite and satisfy the deepest confidences of the world. A woman can work miracles by her graciousness. She knows how to enter the sick chamber noiselessly. She knows how to enter the room without violence, ostentation, or impressiveness, which signifies vanity and display. Woman can speak the gentle word, and look the gracious look, and use the magical touch of friendship and trust, and, in short, can carry her own way without appearing to do so by the very force of tenderness, sympathy, and persuasiveness.— *Parker.*

17. merciful man, one of a generous, charitable disposition. "Charity is twice blessed."[a] **own soul,** *i. e.* himself; his good deeds ret. to bless him. **cruel,** as regardless of the wants and sufferings of others. **his own flesh,** brings on himself retribution.

Matthew Hale and the poor.— It is said of the excellent Lord Chief Justice Hale, that he frequently invited his poor neighbors to dinner, and made them sit at table with himself. If any of them were sick, so that they could not come, he would send provisions to them warm from his own table. He did not confine his bounties to the poor of his own parish, but diffused supplies to the neighboring parishes as occasion required. He always treated the old, the needy, and the sick, with the tenderness and familiarity that became one who considered they were of the same nature with himself, and were reduced to to no other necessities but such as he himself might be brought to.

[a] "The good Samaritan, who bathed the wounds, and provided for the wants of a plundered Jew, obtained a greater profit on the transaction than the sufferer who was saved by his benevolence."—*Arnot.*

18, 19. (18) **deceitful work,** *R. V.*, "earneth deceitful wages," such they will surely prove to the man himself. **sure reward,** permanent and satisfying return.[b] (19) **life,** used inclusively of all true and lasting blessings.

The deceitfulness of sin (*vs.* 18).— We have here — I. Opposite characters II. Opposite practices. III. Opposite results. To the righteous there is — 1. A certain reward; 2. A suitable reward; 3. A satisfying reward; 4. An abiding reward. Advise: — (1) Pause and inquire if such a change has been effected in you; (2) Pray for convincing and converting grace; (3) Persevere through evil and good report.— *Zeta in* 400 *Sks.*

The violet sower. — One beautiful spring morning, a little child sat on the stone at his father's door, in the sunshine, playing with a number of small seeds. He threw them about carelessly, until there was only one left. "I will plant this in the earth," said he. So he ran to a bank, and having made a tiny hole, he laid the shining seed within it, and covered it up, raising a little heap of earth above it to mark the spot, that he might return to look at it again. And the spring sunbeams smiled upon the mound where the little seed lay buried, and the gentle dew and refreshing rain moistened it. Thus was it nourished, till at last it opened its smooth case, and spread its clasping fibers round it, and grew, and grew, until two little green leaves passed up above the soil: these soon raised themselves higher, and at length it became a full-grown plant, with two tiny buds, which soon expanded into sweet blue violets. But the child did not see them, for he was far away. When autumn came, these sweet flowers faded, and in their place came two little bags of seed, and as soon as they were ripe, they showered down on the earth a great number of seeds, like the one the little child had planted. While the stern cold winter lasted, these little seeds lay snugly in their bed of earth; but when the mild spring sunshine beamed once more, they too sprang up, spreading their green leaves and opening their graceful flowers beside the parent plant; and every succeeding season there sprang up more violet plants, until the bank was covered with their luxuriant green leaves, and such a number of violets opened their modest flowers that the air was filled with their fragrance, and the passers-by paused to admire the lovely spot; and many took seeds away to plant in their gardens, and a little city child carefully carried a young plant to her humble home, and placed it in a box in her father's window, that it might smile upon her with its sweet blue eyes. Thus years went by. The little boy was now a man in a far-off country, but his heart still loved his childhood's home, and therefore he crossed the seas and visited it again in the sweet spring-time. When he came to the bank of violets, he paused to breathe the delicious perfume; then he remembered how, in his infant play, he had sown the solitary seed. "Can it be," he asked, as he looked in astonishment at the spot, "that all these have sprung from the one I planted?" Then, stooping, he gathered a flower, and as he thoughtfully gazed on its simple beauty exclaimed, "I will never waste a seed again!"

[b] 1 Cor. ix. 11; 2 Cor. ix. 6.

"The ungodly man lives a life of ungodliness and he promises himself some kind of advantage. But it cannot be; he is doomed to disappointment. However much *he lies* to work his work, the *issue of his work* will not lie. The earth will not lie concerning what kind of seed is placed in her furrows. If wheat is hidden there she will not disappoint the husbandman by returning him tares — if tares are sown she will render back of what has been entrusted to her care. She will speak the truth about the sowing by giving according to that which she has received."—*Preacher's Com.*

"By necessity of his condition, every man's life, and every moment of it, is a sowing. The machine is continually moving over the field and shaking; it cannot, even for a moment, be made to stand still, so as not to sow. It is not an open question at all whether I shall sow or not to-day; the only question to be decided is, Shall I sow good seed or bad?"—*Arnot.*

20, 21. (20) **froward,** in sense of wilful, perverse. **upright,** steadily waiting on God for counsel and guidance, prepared to follow cheerfully in His way. (21) **hand in hand,** a fig for combining together, taken from the custom of clasping hands in suretyship. **seed . . delivered,**[c] not "the posterity of the righteous," but the righteous themselves; *comp.* "the generation of them th seek Him," Ps. xxiv. 6.

God's anger with the wicked (*vs.* 20). — To think that God is only "angry with the wicked" is but half a truth, and half a truth becomes practically a

[c] Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26.

"The true, the beautiful, and the good are one in God, and He can only delight in that which reflects Himself. Hence

His delight in the well-beloved Son, and in all who are conformed to His image."—*Preacher's Com.*

"Men cannot be joined wisely and permanently together unless they are first joined to the living God. Men can only be joined to the living God through the living Christ; He is the vine, men are the branches."—*Parker.*

lie. To picture our Father in heaven all in shade is to hide half His loveliness, and keep His creatures terrified away. There is another side to His character. — *Arnot.*

Hand to hand. — A very solemn method of taking an oath in the East is by joining hands, uttering at the same time a curse upon the false swearer. To this the wise man probably alludes. This form of swearing is still observed in Egypt and the vicinity; for when Mr. Bruce was at Shekh Hunner, he entreated the protection of the governor in prosecuting his journey, when the great people who were assembled came, and after joining hands, repeated a kind of prayer about two minutes long, by which they declared themselves and their children accursed, if ever they lifted up their hands against him in the tent, or the field, or the desert, or in case that he or his should fly to them for refuge, if they did not protect them at the risk of their lives. Or, sometimes, when two persons make a contract they bring the palms of their right hands into contact, and raise them to their lips and forehead. At other times they rub the forefingers of their right hands together, repeating the words, "right, right," or "together, together." — *Paxton's Illustrations.*

a "Nose-rings were fastened in the central division of the nose, and hung down over the mouth: they have been ornaments in common use in the East from the time of the patriarchs down to the present day." — *Delitzsch.*

22. jewel, better, *ring,* with reference to the Eastern nose-ring, worn by ladies.[a] **swine's snout,** fr. this it appears that in ancient Syria swine wore such rings to prevent them from doing mischief. **fair woman,** of attractive personal appearance. **without discretion,** *lit.* one who has turned aside in respect to taste: one who lacks moral sensibility.[b] One of a loose and dissolute conversation. — *Henry.*

Analogy between gold and beauty. — 1. They are both gifts from God. Whether a man possesses gold by inheritance or as the result of labor it is a gift from God. Beauty is also a gift from God, those who possess it deserve no honor for being beautiful, those who lack it are not to be despised on that account. 2. Both have a certain value. 3. Both may make their possessors worthy of praise or blame. Although neither praise nor blame can be attached to the possession of them, much may be to their use." — *Preacher's Com.*

Ge. xxiv. 22, 47; Is. iii. 21.

Gold. —

"Money thou bane of bliss, and source of woe,
Whence com'st thou, that thou art so fresh and fine?
I know thy parentage is base and low:
Man found thee poor and dirty in a mine.

"Surely thou didst so little contribute
To this great kingdom, which thou now hast got,
That he was fain, when thou wert destitute,
To dig thee out of thy dark cave and grot.

"Then forcing thee, by fire he made thee bright;
Nay, thou hast got the face of man: for we
Have with our stamp and seal transferred our right:
Thou art the man, and man but dross to thee.

"Man calleth thee his wealth, who made thee rich,
And while he digs out thee, falls in the ditch." — *Herbert.*

b "'Without taste;' void of the subtle tact and grace, without which mere beauty is as ill-bestowed as the nose-ring, not on a fair woman's face, but in the snout of an unclean beast."—*Spk. Com.*

23. desire, or mere wish. Set in contrast with the *expectation,* or strong confidence, of the wicked, as ch. x. 28. **only good,** wh., therefore, can only bring to him prosperity and blessing. **wrath,** that wrath of God wh. surely attends on all self-willed, violent, and wicked ways, however prosperous for the time they may seem.[c]

Wishes and hopes. — The wishes of the righteous are only good, for God prospers and fulfils them; but the hope of the wicked is extinguished in calamity. I. Wishes and hopes have a certain power to fulfil themselves. II. The regulation of the wishes is an important part of self-discipline. III. To wish and to hope for nothing but the best (in accord with the will of God) is an insurance against disappointment. IV. Selfish hopes lead to unanswered prayers and to bitter chagrins. — *Johnson.*

c "This *vs.* tells us what the desire and expectation of the wicked are, and how they will prove, what they *would* have, and what *they shall* have." — *Matt. Henry.*

Ps. x. 17; lxxiii. 25; Is. xxvi. 8; Ro. ii. 7-11.

Meekness illustrated by the elder tree. — This timber is the softest, and can without difficulty be split, cut, and wrought, and yet experience proves that

it does not rot in water. The greater part of the city of Venice stands upon piles of elder, which, sunk in the sea, form the foundation of massive buildings. It is the same with meek hearts. There is no better foundation for important undertakings of public or private utility, than that intelligent modesty which is gentle indeed, and ready to yield as far as a good conscience will allow, but which, nevertheless, lasts and continues stable in the flood of contradiction. — *Gottholdt.*

24—26. (24) **scattereth,** in a good sense; makes "a generous distribution of benefactions." The figure is taken from the hand-sower. **increaseth,** by gaining both temporal and spiritual good.[a] "There is a distribution that enricheth the soul of the distributor." **withholdeth . . meet,** is sparing, niggardly, and avaricious.[b] *R. V., marg.* "what is justly due." "Mean parsimony tends only to poverty." **poverty,** the miser's feeling of poverty: and poverty of God's true blessings, which alone make rich. (25) **liberal soul,** *lit. the soul of blessing.* **fat,**[c] "the sleek, well-filled look of health becomes the figure of prosperity." **watereth,** *lit. he that raineth shall himself become a river.*[d] (26) **withholdeth corn,** in time of famine, *etc.*, to force up the price.[e] **selleth it,** at a fair price.

Christian liberality (*vs.* 25). — These words lead us to see — I. The spirit we should possess. 1. A spirit of liberality; 2. A spirit of benevolence. II. The benefits that will accrue to the possessor of it. 1. From the very exercise of the principle itself; 2. From the immediate agency of the Almighty God. Hence we may clearly see — (1) From whence comes that leanness of which many complain; (2) What encouragement we have to proceed in the work before us. — *Simeon.*

Reward of generosity. — Nearly half a century ago, when a coach ran daily between Glasgow and Greenock, by Paisley, on a forenoon, when a little past Bishopton, a lady in a coach noticed a boy walking barefooted, seemingly tired, and struggling with tender feet. She desired the coachman to take him up, give him a seat, and she would pay for it. When they arrived at the inn in Greenock, she inquired of the boy what was his object in coming there. He said he wished to be a sailor, and hoped some of the captains would engage him. She gave him half-a-crown, wished him success, and charged him to behave well. Twenty years after this, the coach returning to Glasgow in the afternoon on the same road, when near Bishopton, a sea-captain observed an old lady on the road walking very slow, fatigued and weary. He desired the coachman to put her in the coach, as there was an empty seat, and he would pay for her. Immediately after, when changing horses at Bishopton, the passengers were sauntering about, except the captain and old lady, who remained in the coach. The lady thanked him for his kindly feeling towards her, as she was now unable to pay for a seat. He said he had always sympathy for weary pedestrians, since he himself was in that state when a boy, twenty years ago, near this very place, when a tender-hearted lady ordered the coachman to take him up and paid for his seat. "Well do I remember that incident," said she; "I am that lady, but my lot in life has changed. I was then independent; now I am reduced to poverty by the doings of a prodigal son." "How happy am I," said the captain, "that I have been successful in my enterprises, and am returning home to live on my fortune; and from this day I shall bind myself and heirs to supply you with twenty-five pounds per annum till your death." — *Whitecross.*

27. diligently, or early in the morning: the Eastern sign of diligence was rising early and setting about a thing earnestly. **procureth,** better, "will seek for [God's] favor." This is the highest good; therefore the wise seeker will seek for this. — *Stuart.* **favour,** from God.[f] **mischief,** or the injury of others. **it,** viz., that wh. he desires and seeks for others.[g]

Good and evil (*vs.* 27). — I. As objects of pursuit. 1. Some pursue good; 2. Some pursue evil. II. As sources of destiny. These pursuits bring different results to the soul. 1. The one procureth favor; 2. The other disfavor. — *Thomas.*

Diligence. — A friend of mine, says Mr. Gurney, one day inquired of the then Lord Chancellor how he managed to get through so much business. "Oh," said his lordship, "I have three rules: the first is, I am a whole man to one thing at a time; the second is, I never lose a passing opportunity of doing anything that can be done; and the third is, I never entrust to other people what I ought to do myself."

"But every man is with God so good as he desires to be. They are written in the book of life that do what they can, though they cannot do as they would." — *Trapp.*

a "John Howard, when he grew sad about his piety, put on his hat and went about among the poor. He came back a gainer." — *Miller.*

b "Avarice is an anomaly in the universe: all else gives out what it receives, but as a monster this clutches and retains." — *Dav. Thomas.*

c Pr. xiii. 4; xxviii. 25.

d "The water that falls in refreshing and fertilizing irrigation is not lost, but becomes a fair stream, fringed with flowers, and overhung with trees. So the bounty of the liberal man, wh. rains down blessings, will flow on forever in a beautiful river." — *Wordsworth.*

e Am. viii. 4-6.

"Cast forth thy act, thy word, into the ever-living, ever-working universe: it is a seed-grain that cannot die; unnoticed today, it will be found flourishing as a banyan grove, perhaps, alas, as a hemlock forest, after a thousand years." — *Carlyle.*

f "The meaning is, that he who desires good, absolutely for its own sake, is also unconsciously striving after the favor which attends goodness." — *Spk. Com.*

g Ps. vii. 14-16.

"I go at what I am about as if there was nothing else in the world for the time being. That is the secret of all hard-working men." — *Charles Kingsley.*

28. trusteth . . riches, wealth itself is not an evil, but trust in wealth rather than in God is the very essence of evil.[a] **branch,** or *leaf.*[b] "A fresh green leaf on a tree, in contrast with the withered falling leaf, to wh. the fool should rather be compared who trusts in his riches." — *Zöckler.*

Trusting in riches (*vs.* 28). — I. Here is a common tendency. Wealth as an object of trust — 1. Is spiritually unsatisfying; 2. Necessarily evanescent. II. Here is a terrible catastrophe. Shall fall! 1. Whence? 2. Whither? 3. When? 4. Why? — *Thomas.*

Riches unsatisfying. — I have read of one that, upon his dying bed, called for his bags, and laid a bag of gold to his heart, and then cried out, "Take it away, it will not do, it will not do!" There are things that earthly riches cannot do. They can never satisfy Divine justice, nor pacify Divine wrath, nor quiet a guilty conscience. And till these things are done, the man is undone. — *Brooks.* — *Riches dangerous.* — As sheep that go in fat pastures come sooner to the slaughter-house than those which are kept upon the bare common: so, likewise, rich men, who are pampered with the wealth of this world, sooner forsake God, and therefore are sooner forsaken of God than others. — *Cawdray.*

29. troubleth, with niggardly and worrying ways: by his greediness for gain. **the wind,** used as the type of disappointment and dissatisfaction. No gains are of any value if to win them we sacrifice the peace and joy of our *home.*[c] **the fool,** *i. e.* this ill-tempered destroyer of the home. **servant,** he becomes, as a slave, dependent on those who wisely manage household economies.

Family life (*vs.* 29). — The words imply three things. I. That peace should be the grand aim of all the members of the domestic circle. II. That there are some members who break the peace of their domestic circle. III. That those who break the peace of their domestic circle are fools. 1. They get no good by it; 2. They get degradation by it. — *Thomas.*

A home-troubler. — "I called," said a minister, "some time ago to see a mother. She was in distress; she not only wept, but wept aloud. 'What is the matter?' I inquired. 'O, my child,' and she wept again — 'O, my child is committed to prison,' and again she wept,— 'O, my child is just committed to prison, and I fear he will never, never return to his father's house;' and she wept again, and with all my firmness I could not forbear weeping too. I was afraid to ask the cause. I did not need, for she said, 'O that theatre! he was a virtuous, kind youth, till that theatre proved his ruin.' This was her testimony — it was the young man's also." "One theatre," said a learned and observant judge, "destroys more souls than fifty churches can save."— *Whitecross.*

30, 31. (30) **fruit,** that wh. the righteous man says and does; the result of his moral integrity.[d] **tree of life,** a growth fr. wh. there springs forth life for many. **winneth,** *etc.*, better, "A wise man winneth souls."[e] (31) **recompensed,** with just Divine recognition of their failings and sins. "The righteous is punished for his lesser sins, or as a discipline; much more the wicked."[f]

A word to winners of souls (*vs.* 30). — I. He has a blessing in the winning. 1. The best way to keep our own souls in health is to seek those of others; 2. The best way to benefit our brethren is to seek souls. II. He has a blessing in the won. 1. Every soul we win for Christ is a token of His favor; 2. Causes, or should cause, more watchfulness; 3. Is an additional helper for us. III. He has a blessing stored up in heaven. 1. Exalted position — "shine as the stars;" 2. Perpetual preferment — "for ever and ever;" 3. Unbounded delight." — *Stems and Twigs.*

Winning souls. — The following is language held by a colporteur of the American Tract Society in Florida: A colporteur must count the cost, admonished by Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Bodily strength and vigor of health are prerequisites. He must be willing to abide with the poorest and most ignorant of our fellow-men, and be content with the humblest fare; cheerfully endure cold and heat, hunger and thirst, labor and fatigue, if souls may be benefited and the kingdom of our Redeemer promoted. Above all, he needs an entire reliance on the Divine aid and guidance, and must have his own heart subdued by the Spirit of God. Though I have sunk in the bogs, and have extricated myself only by exces-

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a Pr. x. 15; Ps. xlix. 6; 1 Ti. vi. 17.

b Ps. i. 3; xcii. 12; Je. xvii. 8.

"When those who take root in the world wither, those that are grafted into Christ and partake of His root and fatness shall be fruitful and flourishing."— *Matt. Henry.*

"Be not proud of riches, but afraid of them, lest they be as silver bars to cross the way to heaven."—*Mason.*

c "Home is the one place where hearts are sure of each other. It is the place of confidence. It is the place where we tear off that mask of guarded and suspicious coldness wh. the world forces us to wear in self-defense, and where we pour out the unreserved communications of full and confiding hearts." — *F. W. Robertson.*

"The man who slams the door on his own home needn't sing about climbing the golden stairs to heaven." — *C. E. World.*

d "The fruit of a life is the involuntary and regular expression of what the man is in heart and soul." — *Dav. Thomas.*

e Da. xii 3; Ja. v. 19, 20; 1 Cor. ix. 19, 22, 23.

f 1 Pe. iv. 18.

"God would have us read our sins in our judgments, that we might both repent of our sins and give glory to His justice." — *Bp. Hall.*

"Only He who made the human heart knows how to satisfy the human heart. That nothing can satisfy the human heart but the living God, in some

sive labor; have broken down in the midst of a difficult stream, in the sickly and hot season, and waded out with my boxes of books; have been lost two days in the woods without food for myself or horse; have lain in the wild forest, far from any habitation, while the storm was raging about me, or only the howling of wolves and of other wild beasts was heard; yet these trials of hunger, thirst, and exposure are of little account if I can but win souls to Christ." — *Cheever.* — The soul can only be won to God by the same kind of power as it was won from God, viz., by that of persuasion. If the tempter had tried force he would have failed with our first parents. He knew human nature too well to attempt the use of such means. Force is of no avail to bring about a friendship, and the winning of a soul is bringing about a friendship between man and God. — *Preachers' Com.*

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

1. instruction, in the wider sense of discipline, wh. comes through the providences and experiences of life. **knowledge,** the practical knowledge that enables a man to guide his life aright. **reproof,** wh. comes so surely in the providential dealings of God. **brutish,** incapable of being influenced by reason and experience.[a] Such conduct is unworthy of one who is possessed of an immortal soul and infinite capacity for progress and improvement.

Good and evil (*vs.* 1). — Good and evil are presented in three aspects. I. In relation to intelligence. 1. The good loves instruction: 2. The evil hates intelligence. II. In relation to Divine judgment. 1. The good secures the favor of God: 2. The evil incurs condemnation. III. In relation to their standing. 1. The evil have no stability; 2. The good are firmly established. — *Thomas.*

Reproof. — It was a maxim of Bishop Griswold — "When censured or accused, to correct — not justify — my error." A certain minister with more zeal than discretion, once became impressed with the thought that the bishop was a mere formalist in religion, and that it was his duty to go and warn him of the danger, and exhort him to "flee from the wrath to come." Accordingly he called upon the bishop, very solemnly made known his errand, and forthwith entered upon his reproof. The bishop listened in silence till his visitor had closed a severely denunciatory exhortation, and then in substance replied as follows: "My dear friend, I do not wonder that they who witness the inconsistency of my daily conduct, and see how poorly I adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour, should think I have no religion. I often fear for myself that such is the case, and feel very grateful to you for giving me this warning." The reply was made with such evidently unaffected humility, and with such deep sincerity, that if an audible voice from heaven had attested the genuineness of his Christian character, it could not more effectually have silenced his kindly-intending but misjudging censor, or more completely disabused him of his false impressions. He immediately acknowledged his error, begged the bishop's pardon, and ever afterwards looked upon him as one of the distinguished lights of the Christian world. — *Episc. Record.*

2, 3. (2) **goodman,** *i. e.*, pure, morally good. **obtaineth,** or *draws out.* **man . . devices.** It means "the man of plots;" one whose thoughts are perverse and artful. (3) **established,** set firm. The apparent prosperity of the wicked became a sore puzzle oftentimes to the righteous, so they needed such an assurance as this. **root,** representing the righteous as a firmly established tree.[b] *Comp.* our Lord's fig. Matt. vii. 24–27.

Primary truths. — I. The wisdom of submission, the folly of resistance, to reproof. As self-knowledge is the most precious and indispensable, and as it comes to us by chastisement, to be willing and anxious to know our faults, is the mark of true wisdom. To fret at reproof, to be angry with the counselor, to hate the revealing light, is the worst folly and stupidity. II. The favor and the disfavor of God are discriminating. The good reap His good will; the crafty and malicious are exposed to His condemnation. III. Moral stability and instability. Wickedness gives no firm foundation. The bad man is insecure, as a tottering wall or a leaning fence. The good man is like the oak, firmly and widely rooted, which may defy a thousand blasts and storms. — *Johnson.*

form, is a proof that man was made in the image and likeness of God."—*Parker.*

"Loving thoughtfulness can't be hired at the employment agency."—*C. E. World.*

"Ignorance is the curse of God,
Knowledge the wing with which we fly to heaven." — *Shakespeare.*

a "The difference bet. man and brute lies chiefly in the capacity of the former for progress and improvement, and that capacity depends upon his willingness to submit to discipline and education." — *Spk. Com.*

Ps. xlix. 10; lxxiii. 22; xcii. 6; Pr. xxx. 2.

"Those that desire to live in loose families and societies, where they may be under no check, that stifle the convictions of their own consciences, and count those their enemies who tell them the truth, are the *brutish* here meant." — *Matt. Henry.*

"It is the property of all true knowledge, especially spiritual, to enlarge the soul by filling it; to enlarge it without swelling it; to make it more capable, and more earnest to know, the more it knows." — *Bp. Sprat.*

b Ps. i. 3; xv. 5; Je. xvii. 8.

"'Tis Nature's law that none, the meanest of created things, of forms created the most vile and brute, the dullest or most noxious, should exist divorced from good — a spirit and pulse of good, a life and soul to every mode of being inseparately linked." — *Wordsworth.*

"A man, being wicked, how shall he expect anything, except that he shall be disturbed? While the saint, though '*shaken*' in leaf and bough, and storm-tossed, and, perhaps, broken in his branches, yet '*shall not be shaken*' in his '*root*.'"—*Miller.*

Guided by integrity. — A company of boys in ——— street, Boston, one day after school, were engaged in snowballing. William had made a good hard snowball. In throwing it he "put in too much powder," as the boys say — he threw it too hard — and it went further than he intended, right through a parlor window. All the boys shouted: "There, you'll catch it now. Run, Bill, run!" They then took to their heels. But the brave William straightened up and looked sober, as he said, "I shall not run." He then started directly for the house where the window had been broken. He rang at the door, acknowledged what he had done, and expressed his regret. He then gave his name, and the name of his father, and his father's place of business, and said the injury should be repaired. — *Am. Mag.*

4. virtuous woman, not merely a chaste woman, but one in whom is strength of character: a woman of power;[a] a capable woman; one in whom her husband can fully trust. **crown,** or garland; the emblem of honor and renown, of gladness and of joy. Her care and wise ruling in the house crowns him with prosperity and happiness. **maketh ashamed,** *R. V., marg,* "doeth shamefully," by incompetency or self-indulgence. **rottenness,** *etc.*[b] Such a wife poisons her husband's life, deprives him of strength and vigor, saps his very existence.

[a] Ru. iii. 11; Pr. xxxi. 16.

[b] "*Lit.* a worm eating, *i. e.* a ruin inwardly undermining and slowly destroying." — *O. Zöckler.*

The queen of the household (*vs.* 4). — In that — I. She exercises a control over him — crown the insignia of rule. II. She confers a dignity upon him — a crown is a dignity. 1. Her excellence justifies his choice: 2. Her management enriches his exchequer; 3. Her influence exalts his character. — *Thomas.*

A virtuous woman is a source of honor to her husband; a vicious one causes him disgrace.

The household queen.—

Eyes not down-dropp'd, nor over bright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity:
. . Locks not wide dispread,
Madonna-wise, on either side her head;
Sweet lips, whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihood.
. . . . . .
A courage to endure and to obey —
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, through all her placid life,
The queen of marriage — a most perfect wife.— ***Tennyson.***

"The very first of human life must spring from woman's breast; your first small words are taught you from her lips; your first tears quench'd by her, and your last sighs too often breathed out in a woman's hearing, when men have shrunk from the ignoble care of watching the last hour of him who led them."—*Lord Byron.*

Woman's voice.—

Not in the swaying of the summer trees,
When evening breezes sing their vesper hymn
Not in the minstrel's mighty symphonies,
Nor ripples breaking on the river's brim,
Is earth's best music; these may have awhile
High thoughts in happy hearts, and carking **cares beguile.**

But even as the swallow's silken wings,
Skimming the water of the sleeping lake,
Stir the still silver with a hundred rings —
So doth one sound the sleeping spirit wake
To brave the danger, and to bear the harm —
A low and gentle voice — dear woman's chiefest **charm.**

An excellent thing it is! and ever lent
To truth and love, and meekness; they who own
This gift, by the all-gracious Giver sent,
Ever by quiet step and smile are known;
By kind eyes that have wept, hearts that have sorrow'd —
By patience never tired, from their own trials borrow'd.

An excellent thing it is when first in gladness
A mother looks into her infant's eyes —

"Oh, woman! that some one of you will take an everlasting pen into your hands, and grave in paper (which the writ shall make more lasting than the marble monuments) your matchless virtues to posterities; which the defective race of envious man strives to conceal."— *Beaumont and Fletcher.*

Smiles to its smiles, and saddens to its sadness —
Pales at its paleness, sorrows at its cries;
Its food and sleep, and smiles, and little joys —
All these come ever blent with one low gentle voice

An excellent thing it is when life is leaving —
Leaving with gloom and gladness, joys and cares —
The strong heart failing, and the high soul grieving
With strangest thoughts, and wild unwonted fears·
Then, then a woman's low soft sympathy
Comes like an angel's voice to teach us how to die.

But a most excellent thing it is in youth,
When the fond lover hears the loved one's tone,
That fears, but longs, to syllable the truth —
How their two hearts are one, and she his own:
It makes sweet human music — Oh! the spells
That haunt the trembling tale a bright-eyed maiden tells! — *Arnold.*

"*Ill-temper in woman.*—Fie, fie! unknit that threat'ning unkind brow; and dart not scornful glances from those eyes, to wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor; it blots thy beauty, as frosts bite the meads; confounds thy fame, as whirlwinds shake fair buds; and in no sense is meet, or amiable." — *Shakespeare.*

"As good say nothing, as nothing to the purpose." — *Philip Henry.*

5–7. (5) **thoughts,** or purposes.[a] **right,** aim at simple justice and righteousness. "Habits of good and evil reach beyond the region of outward act to that of impulse and violation." — *Spk. Com.* **counsels,** or deliberate plans, contrasted with casual thoughts of the righteous. **deceit,** not truth, or righteousness, or charity. (6) **for blood,** "are a-lying in wait." — *Stuart.* The wicked by their lies, slanders, false accusations, endanger men's lives, 1 Ki. xxi. 13. **deliver them,** *i. e.* the innocent whose blood the wicked seek. (7) **overthrown,** "when the wicked are overturned." — *Stuart.* The notion is scarcely of an overthrow. The Vulgate has, *verte impios; i. e.* change them a little from their previous state, let them suffer a blow from any cause or of any degree, and they succumb; they have no power of resistance. What the stroke is, or whence it comes, is not expressed; it may be the just judgment of God — temptation, trouble, sickness — but whatever it is, they cannot withstand it as the righteous do. — *Pul. Com.* Ps. xxxvii. 34–36.

Moral contrasts (*vss.* 5–7). — I. Thought. If the thought of the righteous is right, his words and actions will correspond. If the counsels of the wicked are deceit, what must his thought have been? II. Word. The deceitful words of wickedness are to lure men to destruction, but the plain and honest speech of truth is to extricate men from the snare of the wicked. III. Destiny. The wicked are overthrown in position and in reputation with man and God, while the righteous will be secure.

A Sunday scholar. — Little Jane was a Sunday scholar whom every one of her Christian friends loved. Whatever seat was vacant at nine o'clock on a Sunday morning, hers was always filled. She was so poor that potatoes and bread constituted her only sustenance, while she was the victim of a severe and wasting ague. She called on her teacher one Monday, who saw traces of disease, hunger, and exhaustion in her expressive countenance, and forced some nutritious food upon her. Jane retired into a corner, and hastily ate one half of this opportune luxury; the other half was stealthily committed to her empty pocket. The action did not escape the keen eye of her teacher. "Jane, my dear," said the teacher, "what are you saving it for? I am sure you can eat it all." The little invalid looked confused, as she answered, "It is for my brother Tommy; he has got the ague too." — *R. T. S.*

"Upon the regulation of our thoughts depends the regulation of our lives. To think well is the way to act rightly." — *Paley.*

"Thoughts are the most wonderful things in connection with human life. They are the factors of character, and the primal forces of history. By thought man builds up his own world, and it is ever to him the realest world." — *Dav. Thomas.*

"So spake the cherub and his grave rebuke, severe in youthful beauty, added grace invincible: abash'd the devil stood, and felt how awful goodness is." — *Milton.*

"He
Fails never; if
he cannot work
by us,
He will work
over us."
— *Mrs Browning.*

8, 9. (8) **wisdom,** a man who gives practical proof of wisdom by life and character, whose words and actions show that he is actuated by high views, is praised and acknowledged by all. **perverse heart,** *lit.* the crooked in heart. "The perverse man, who does not see things as they are, and therefore acts perversely and injudiciously." — *Hitzig.* **be despised,** or *come to shame.* (9) **hath a servant,** *better,* "is a servant to himself." "It is wiser to look after one's own business and provide for one's own necessities, even if thereby he meets with contempt and detraction, than to be in real want, and all the time assuming the airs of a rich and prosperous man." **honoureth himself,** with the foolish idea that labor is ignoble, and so lets his hands hang idle.[b]

Honoreth himself. — "I have read," says Thomas Adams, "of Menecrates, a physician that would needs be counted a god, and took no other fee of his

"Better is he that laboreth, and aboundeth in all things, than he that boasteth himself and wanteth bread." — *Wordsworth.*

"Respectable mediocrity is better than boastful poverty." — *Spk. Com.*

patients than their vow to worship him. Dionysius Syracusanus, hearing of this, invited him to a banquet, and, to honor him according to his desire, set before him nothing but a censer of frankincense, with the smoke whereof he was feasted till he starved, while others fed on good meat." Such smoke as this is all the return such a man as the one pictured in this proverb will get for starving himself, and for sinning against his own body, against society, and against God.— *Preacher's Com. Power of knowledge and force of example.* —One day, in the year 1814, a workman hurried into Stephenson's cottage with the startling information that the deepest main of the colliery was on fire! He immediately hastened to the pit-head, about a hundred yards off, whither the women and children of the colliery were running, with wildness and terror depicted in every face. In a commanding voice Stephenson ordered the engineman to lower him down the shaft in the corve. There was danger, it might be death, before him, but he must go. He was soon at the bottom, and in the midst of the men, who were paralyzed at the danger which threatened the lives of all in the pit. Leaping from the corve on its touching the ground, he called out, "Are there six men among you who have the courage to follow me? If so, come, and we will put the fire out." The Killingworth pitmen had the most perfect confidence in their engine-wright, and they readily volunteered to follow him. Silence succeeded the frantic tumult of the previous minute, and the men set to work with a will. In every mine, bricks, mortar, and tools enough are at hand, and by Stephenson's direction the materials were forthwith carried to the required spot, where, in a very short time, a wall was raised at the entrance to the main, he himself taking the most active part in the work. The atmospheric air was by this means excluded, the fire was extinguished, most of the people in the pit were saved from death, and the mine was preserved.— *Smiles' Life of Stephenson.*

10. regardeth, *lit.* "knoweth." "All true sympathy and care must grow out of knowledge. The righteous man tries to *know* the feelings and life even of the brute beast, and so comes to care for it."[a] — *Spk. Com.* **his beast,** esp. the animal that in any way renders him service.[b] **tender mercies,** or *bowels.* The reference is prob. to the action of the wicked towards their fellow-men; and the contrast intended may be thus expressed: "The righteous more regards a beast than the wicked a man."— *Fausset.*

Duty to animals (*vs.* 10).—I. Consider the relation of man to the lower creatures. He is their lord, ruler—not torturer. They are to minister to his need, not to the violence of his passions or vicious curiosity. A word on vivisection. II. Out of this consideration will grow a proper regard for the life of dumb creatures. Animals kept for use will be cared for, properly fed, not overtasked. The enforced confinement of pet animals should be compensated by kind treatment. III. A proper regard for the lower animals would very much affect what is called sport. Christian legislation has already abolished many of the pastimes that involved cruelty to animals, and inscribed on the statute books laws against such cruelty. IV. Disregard is the evidence of a brutal mind, and degrades man to the level of beasts of prey.

Cruel drivers.— He very often mingled with affairs in the street as he passed along. One day, when he saw a man beating his horse brutally, he stepped up to him and said very seriously, "Dost thou know that some people think men change into animals when they die?" The stranger's attention was arrested by such an unexpected question, and he answered that he never was acquainted with anybody who had that belief. "But some people do believe it," rejoined Friend Hopper; "and they also believe that animals may become men. Now I am thinking if thou shouldst ever be a horse, and that horse should ever be a man with such a temper as thine, the chance is thou will get some cruel beatings." Having thus changed the current of his angry mood, he proceeded to expostulate with him in a friendly way, and the poor beast was reprieved, for that time at least.— *Life of I. T. Hopper.*

11. tilleth his land, with foresight and diligence. **satisfied,** with the sure rewards of his toil. **vain persons,** idle and prodigal men.[c] "Idleness leads to worse evil than that of hunger."

Industry and idleness (*vs.* 11).—I. Every one has something, if not land, that he may till. II. The industrious toiler will have at least bread. III. The results of honest toil will be satisfying. IV. If one has understanding he will not follow the empty, but will rather seek to lead them in a more excellent way.

"That man is to be accounted poor, of whatever rank he be, and suffers the pains of poverty, whose expenses exceed his resources; and no man is, properly speaking, poor but he." — *Paley.*

"Bad company is like a nail driven into a post, which after the first and second blow, may be drawn with little difficulty; but being once driven up to the head, the pincers cannot take hold to draw it out, but which can only be done by the destruction of the wood."— *Augustine.*

"The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel *even to men.*" — *Wordsworth.*

[a] Ge. xxxiii. 13, 14.

[b] "God put all under the dominion of man; some to serve him in one way, and some in another; some to charm his eye with their beauty, others to delight his ear with their music; some to supply him with food, others with clothing; some to save his own muscular strength in doing his work, and others to bear him about."—*Dav. Thomas.*

"The tender mercies of the wicked are when base and guilty men are spared that should be smitten with the sword of justice. This pity, by granting impunity, arms and sends forth against innocent men the whole army of evil-doers." — *Lord Bacon.*

[c] Man should not eat of honey like a drone from other's labors.

"In a moral point of view the life of the agriculturist is the most pure and holy of any class

Earl of Chatham. — The celebrated Earl of Chatham performed an amount of business, even minute, which filled common improvers of time with astonishment. He knew not merely the great outlines of public business, the policy and intrigues of foreign courts, but his eye was on every part of the British dominions, and scarcely a man could move without the knowledge of the man and of his object. A friend one day called on him when premier of England, and found him down on his hands and knees, playing at marbles with his little boy, and complaining bitterly that the rogue would not play fair, gaily adding, "that he must have been corrupted by the example of the French." The friend wished to mention a suspicious-looking stranger, who for some time had taken up lodgings in London. Was he a spy, or merely a private gentleman? Chatham went to his drawer, and took out some scores of small portraits, and holding up one which he had selected, asked, "Is that the man?" "Yes, the very person." "Oh! I have had my eye on him from the moment he stepped on shore." All this was accomplished by a rigid observance of time, never suffering a moment to pass without pressing it into service.

12, 13. (12) **desireth the net,** a difficult expression. "The wicked desireth the spoil of evil doers." — *Zöckler.* "The wicked longs for the prey of evil men." — *Miller.* The *marg.* gives another word for *net*, viz., *fortress*, "The wicked seeks the protection of evil men." — *Pul. Com.* **root,** the part wh. is fixed and stable; the firm principles and rootings in righteousness. **yieldeth fruit,** "shall be firm." — *Stuart.* (13) **is snared,** is himself snared by the evil speaking with wh. he seeks to overthrow others. Lies are the language of the crafty. **come out of,** if he may get into trouble, truth, integrity, and uprightness will insure deliverance sooner or later.

Fruitfulness (*vs.* 12). — 1. The forms of godly fruitfulness are these. (1) All excellency of spirit; (2) All beauty and worthiness of life, the presence of that which is pleasing in the sight of God and admirable in the sight of man; (3) all earnest endeavor to do good, the patient, persevering effort to instil the thoughts of Christ into the minds of men, to awaken their slumbering consciences, to lift up their lives, to ennoble their character, to enlarge their destiny. 2. The source and the security of such fruitfulness are: (1) Union with the living Vine; (2) Abiding in Him; (3) The wise and kind discipline of the Divine Husbandman. — *Pul. Com.*

"The net of evil men they run into with such a blind infatuation, that it seems as if they were in love with their own destruction." — *Spk. Com.*

14. fruit of his mouth, *i. e.* rational and benevolent discourse. **recompence,** *etc.*, retributive law surely governs the universe.[a] **hands,** a man's works are the fruit of his hands, as his words are the fruit of his lips. Both good words and good works return upon a man in blessings.

Retributions of lip and life (*vs.* 14). — I. The retributions of the lip. Good speech is — 1. Sincere; 2. Truthful; 3. Benevolent. Such speech satisfies — (1) In its action on one's own mind; (2) In the effect produced on others; (3) In the conscious approbation of God. II. The retributions of the life. This is inevitable — 1. From the law of causation; 2. From the law of conscience; 3. From the law of righteousness. — *Thomas.*

Reward of benevolence sometimes immediate. — Occasionally a benevolent action wrought in faith brings with it an instantaneous recompense in kind; therein Providence is seen as smiling upon the deed. The late John Andrew Jones, a poor Baptist minister, whilst walking in Cheapside, was appealed to by some one he knew for help. He had but a shilling in the world, and poised it in his mind to give or not to give. The greater distress of his acquaintance prevailed, and he gave his all, walking away with a sweet remembrance of the promise, "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will He pay him again." He had not gone a hundred yards further before he met a gentleman who said, "Ah, Mr. Jones, I am glad to see you. I have had this sovereign in my waistcoat pocket this week past for some poor minister, and you may as well have it." Mr. Jones was wont to add, when telling the story, "If I had not stopped to give relief I should have missed the gentleman and the sovereign too." — *Spurgeon.*

15, 16. (15) **fool,** here the self-willed as well as the thoughtless. **right . . eyes,** *i. e.* he takes no advice, but with self-confidence follows on his own wilful way.[b] **counsel,** from those who have wisdom and experience.[c] The wise man is ever a willing listener to wise counsels. "He is a fool that is

[a] Ga. vi. 7, 8; Ro. ii. 6.

"Now, as good words, so good works shall be rewarded. For the recompense of a man's hands shall reward him; not only shall the wicked be plagued for their evil doing, but the godly shall be blessed for their well-doing." — *Muffett.*

"The kindness of some is too much like an echo; it returns exactly the counterpart of what it receives, and neither more nor less." — *G. S. Bowes.*

[b] He who knows nothing doubts nothing.

[c] "The first step in knowledge is to know that we are ignorant." — *Cecil.*

of men; pure, because it is the most healthful, and holy, because it brings the Deity perpetually before his view, giving him thereby the most exalted notions of supreme power, and the most fascinating and endearing view of moral benignity." — *Sir B. Maltravers*

"The wicked seek their good from without; the righteous have it within, their own root, deep and firmly sunk, supplying it." — *Fausset.*

"The meaning is, the wicked desire to be as apt in all the stratagems by wh advantage is taken of others as the most cunning of evil men." — *Dav. Thomas.*

governed by his eye, and not by his conscience. He is wise whose ear is always open to good advice."—*Henry.* (16) **presently,** very soon ; because he has not character and self-command enough to restrain his wrath. **covereth shame,** *R. V.*, "concealeth shame," or hasty anger that might bring shame.[a]

The way of the fool (*vs.* 15). — I. Right in his own eyes, because, being a fool, he is ignorant of better ways. II. Being a fool he is too proud to acknowledge what he may see to be good in the ways of others. III. Although right in his own eyes, it is wrong in the sight of others, — the good and wise, and God. Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve.

A parable of folly. — Hazael, the son of an Eastern prince, had been educated in the valley of the wise men, and had passed there the days of his boyhood. Then his father sent him to Persia to finish his education, and to learn the ways and manners of men. Perfect liberty was granted to the youth; but Serujah, his old master, secretly watched the life and doings of the prince. When he arrived in Persia, he was led away by the pleasures of the capital and the turmoil of luxurious life ; so that he forgot his destination, and thoughtlessly gave up his heart to pleasure : he remembered no longer his royal calling. When he was one day walking in the pleasure-gardens of Ispahan, Serujah passed him in the garb of a pilgrim, having a staff in his right hand. But Hazael knew Serujah, and asked him, "Whence comest thou, and whither goest thou?" Serujah answered, and said, "I know not." Then the youth marveled, and said, "Hast thou left thy home, and dost thou travel abroad not knowing whither?" Serujah answered, "I have forgotten it : I walk to and fro ; and the path which seems to me the widest and most pleasant, that choose I." "And whither will such bootless wanderings lead thee?" asked the astonished youth. Serujah answered, "I know not : why should I care?" Then Hazael turned to those who stood around him, and said, "This man was the teacher of my youth, and full of wisdom ; but, behold! he has grown foolish, and lacks understanding. Alas! how is he changed, and become like another being!" Then Serujah threw down his wallet, and went to the youth, and said, "Thou sayest it, Hazael, my life has changed like thine. Formerly, I was thy guide, and thou didst follow me in the way which I showed thee. But now I have ceased to be thy guide ; I have begun to follow thee. Behold my wandering! wherein I lose sight of the way, and the goal is like thine : reason has departed from thee, even as it has quitted me. Who is the more foolish, thou or I? and which of us is wandering in the worse path?" Thus said Serujah. Then Hazael acknowledged his trangression, and returned to the way of wisdom which Serujah had taught him. — *Krummacher.*

17—19. (17) **truth,** strict absolute truth, without concealment or deception. The point in this verse is the "inseparable union bet. truth and justice. The end does not justify the means, and only he who breathes and utters truth makes the righteous cause clear." — *Spk. Com.* **false witness,** showeth forth deceit, exhibits his true character, which is fraud, treachery and wrong-doing. (18) **piercings,** *etc.*,[b] Ps. lvii. 4 ; lix. 7. Inconsiderate and inappropriate words are like knife-thrusts, persons feel cut and wounded by them. **health,** or bringeth healing. Wounding thrusts, and tender healings are forcibly contrasted. (19) **for ever,** it will abide all testing. **for a moment,** *lit. till I wink again ;* "unto old age no lie doth ever live."

Truth unchanging. — 1. It is valid, abiding, permanent in value (*vs.* 19). Much in our knowledge is subject to the laws of change and growth. We grow out of the old and into the new. But the simple sentiments of piety and duty common to all good men are capable of no change, no decay. Of them all the good man will ever say, "So was it when I was a boy; so is it now I am a man ; so let it be when I grow old!" 2. Joy, peace, and eternal safety are the portion of the wise and just (*vss.* 20, 21). Joy in the heart, peace in the home and amongst neighbors, safety here and hereafter. Translated into the language of the gospel, "Glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life!' For in one word, he enjoys the favor of his God, and this contains all things. — *Pul. Com.*

A lying tongue. — A lying or even a babbling tongue can pierce a much more vital organization than flesh and blood — it can enter the human spirit, and hurt it in its most sensitive part ; or by slander it can destroy all the joy of a man's earthly life. And as a sword can in a moment sever the spirit

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[a] "He is slow to denounce his insulters."—*Fausset.*

When Dr. Swift was arguing one day, with great coolness, with a gentleman who had become exceedingly warm in the dispute, one of the company asked him how he could keep his temper so well. "The reason is," replied the Dean, "I have truth on my side."

"Command thyself in chief. He life's war knows
Whom all his passions *follow* as he goes."
—*George Herbert.*

"The greatest of fools is he who imposes on himself, and in his greatest concern thinks certainly he knows that which he has least studied, and of which he is most profoundly ignorant."—*Shaftesbury.*

"Surely he is not a fool that hath unwise thoughts, but he that utters them."—*Bp. Hall.*

[b] "The edge of a sword is called its mouth in Heb. (Ex. xvii. 13; Nu. xxi. 24.) The tongue of the wise is contrasted with the mouth of the sword brandished by the slanderer."—*Wordsworth.*

"In nature we have a two-fold exhibition of power. The hurricane comes and breaks the branches of the tree, and strips off its leaves ; but a more beneficent power clothes it again with beauty. So the tongue of a fool strips a man of what made life beautiful to him — takes away his

and the body of a man, and work such ruin and misery as can never be done away with, so a lying tongue may by one word, or one conversation, do mischief that can never be undone. The sword of steel can divide human friends locally; but it cannot sever their love; it tends rather to increase and brighten the flame; but a word of slander may do all this, and estrange those who were bound in the tenderest ties, until the God of Truth shall bring the truth to light. Though the lying tongue is comparatively "but for a moment," yet in a moment it can deal a thrust that will last as long as life. It can open a wound whence will flow out all the joy of life, as the heart's blood flows from a mortally wounded man. — *Hom. Com.*

good name, or breaks bonds of close friendship — but wise and kind words have a healing power in them — they help to cheer the wounded spirit, and enable the bowed head to lift itself again."— *Preacher's Com.*

20, 21. (20) **in the heart,** it is no surface matter. They are corrupt at the root. **imagine,** *R. V.*, "devise," *i. e.* give evil counsel. **joy,** at heart. Their counsels of peace make their neighbors glad. (21) **no evil,**[a] *R. V.*, "mischief;" no unmitigated or unsanctified evil; nothing *worthless* to him. **mischief,** *R. V.*, "evil," calamity and distress.

Immunity from evil (*vs.* 21). — I. This seems not to be true; the same event happeneth alike to all; the best of men sometimes suffer. II. But it is true, it will be remembered, that because he is a just man he will regard as good for him that which to others seems evil; for him the curse is turned into a blessing — for him poverty and sickness, *etc.*, are blessings in disguise.

No evil. — It shall not hurt his better part, that which is the man himself — his spiritual nature, his moral character. The storms that cannot uproot a tree only make it take deeper root-hold, and so add to its strength. If it break some of the branches it makes it more fit to weather another tempest. So all the trials of the just man tend to strengthen his character by causing him to lay a firmer hold upon the things that are unseen and eternal. — *Hom. Com.*

> "Affliction then is ours;
> We are the trees whom shaking fastens more,
> While blustering winds destroy the wanton bowers,
> And ruffle all their curious knots and store." — *Herbert.*

[a] Ps. xci. 10.

"Look how the scourging and beating of a garment with a stick drives out the moths and the dust; so doth affliction corruptions from the heart; and there is no hurt in that; no evil thereby happens to the just."— *Preacher's Com.*

"Not merely they that speak truly, but they that deal truly. Deeds of true dealing must confirm words of fair speaking."— *Fausset.*

22. abomination, *etc.*, this takes the higher view: the evil of deceitful speech has already been shown; now God's view of it is declared.[b] **deal truly,** *i. e.* faithfully, according to promises.

God's delight. — Whatever gives delight to a noble and benevolent man must be a blessing to humanity, and everything will delight him that tends to minister blessing to the world. This is pre-eminently true of the good God. Truth is the great need of the race — truth in word and deed and thought. To this end Christ came into the world "to bear witness of the truth," because that alone is the cure for the world's woes. Then every man who is *true* must bless humanity and consequently delight God. Truth of any kind will be established in the course of time. If a man proclaim a scientific truth, however much he may be laughed at and disbelieved at first, his 'lip," or his words, will be established in the end. The words of Galileo, when he uttered the truth, that the earth moved round the sun, have long since been "established." Time only is needed for any truth to take root-hold — it can never be overturned, whether it be physical or moral truth. Many truths which were scoffed at by most men, when they were first promulgated, are now regarded as truisms by almost everybody. And the lips that uttered them are now established and held in honor. — *Hom. Com.*

[b] Pr. vi. 16-19; Jno. iii. 20, 21.

"Be sure you are true yourselves and have a true purpose in view, and all discrepancies, inconsistencies, and difficulties will ultimately be smoothed down, and men will be brought to acknowledge the integrity of your heart." — *J. Parker.*

"Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie:
A fault which needs it most grows two thereby."— *Herbert.*

23. concealeth, *comp. vs.* 16. A wise man is not too ready to talk; he would rather think on, and seek to know more perfectly. Those who know but little are always eager to make the most of their little stock. The truly learned are usually modest and retiring.[c] **proclaimeth,** by rushing in at every opportunity they surely proclaim the limit of their knowledge.

Concealing knowledge (*vs.* 23). — A prudent man concealeth knowledge — I. When it is inopportune, John xvi. 12. II. Or above the capacity of his hearers, 1 Cor. ii. 2. III. Or likely to be misapplied, Mark xv. 5. IV. When sure of rejection, Matt. vii. 6. V. When calculated to injure the brethren, Lev. xix. 16. VI. When to utter it would be only for self-display, Prov. xxvii. 2. — *Stems and Twigs.*

Humility like ointment. — It is a point of humility to be silent in modesty,

[c] "Knowing men, if they be prudent men, will carefully avoid everything that savors of ostentation, and not take all occasions to show their learning and reading, but only to use it for good purposes, and then let their own works praise them"— *Matt. Henry.*

Pr. xv. 2; Ec. iii. 7; Am. v. 13.

"Honors come by diligence; riches spring from economy."

and their words are so much **more desirable**, and better accepted as they are rare, and few, and seasonable. The ointment that is close kept in a box will yield a sweeter savor when it is poured out, than that which is continually open. A wine fresh from the vessel hath a better relish than that which was drawn long before there was any need of it.— *Dods.*

24—26. (24) **bear rule**, the rewards of diligence will set men in positions of independence and authority. **be under tribute**, *R. V.*, "be put under task-work;" will be forced to labor. "The slothful inevitably descend to pauperism and servitude." (25) **Heaviness**, or trouble. **maketh it stoop**, "will bow it down."— *Stuart.* Care brings dejection and despair.[a] **a good word**, cheery, comforting word, or good tidings. (26) **more excellent**, better *trans.* "guideth his friends aright." **seduceth them**, *better*, "causeth him [the wicked] to err." Far from guiding others aright, the wicked, reaping the moral consequences of their sin, drift hopelessly astray themselves.

Heaviness in the heart (*vs.* 25).— The man that has every day to carry a heavy burden upon his shoulders will find that an attempt to carry the load of two days at once will weigh down his body beyond all his power to rise and stand upright. He must not try to carry more than the load of to-day, if he is to do anything at all. So is it with the spirit of a man if he goes out to meet the cares and difficulties of to-morrow, while he is bearing and battling with those of to-day. The weight of the present is as much as he can carry; his heart must "stoop" if he dwells upon the possible or certain trials of the future. The right way to bear burdens is to take the advice of One who Himself was a burden-bearer.— *Hom. Com.*

"In this world, diligence puts a man at the head. In the eternal world, it will have made the man a king, and made all hell, and of course, all 'sloth under tribute' to him."—*Miller.*

"Hard words are like hailstones in summer, beating down and destroying what they would nourish were they melted into drops."

[a] We should watch against giving way to grief, lest it unfit us for duty.

27, 28. (27) **roasteth not**, so as to get for himself the benefit of his own labors; he lets it slip from him. He does not improve his advantages.[b] *R. V., marg.* "catcheth not his prey." **substance**, *etc.*, better *rend.* "But a precious treasure to a man is diligence. (28) Prosperity and success are found in doing right.

Life in the way of righteousness (*vs.* 28).— "The path *is* life. 1. It is the path of a living soul. No one can continuously pursue a right course unless he has the spiritual life in him. The path of righteousness can only be trodden by those who have within them the soul-energy to follow it. 2. It is the path that quickens life. It is not like the deadly tracts of sin, those ways of wickedness that lead down into the fatal swamps of soul-death. This path runs over bracing mountain heights. 3. It is the path that leads to life. There is a fuller life beyond, not yet reached, and righteousness is the way to it. Every attainment in holiness is accompanied by a deepening of the soul-life."— *Pul. Com.*

Griffith Davies.— Griffith Davies was born in Carnarvonshire in 1788. He was the son of a poor man, and had no training at all in his young days, except that which he obtained from a laboring man in the village Sunday school. Up to the age of seventeen he had never been to a day school. He had then accumulated money enough to pay for three months' tuition of a very humble description. Here he learned the elements of arithmetic, and afterwards, while working in the slate quarry with his father, used to employ his spare time by figuring upon the pieces of slate with an iron nail. He thus became a very accurate calculator. In process of time he came up to London, opened a school, and had for one of his early pupils John Franklin, the subsequently celebrated Arctic voyager. In 1823 he was appointed actuary to the Guardian Life Office, which situation he maintained with honor and efficiency all his life, and died a humble and devoted Christian.

"Life, in any sense, is a sweet mercy, a precious indulgence. Life natural is but a little spot of time between the two eternities, before and after, but it is of great consequence, and given us for this purpose, that glory may be begun in grace, and we have a further and further entrance into the kingdom of heaven here, as Peter saith (2 Peter i. 2). Christ hath unstinged the first death, and made of a postern to let out eternal life, a street-door to let in eternal life."—*Preacher's Com.*

[b] He will let whatever he may gain slip from his hands for want of effort and attention.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

1. instruction, *better*, "correction;" *Wordsworth* and others suggest that it should read, "A wise son *is* his father's instruction," *i. e.* he is the fruit of it, his wisdom is produced by it.[c] **scorner**, Ps. i. 1; Pr. i. 22.[d] **rebuke**,[e] a much stronger word than correction.

Wisdom and folly (*vs.* 1).— I. The wise son bears his father attentively, patiently, obediently, though the words may not always be pleasant or laudatory. II. The foolish son, being scornful, conceited, proud, heareth not rebuke

[c] Pr. x. 1, 17.

[d] "The heedless reviler of religion who has long ago thrown aside all childlike piety and reverence for the holy."—*Zöckler.*

[e] "How can those mend a fault

though he most needs it. 1. Compare the course and the end of the two; 2. How is the father affected in either case. — *Hive.*

Docility vs. stubbornness. — Let us carry this into the distinctly religious sphere. To be wise is to be a good listener. In the expressive phrase of the Bible, to "hearken to the voice of Jehovah," to listen to the suggestions of the inward monitor, is the secret of a sober, well-balanced habit of mind, and of every safe line of conduct. All that God teaches, by the voice of inspired teachers, by our own experience, by the inner revelations of the heart, is "a father's instruction." Above all, instruction by means of suffering is God's fatherly way with souls. And we have the great example of Christ to guide us and to sweeten obedience, for he "learned" it by the things which he suffered. On the other hand, the scorner has cast aside all reverential awe in the presence of the Holy One. To refuse the faithful warnings of friends, to be no better for those lessons of experience which are written in personal suffering, is to disown one's filial relation, and to estrange one's self from God. — *E. Johnson.*

2, 3. (2) **eat good,** *comp.* ch. xii. 14. **fruit of . . mouth,** *i. e.* words. By his kindly speech and wise counsels he shall gain the good will of his neighbors and the blessing of God. **trangressors,** *R. V.*, "treacherous;" the Hebrew is, "The soul (*i. e.* the desire, or delight) of the perfidious (is) violence." Such men have only one thing at heart, viz., to wrong their neighbor, and to increase their own property by any, even nefarious, proceedings. (3) **keepeth his life,** bec. he does not provoke others to violence towards him; he does not make enemies. **openeth . . lips,** "loves to bluster, and make a noise, and affect such a liberty of speech as bids defiance both to God and man."— *Henry.* **destruction,** of his reputation, his interest, his comfort.

Man speaking (*vss.* 2, 3). — I. The self-profiting and self-ruinous in speech. The speech of the good — 1. Promotes the development of his own spiritual being; 2. Gratifies his own moral nature; 3. Produces good results in the hearer. II. The self-controlled and the self-reckless in speech. 1. The controlled may be useful; 2. The reckless, dangerous. — *Thomas.*

A sermon to one hearer. — Dr. Beecher once engaged to preach for a country minister on exchange, and the Sabbath proved to be one excessively stormy, cold, and uncomfortable. It was midwinter, and the snow was piled all along in the roads, so as to make the passage very difficult. Still the minister urged his horse through the drifts, put the animal into a shed, and went in. As yet there was no person in the house; and after looking about he took his seat in the pulpit. Soon the door opened, and a single individual walked up the aisle, looked about, and took a seat. The hour came for commencing service, but no more hearers. Whether to preach to such an audience was a question — and it was one that Lyman Beecher was not long deciding. He felt that he had a duty to perform, and he had no right to refuse to do it because only one man could reap the benefit of it; and accordingly he went through all the services, praying, singing, preaching, and the benediction, with only one hearer. And when all was over, he hastened down from the desk to speak to his congregation, but he had departed. A circumstance so rare was referred to occasionally; but, twenty years after, it was brought to the doctor's mind quite strangely. Traveling somewhere in Ohio, the doctor alighted from the stage one day in a pleasant village, when a gentleman stepped up and spoke to him, familiarly calling him by name. "I do not remember you," said the doctor. "I suppose not," said the stranger; "but we once spent two hours together in a house alone in a storm." "I do not recall it, sir," added the old man; "pray when was it?" "Do you remember preaching, twenty years ago, in such a place, to a single person?" "Yes, yes," said the doctor, grasping his hand, "I do, indeed; and if you are the man, I have been wishing to see you ever since." "I am the man, sir; and that sermon saved my soul, made a minister of me, and yonder is my church. The converts of that sermon, sir, are all over Ohio."

4—6. (4) **soul,** the sluggard only forms vain wishes, he makes no effort to secure their fulfilment. He builds many castles, but they are all castles in the air.[a] **made fat,** the figure for fully prospered and satisfied. Ch. xii. 14. (5) **lying,** put generally for all deceitful and injurious speech and action.[b] **loathsome,** perhaps should be read, acteth basely and shamefully; *R. V., marg.*, "causeth shame and bringeth reproach." (6) **keepeth,** protecteth.

who will not be told of it, but count those their enemies who do them that kindness?"—*Matt. Henry.*

"The young man who considers himself to be exceptionally clever is tempted to idolize his own notions and despise parental correction."— *Pul. Com.*

"Take heed that thy tongue cut not thy throat."— *Arab. Prov.*

Ja. iii. 6.

"Keep thine heart. This guards the citadel. Keep thy mouth. This sets a watch at the gates. If they be well guarded the city is safe. Leave them unprotected — thus was Babylon taken."— *Bridges.*

"Religion is an every-day battle. He that is not conscious of it, has no true religion."— *Miller.*

"The joy resulting from the diffusion of blessings to all around us is the purest and sublimest that can ever enter the human mind, and can be conceived only by those who have experienced it."— *Ponteus.*

"Discretion in speech is more than eloquence. When in doubt, abstain." — *Bacon.*

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept,
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say,
Who knows how grandly it had rung?"

[a] 2 Th. iii. 10.

[b] "A soul that has been made right in relation to the laws of its own spiritual being, to the universe, and

to God, has an instinctive repugnance to falsehood." — *Dav. Thomas.*

Ps. cxix. 29

upright, *etc., lit. innocence of way,* an abstract for the concrete, equivalent to "them that walk uprightly." **overthroweth,**[a] *lit.* plungeth into sin with all its consequences.

The effects of sin (*vss.* 5, 6). — I. Give the character of the sinner. 1. What is sin? — transgression of law; 2. Hence sin is contempt of God; 3. Rejection of Christ; 4. In the rank of sinners place infidels, *etc.*; 5. Such are sinners by name, practice, motives, *etc.* II. Show how sin is the ruin of the sinner. 1. It exhausts his property; 2. Blasts reputation; 3. Destroys health; 4. Hastens approach of death; 5. Effects the condemnation of the soul. — *Theta in* 400 *Sks.*

The minister of Clermont. — The minister of the seminary at Clermont (France) having been seized at Autun by the populace, the mayor, who wished to save him, advised him not to take the oath, but to allow him to tell the people that he had taken it. "I would myself make known your falsehood to the people," replied the clergyman: "it is not permited me to ransom my life by a lie. The God who prohibits my taking this oath will not allow me to make it believed that I have taken it." The mayor was silent, and the minister was martyred.

a "Maketh to slip." — *Wordsworth.*

"Where grace reigns, sin is loathsome; where sin reigns the man is loathsome."—*Henry.*

7. maketh, *R. V., marg.,* "feigneth." **hath nothing,** of real and lasting worth. "A maxim aimed at foolish pride of birth and empty love of display on the part of men without means, as ch. xii. 9." — *Zöckler.* **maketh himself poor,** for some purpose simulating poverty to conceal great wealth.[b] We must not trust appearances.

The "poor-rich." — He who is really wealthy and yet does not use his wealth to the glory of God "hath nothing." 1. He is poor in relation to his fellow-creatures. The greatest beggar cannot do less for the world than he does, and he is poor in the love and gratitude of those from whom he might win a rich reward by the exercise of benevolence. 2. He is poor in spiritual riches. A miserly, niggardly man must be poor "towards God," must be destitute of all that God counts worth possessing. The rich church of Laodicea was so "increased with goods" that she said, "I have need of nothing," but in the sight of the Son of God she was "poor." — *Preacher's Com.*

The three brothers. — A minister soliciting aid towards the erection of a place of worship waited on an individual distinguished for his wealth and benevolence. Approving the case, he presented to the minister a handsome donation, and, turning to his three sons, who had witnessed the transaction, he advised them to imitate his example. "My dear boys," said he, "you have heard the case; now, what will you give?" One said, "I will give all that my pockets will furnish;" another observed, "I will give half that I have in my purse;" the third sternly remarked, "I will give nothing." Some years after, the minister had occasion to visit the same place, and recollecting the family he had called upon, he inquired into the actual position of the parties. He was informed that the generous father was dead; the youth who had cheerfully given all his store was living in affluence; the son who had divided his pocket-money was in comfortable circumstances; but the third, who had indignantly refused to assist, and haughtily declared "he would give nothing," was so reduced as to be supported by his two brothers.

b "The teaching of ch. xi. 24 finds its echo here. There is a seeming wealth behind wh. there lies a deep spiritual poverty and wretchedness. There is a poverty which makes a man rich for the kingdom of God."—*Spk. Com.*

2 Co. vi. 10; Phi. iii. 7, 9.

"There is no art or science that is too difficult for industry to attain to: it is the gift of tongues, and makes a man understood and valued in all countries, and by all nations. It is the philosopher's stone that turns all metals. In a word, it conquers all enemies, and makes fortune itself pay contribution" — *Lord Clarendon.*

"He that hath empty pockets may whistle in the face of a highwayman."—*Juvenal.*

"Grete rest stondeth in litel busineśse."—*Chaucer.*

Industry.—

Be thrifty; but not covetous: therefore give
Thy need, thine honor, and thy friend his due.
Never was scraper brave man. Get to live;
Then live, and use it; else, it is not true
That thou hast gotten. Surely use alone
Makes money not a contemptible stone.—*G. Herbert.*

8, 9. (8) **ransom,** a rich man can save himself from many difficulties and dangers by the sacrifice of a portion of his wealth, *e. g.* when his money or his life is demanded by a robber; when men in authority make extortionate demands on pain of death; or when he has incurred extreme penalty by infringement of law.[c] **the poor heareth not rebuke,** has not to listen to (Job iii. 18) threats from the covetous or abuse from the envious. He has nothing to lose and no one can gain anything by interfering with him. So the poor man is at peace. "A hundred men cannot rob one pauper." (9) **light,**[d] this light is the grace and virtue which adorn the good man's life, and which beam through all his actions with a cheerful, kindly radiance.

c "Who ever thinks of robbing or murdering a beggar? He is everywhere safe and free from molestation fr. whom there is nothing to be had. Poverty is then not without its advantages"—*Quoted by Dav. Thomas.*

d Matt. v. 14, 16.

rejoiceth,[a] increaseth, groweth in brightness, so giving ever more joy. **lamp,** or *candle, i. e.* "the false show of wisdom or piety wh. may glimmer for a time." A word signifying both a temporary and a man-lighted thing is chosen in order to point the contrast.[b] The light of the wicked is a lamp of their own kindling.

Joy and gloom. — I. Light is the symbol of joy. II. Hence the cheerful burning of a light is the symbol of the good man's heart. He sits in the centre and enjoys clear day. III. Gloom is the natural emblem of sorrow. IV. The putting out of a lamp in darkness is the emblem of the extinction of joy, of hope — of all that makes life worth having, and of life itself. — *Pul. Com.* — *The lights of the soul* (*vs.* 9). — The text leads us to consider two things. I. The joyous light of the soul — the light of the righteous. II. The transient light of the soul — the lamp of the wicked. — *Thomas.*

10. Only,[c] *better*, "By pride cometh only contention." One who is haughty and overbearing, or who is too conceited to receive advice, is sure to quarrel with others. **pride,** or self-conceit, wh. is an unfailing source of quarreling. **well advised,** those showing a modest inclination to consult and consider others.[d]

Pride (*vs.* 10). — We learn — I. That pride generates contention: for in society pride is essentially exacting, insolent, heartless, detracting; hence is ever generating contention. II. That pride rejects counsels. — *Thomas.*

Too much approbation unsafe. — Donatello, the great Florentine sculptor, went at one time of his life to Padua, where he was received with the utmost enthusiasm, and loaded with approbation and honors. But soon he declared his intention of returning to Florence, on the ground that the sharp assaults and the cutting criticisms which always assailed him in his native city were much more favorable to his art than the atmosphere of admiration and eulogy. In this way he thought that he would be stimulated to greater efforts, and ultimately attain to a surer reputation. In the same spirit the greatest of modern art critics has told us how valuable to him were the criticisms which his humble Italian servant made on his drawings. Certainly, "with those who allow themselves to be advised is wisdom." "He that trusteth in his own heart," and cannot receive the advice of others, "is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely he shall be delivered," sometimes perhaps by the humble suggestions of very simple people. — *Exp. Bib.*

11, 12. (11) **by vanity,**[e] by some means distinct fr. honest and earnest labor. The *Sept.* has "in haste," without effort. **be diminished,** we have a similar proverb, "Light come, light go." **by labour,** *Heb. with the hand*; "handful by handful," by patient industry.[f] (12) **Hope,** "we live by hope." **deferred,** the attainment of the desire is sometimes long deferred. **heart sick,** languid, despondent. **desire cometh,** or when the object of desire is attained. "Desire that hath come is desire accomplished." **tree of life,** fig. for a thing that continually bears fruitage of blessing;[g] "a vivid image of the animating power of hope when it is fulfilled." — *Stuart.*

Fraudulent gain. — This looks very different from coarse, vulgar robbery. The sleek swindler owns no common brotherhood with the brutal burglar. Fraudulent gain is got in the way of business; it is not at all like the money directly stolen from a man's pocket. The process is so very roundabout that it is difficult to trace the transition from fair dealing to cheating. The decorus thief would be horrified at hearing his true name. He knows his actions are not quite straightforward, but the crookedness of them is almost hidden from himself by neat contrivances. Now, all this makes the pursuit of fraudulent gain the more treacherous and dangerous. A man who follows such a course is lost before he owns himself to be dishonest. — *Pul. Com.*

Heart-sickness. — Sickness of body enfeebles its powers, so does sickness of soul. A man derives strength to work when he possesses hope of enjoying some good thing the future. Hope is a kind of spiritual food, by feeding upon which a man renews his energy. But the constant postponement of its realization renders the hope less and less strong, and has the same effect upon the mind as insufficient food has upon the body, it enfeebles its resolution and lessens its courage. If a hungry man finds each day that his portion of food grows less, he will soon be conscious of loss of flesh and strength, and if the process goes on for many months he will lose all power of action and probably his very life. The same thing takes place in a man's spirit when hope is indefinitely "deferred." — *Hom. Com.*

[a] "The same root, in Arabic, means to laugh, or to sport" — *Hitzig*

[b] "The righteous have the true light in them. That wh. belongs to the wicked is but derived and temporary, and shall be extinguished before long." — *Spk. Com.*

[c] "The meaning is this — 'The obstinacy wh. attends self-conceit produces contention, wh. the well-advised thus evincing modesty avoid.'" — *Fausset.*

[d] "Meekly ask counsel of God, consult His word, His ministers, your pious friends, and your own conscience; ponder your path and you will be enabled to act prudently and live in peace." — *Nicholls.*

"He whose pride oppresses the humble may, perhaps, be humbled, but will never be humble." — *Lovater.*

[e] Some *trans.* "Wealth dwindles faster than the breath." — *Miller.*

"Secured in an unsubstantial, inconsiderate, fraudulent way." — *Ewald.*

[f] "It describes the gradual and progressive accumulation of wealth resulting from diligence and exertion, and so is in significant contrast with the impatient dishonesty of the preceding clause." — *Zöckler.*

[g] "Our wisdom is not to promise ourselves too much from the creature; but in reference to what God has promised we should never despair, however long we may wait." — *Nicholls.*

13, 14. (13) **the word,**[a] of warning and reproof; then all words of truth and duty. **be destroyed,** *lit. is in bonds to it*; cannot escape it, must suffer for its neglect. **feareth,** so as to concern himself about obedience. **shall be rewarded,** or to him is requital. (14) **fountain,** or ever fresh source. **snares of death,** Ps. xviii. 5; an established formula for the description of mortal perils.

The Word (*vs.* 13).—I. The Word despised is ruin. 1. Because he who despises rejects the only instrument of soul-salvation; 2. Brings on his nature the condemnation of heaven. II. The Word reverenced is blessedness. 1. Such a man is rewarded in its blessed influences on his own soul; 2. With the approbation of heaven.—*Thomas.*

Security.—Number the nations over one by one, and see where property is valuable and life secure; mark the places where you would like to invest your means and educate your family; you will shun some of the sunniest climes of earth, as if they lay under a polar night, because the light of truth has been taken from their sky. Traverse the world in search of merely human good, seeking but an earthly home, and your tent, like Abraham's, will certainly be pitched at "the place of the altar."—*Arnot.*—*Law of the wise.*—For us the "law of the wise" is best represented by the Book of God. It is essentially life-giving. Its design is not to publish and confirm the sentence of death, but to show how death may be escaped. The declaration of the sentence of death is only attended to show the necessity, and to impress the importance and value of the tidings of life. Life is the end of Divine revelation.—*Ward-law.*

15, 16. (15) **Good understanding,** right perception and action. "Kindly wisdom." As a good and wise man uses his gifts and graces properly he wins the love and respect of his fellow-men. **way . . hard,** "way of the treacherous is stony."—*Stuart.* "Rough to the feet, and like a craggy precipice." "The idea is that of a barren, dry soil, or the impassable marsh, in contrast with the fountain of life, carrying joy and refreshment with it."—*Spk. Com.* (16) **prudent,** *etc.*, Pr. xii. 23; xv. 2. **dealeth with knowledge,** *i. e.* "acteth with foresight and deliberation." **layeth open,** spreadeth. This proverb rebukes the rash and inconsiderate. Some are forward to talk of that they do not understand, and to undertake that for wh. they are unfit; and such persons speedily expose their ignorance and inability, and make themselves ridiculous.

Downward, yet difficult (*vs.* 15).—I. This fact is opposed to received notions. II. This fact is in accordance with experience. The transgressor finds—1. Difficulties innumerable; 2. Dangers on every side; 3. Disappointments without number; 4. Penalties most dreadful afterwards.—*Stems and Twigs.*—*The hardship of sin.*—I. A truth to be confirmed. It is hard to themselves—to others, to their families, their friends, to society. II. A dispensation to be approved. It illustrates the mingled justice and mercy of God, who has made the way to hell difficult. The hardness of the way of sin is often the means of stopping sinners in their course. III. A warning to be enforced. Take care how you take the first step. Remember that the hardness of the way is nothing to the bitterness of the end.—*S. Thodey.*

Way of transgressors.—The results of wickedness come upon a man in a thousand different ways. They are not summed up in one punishment, which may be endured once for all. The consciousness of wickedness follows a man all the days of the week and all the hours of the day, and comes up at the most unexpected times; it afflicts him with constant nightmare; every tap at the door may be the coming-in of the jailor; every post may bring the letter of doom; everything that occurs is charged with a possibility of mischief. The stars in their courses fight against the bad man: he has no satisfaction in his feast, no holiday in his summer; the flowers that he plants in his garden become poison trees, and the birds that ought to sing to him seem to bring messages suggestive of vengeance and penalty.—*J. Parker.*

17—19. **wicked,** in the sense of unfaithful to his trust, or wanting diligence in the execution of it. **into mischief,** *R. V.*, "into evil," as a punishment for his faithlessness.[b] **ambassador,** only another word for messenger, not strictly a king's representative. **health,** to all concerned; to himself, to those who send him, and to those to whom he is sent.[c] (18) **Poverty,** *etc.*, a sentiment previously expressed, ch. x. 17; xii. 1. **instruction,** discipline,

[a] "Those that prefer the rules of carnal policy before Divine precepts, and the allurements of the world and the flesh before God's promises and comforts, despise His Word, giving the preference to those things wh. stand in competition with it."—*Matt. Henry.*

He. ii. 2, 3; xii. 25.

"Specially forbidden is the keeping of the bread of heaven. It was to be gathered every morning. But the saint who hoards up the past is the Israelite who kept the manna, and who found that it 'bred worms and stank.'"—*Preacher's Com.*

"The more we despise the law, the more we are bound by it."—*Miller.*

"A good understanding must include four things—enlightenment, impartiality, religiousness and practicalness. So a good understanding is tantamount to practical godliness."—*Dav. Thomas*

Voltaire said, "I begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition, environed by deepest darkness on every side. I wish I had never been born."

"The worst man has knowledge enough to save him—that is, God's goodness is such that if a man would use the light he had, he would start from that point, and be helped into the kingdom."—*Miller.*

"Indolence is, methinks, an intermediate state between pleasure and pain, and very much unbecoming any part of our life after we are out of the nurse's arms."—*Steele.*

[b] 2 Ki. v. 26, 27.

[c] Ge. xxiv. 34, 37, 38, 51-56.

R. V., "correction." (19) **desire accomplished.**[a] "It is sweet to a good man to obtain his wish: but for a wicked man to leave, to abandon evil to which he clings so fondly, is a detestable alternative." — *Pul. Com.*

The incorrigible and the docile (*vs.* 18). — I. The doom of the incorrigible — 1. In secular matters; 2. In intellectual matters; 3. In moral matters. II. The destiny of the teachable. 1. His own soul will honor him; 2. Society will honor him; 3. God will honor him. — *Thomas.*

Faithful messengers. — In early times, when no public postal arrangements existed, and when reading and writing were not generally cultivated, communications were more often sent by verbal messages and personal messengers. Great mischief would then accrue through unfaithfulness on the part of one of these agents of business or friendship. But important as would be the social effects arising out of this condition of affairs, far more momentous consequences must flow from the action of messengers between God and man. They indeed need to be faithful. — *Pul. Com.* — *A faithful ambassador.* — Count Bismarck left to consult his Majesty, and returned in a quarter of an hour. It then appeared that the King accepted the proposal as to Tours, but insisted that the garrison of Strasburg should constitute themselves prisoners. It would seem that M. Favre was out of health at the time, for he describes himself as being "perfectly exhausted" on the return of Prince Bismarck. For a moment he thought he should faint, and turned away to hide the tears which suffocated him. Asking to be excused for his involuntary weakness, he took his leave in these words: "I made a mistake, M. le Comte, in coming here; but I do not regret it. I have suffered sufficiently to excuse myself in my own eyes; but in any case I only yielded to a feeling of duty. I will report to my government all that you have said, and should they consider it fit again to send me to you, however cruel the task for me, I shall have the honor of returning. I am grateful for the kindness you have shown me, but I fear that all that can be done is to let events take their course. The inhabitants of Paris are courageous, and resolved to make every sacrifice; and their heroism may change the course of events. If you have the honor of conquering them, you will never subjugate them. The whole nation is possessed with the same sentiments. As long as there can be found one element of resistance amongst us, we shall fight you. This becomes an interminable struggle between two nations who should extend their hands to each other. I had hoped for a different solution. I leave most unhappy, but nevertheless full of hope." — *Cassel's Hist. of Franco-German War.*

20. walketh, as his friends and chosen companions.[b] **companion,** *etc.*, the play upon words in the *Heb.* of this clause may be thus imitated, "He who attendeth fools tendeth to folly."[c] **be destroyed,** the antithesis is best brought out by the rendering of the Vulgate: "The friend of fools shall turn out the same." He who associates with fools shall do evil.

The best company (*vs.* 20). — I. Who are the wise? 1. Those who seek the favor and friendship of God, the best of all ends; 2. Those who seek them through the acceptance of the Gospel, the best of all means. II. How may we walk with the wise? 1. By cherishing their principles; 2. By cultivating their society; 3. By perusing their publications. III. Why will walking with the wise make us wise? 1. There is the force of example; 2. There is the power of sympathy; 3. There is the influence of conversation; 4. There is the promise of God. — *Brooks.*

True wisdom. — How wise to walk the path of life with a Divine Friend! — with Him who Himself is "the Wisdom of God;" intimacy with whom will draw our spirit up toward all that is worthiest and noblest; whose presence will insure guardianship from all serious evil, and enrichment with every true blessing, and will gladden with all pure and lasting joy. — *Pul. Com.* — *The scented clay.* — "One day, as I was in the bath, a friend of mine put in my hand a piece of scented clay. I took it, and said to it, 'Art thou musk or ambergris? for I am charmed with thy perfume.' It answered, 'I was a despicable piece of clay, but I was some time in the company of the rose; the sweet quality of my companion was communicated to me, otherwise I should only be a bit of clay as I appear to be.'" — *Persian Fable.* — *Lord Peterborough and Fénélon.* — When Lord Peterborough lodged for a season with Fénélon, Archbishop of Cambray, he was so delighted with his piety and virtue, that he exclaimed at parting, "If I stay here any longer, I shall

a *Spk. Com.* gives two poss. trans. of this obscure verse. "Satisfied desire is pleasant; therefore it is an abomination to fools to depart fr. the evil on wh. their minds are set."

"Sweet is the satisfaction of desire, yet the wicked will not depart fr. the evil wh. makes that satisfaction impossible."

"'To every man his work;' and in that, even if it is only running little errands for the skilled workmen, we may excel to the edifying of the church." — *F. R. Havergal.*

"Sloth makes all things difficult, but Industry all easy; and he that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night; while Laziness travels so slowly, that Poverty soon overtakes him." — *Franklin.*

b "A good man is the best friend, and therefore soonest to be chosen, longer to be retained, and indeed never to be parted with, unless he cease to be that for which he was chosen." — *J. Taylor.*

c "He that would be safe fr. the acts of evil must wisely avoid the occasions." — *Bp. Hall.*

"The road is long by precept; it is short and effectual by example." — *Seneca.*

"People have no right to make fools of themselves, unless they have no relations to blush for them." — *Haliburton.*

"Every man is his own heir. He devises his own future and he inherits his own past."—*H. F. Hedge.*

become a Christian in spite of myself." — *Companions.* — A Dutch proverb says, "He that lives with cripples learns to limp;" and the Spanish, "He that goes with wolves learns to howl." We have a homely English proverb, "He that lies down with dogs shall rise up with fleas;" so the Orientals say, "He that takes the raven for his guide shall light upon carrion."

21, 22. (21) **pursueth, good shall be,** "Destiny follows character. Misery grows out of sin, and happiness out of goodness."[a] "The avenging deities are shod with wool," but they never pause or tire. "Sinners suffer not only the natural consequences of crime in external evil, injury to body, estate, reputation, *etc.* (Ps. xi. 6), but also stings of conscience and remorse; even seeming prosperity is often a chastisement, and long impunity is only augmenting the coming retribution. As the shadow attends the substance, so guilt is attached to sin, and brings with it punishment." — *Pul. Com. Horace* suggests that a wicked man cannot escape fr. himself. *Shakespeare* in "Macbeth" points out the tenacity with wh. conscience pursues. (22) **leaveth,** *etc.*, transmitteth his estate. **children's children,** goodness secures stability through generations. **wealth . . just,** an intimation that, in the long run, "the heaped-up treasures of the wicked find their way into the hands of better men."[b] "Ill-gotten wealth no third descendant holds."

"Character draws destiny after it by an almighty magnetism. It is a fruitful tree; it never ceases bearing; every branch is clustered; but the fruit is either misery or happiness, according to its own vital sap." — *Dav. Thomas*

Nu. xxxv. 19; Ro. ii. 6-10.

b Job xxvii. 17; Ec. ii. 26.

Goodness is the safest law of entail

The law of repayment runs through nature. He who sows seed is repaid by a harvest. All her forces — rain, sunlight, heat and cold — combine to give back to the husbandman that which he has entrusted to her care. And she repays of the same kind, wheat for the sowing of wheat, thistles for the planting of thistles. She also repays with liberal interest. One head of thistledown scattered over a field will reproduce a hundred heads in a few months. One grain of corn will produce an ear of thirty or forty grains. The law in the kingdom of nature is also the law of the kingdom of grace. Evil sown, as we have just seen under another metaphor, necessitates a reaping of evil. Good sown insures a reaping of good. And grace is not behind nature in a liberal repayment. He who sows handfuls shall reap armfuls. He that goes forth with the seed basket returns with sheaves. The one "corn of wheat bears much fruit." This repayment begins in time, and extends beyond it. Righteousness as well as sin is its own present reward, and is the present first fruits. But the righteous man must wait for the "resurrection of the just" for the abundant harvest. — *Hom. Com.*

"No man liveth unto himself, even for a single day; all the time he is really living for posterity, and in such a way that posterity will be affected, either happily or unhappily, by the course of action with which his name is identified." — *J. Parker.*

c Pr. xii. 11.

23, 24. (23) **Much . . poor,** The reference is to newly-cleared land, which has cost much labor. "The poor, but righteous man, who industriously cultivates his little plot of ground, secures a good return, and is happy in eating the labor of his hands (Ps. cxxviii. 2)." **want of judgment,** *R. V.*, "by reason of injustice," or disregard of right, *comp.* ch. xvi. 8.[c] "Some (poor men) are amply supplied by honest labor; others (rich) lose all by wrong dealing." (24) **spareth his rod,** the instrument of wise and loving correction.[d] **hateth,**[e] in the Bible sense of *loving less;* loving unworthily, injudiciously. **betimes,** or early in the morning of life before the development of evil habits, or directly after the disobedience.

d He. xii. 6, 7; Pr. iii. 12; xxiii. 13, 14; xxix. 15.

e "Acts as if he hated him." — *Fausset.*

Parental corrections (*vs.* 24). — I. The rod, however used, should be a last resort. II. We should be sure that a fault has been committed. III. Let there be always a due proportion between the fault and the correction. IV. Never chastise in a passion. — *Wardlaw.*

"It is *his* rod that must be used, the rod of a parent, directed by wisdom and love, and designed for good, not the rod of a servant." — *Matt. Henry.*

Parental corrections. — A little boy of about five years of age, having offended his father, was called to account by him. After conversing with his son, and telling him the guilt and consequences of disobedience, the father knelt down and prayed for him. He then repeated to him a few texts of Scripture, such as, "He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes." "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." "The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." After briefly explaining these passages, the father continued, "You see, my son, what God says; now what is my duty?" "Why, pa," said the little boy, "it is your duty to punish me; I have done wrong and deserve it." After receiving the chastisement, he embraced and kissed his father; and promised never again to disobey him. — *Whitecross.*

"Children have been called rough diamonds. Parents are to polish them, and they must neither be struck unskilfully nor left uncut." — *Dav. Thomas.*

25. **eateth,** the good fruitage of his righteous ways and works. God's promise to the righteous is, "Verily thou shalt be fed."[f] **belly,** "the stom-

f Ps. xxvii. 3.

ach of the wicked shall be empty." — *Stuart.* Even in this life the wicked has not the best of it.[a]

A great change. — An old medical gentleman, nine years ago, Dr. ——, had a respectable practice, and kept his carriage. He soon commenced, however, to partake too freely of intoxicating liquors. In a short time he neglected his patients, his character also became injured, and for some time he and his once respectable family have been actually reduced to such a state of destitution by intemperance, that they have even been deprived of lodgings, and had nothing to allay the cravings of nature but a few cold potatoes, received from their neighbors. A few weeks ago they were admitted to the workhouse; their passage has since been paid to America, and they are about to leave the land of their fathers. What a change in nine years! — *Whitecross.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

1—3. (1) **Every wise woman,** *lit. the wisdom of women.*[b] **buildeth,** or establisheth, confirmeth, increaseth the wealth and stability of it.[c] **foolish,** *i. e.* the foolish woman; unprincipled women by bad management or evil doings soon ruin a home. (2) **He . . uprightness,** wh. is the sure sign of the true fear of God.[d] "In his uprightness" may be trans. "in a level track." **perverse,** wayward, preferring the uneven and crooked ways of wilfulness. **despiseth,** Jehovah; disregarding His laws and His judgments. (3) **rod,** or branch, "wh. he brandishes at random, and wh. often recoils on himself." The foolish here is the boastful and overbearing braggart. **preserve them,** or procure good to them. "These do not abuse speech to insult and injure others; and their words tend to conciliate others, and promote peace and good will (*comp.* ch. xii. 6, 18)."

Housewifery (*vs.* 1).— I. Its great power. 1. It can build up materially, spiritually; 2. It can pull down. II. Its necessary qualification — wisdom. 1. Using the right means; 2. Using the right means for the right end.— *Thomas.*

A literary wife.— Reiske affixed his wife's portrait to his learned and excellent edition of the Greek orators. In the preface to his first volume, he speaks with much gratitude and affection of the assistance she rendered him in comparing the numerous editions and manuscripts, while he used to correct the text. "She is," says he, "a modest and frugal woman: she loves me and my literary employments, and is an industrious and skillful assistant. Induced by affection for me, she applied herself to the study of Greek and Latin under my tuition. She knew neither of these languages when we were married; but she was soon able to lighten the multifarious and very severe labors to be performed in this undertaking. The Aldine and Pauline editions she alone compared; also the fourth Augustine edition. As I had taught her the Erasmian pronunciation, she read first to me the Morellian copy, while I read those in manuscript. She labored unweariedly in arranging, correcting, and preparing my confused copy for the press. As I deeply feel, and publicly express, my gratitude for her aid, so I trust that present and future generations may hold her name in honored remembrance."— *Mrs. Child.— Heroic women.*— Society is full of heroes of love and domestic fidelity. Thousands of them are unknown on earth. They march in ranks and battalions, so that we speak of them in nouns of multitude, as drunkards' wives. All those that under such circumstances lift themselves up above the ordinary line of human conduct, are heroic. And God waits for them, and heaven is homesick for them. Oh, how they will shine there! Perchance, as you see them going through the street, meek and patient, their dress growing more and more rusty, you smile pityingly, and say, "They are poor drunkards' wives; they were promising once, but they have gone down, down, down, and now they are nowhere." I beg your pardon, they have not gone down. They have been going up. And when you rise, with all your wealth, and learning, and genius, and stand in heaven, having escaped damnation so as by fire, you may stand lowest, and see them as far above you as the stars to-night are above your heads. For the last shall be first, and the lowest shall be highest. — *Beecher.— The temper of women.*— Happy the man on whose marriage hearth temper smiles kind from the eyes of woman! "No deity present," saith the heathen proverb, "where absent — prudence" — no joy long a guest where peace is not a dweller. Peace, so like

a Is. lxv. 13, 14; Mi vi. 14.

"Said Luther (who made many a meal of a boiled herring), 'Let us be content to fare hard here: have we not the bread that came down from heaven?'"— *Trapp.*

"Thou hast made us for Thyself, and the heart is restless till it finds rest in Thee."— *St. Augustine.*

b Pr. i. 20; ix. 1.

c "The fullest recognition that has as yet met us of the importance of woman, for good or evil, in all human society."— *Spk. Com.*

"By a prudent wife, one that is pious, industrious, and considerate, the affairs of the family are made to prosper, debts are paid, portions raised, provision made, the children well educated and maintained, and the family has comfort within doors and credit without. Thus is the house built."— *Matt. Henry.*

d "The generating in human hearts supreme love to God, is the only effective way to promote true morality in men — morality in the family, in the market, in the nation, in the world. There is no true morality without religion. Piety is the first principle of all rectitude.— *Dav. Thomas.*

"The bleakest rock upon the loneliest heath, feels in its barrenness some touch of spring, and in the April dew, or beam of May, its moss and lichens freshen and revive — and thus the heart most sear'd to human pleasure, melts at the tear, joys at the smile of women" — *Sir Joseph Beaumont.*

faith, that they may be taken for each other, and poets have clad them with the same veil. But in childhood, in early youth, expect not the changeless green of the cedar. Wouldst thou distinguish fine temper from spiritless dulness, from cold simulation — ask less what the temper, than what the disposition. Is the nature sweet and trustful, is it free from the morbid self-love which calls itself "sensitive feeling," and frets at imaginary offenses — is the tendency to be grateful for kindness, yet take kindness meekly, and accept as a benefit what the vain call a due? From dispositions thus blessed, sweet temper will come forth to gladden thee, spontaneous and free. Quick with some, with some slow, word and look emerge out of the heart. Be thy first question, "Is the heart itself generous and tender?" If it be so self-control comes with deepening affection. Call not that a good heart, which, hastening to sting if a fibre be ruffled, cries, "I am no hypocrite." Accept that excuse, and revenge becomes virtue. But where the heart, if it give the offense, pines till it win back the pardon; if offended itself, bounds forth to forgive, ever longing to soothe, ever grieved if it wound; then be sure that its nobleness will need but few trials of pain in each outbreak, to refine and chasten its expression. Fear not then; be but noble thyself, thou art safe. — *Bulwer Lytton.*

"We often speak of retribution as if it always lay beyond the grave, and the day of grace as extending through the whole life of man; but such is not the fact. Retribution begins with many men here. The day of grace terminates with many men before the day of death. There are those who reach an unconvertible state, their characters are stereotyped and fixed as eternity. The things that belong to their peace are hid from their eyes. They are incorrigible."—*David Thomas.*

4. crib is clean, needs therefore no labor, but as certainly yields no increase or profit.[a] The meaning is, "He who will develop his wealth to a gratifying abundance must employ the appropriate means." — *Hitzig.* The ox is the animal used in farming work. **strength,** wh. is used in ploughing, *etc.*, but calls for labor in tending and feeding, *etc.*[b]

The clean crib (*vs.* 4). — I. The negative gain of indolence: saves labor. 1. In secular matters; 2. In intellectual matters; 3. In spiritual matters. II. The positive loss of indolence. 1. In secular matters, the pleasure of gaining and rightly using wealth; 2. In intellectual matters; 3. In spiritual matters. — *Thomas.*

Frederick II of Prussia, even after age and infirmities had increased upon him, gave strict orders never to be allowed to sleep later than four in the morning. Peter the Great, whether at work in the docks at London as a ship-carpenter, or at the anvil as a blacksmith, or on the throne of Russia, always rose before daylight. "I am," says he, "for making my life as long as I can, and therefore sleep as little as possible."

a Comp. prov. "Nothing costs nothing, but brings nothing in."

b "Labor has its rough, unpleasant side, yet it ends in profit"—*Spk. Com.*

"The toil and the increase go together; the labor must come before the wealth, whether in relation to the body, the soul, or the spirit." — *Hom. Com.*

5, 6. (5) **will not lie,**[c] cannot be induced to swerve from the truth by threat or bribe. **utter lies,** *Heb.* "breathe forth;" the very breath of him is lies. (6) **scorner . . not,** bec. his spirit prevents him from either seeing or valuing truth. Only the humble and teachable spirit succeeds in acquiring wisdom.

Scorning vs. knowledge.— I see two men prostrate on the ground and bleeding, while one man stands between them, with serenest aspect looking to the skies. Who and what are these? The two prostrate forms are superstition and unbelief. Superstition bowed down to worship his idol, and cut his flesh with stones to atone for his soul's sin. Unbelief scorned to be confined, like an inferior creature, to the earth, and was ever leaping up in the hope of standing on the stars. Exhausted by his efforts he fell, and the fall bruised him, so that he lay as low as the neighbor whom he despised. He who stands between them neither bowed himself to the ground, nor attempted to scale the heavens. He neither degraded himself beneath a man's place, nor attempted to raise himself above it. He abode on earth, but he stood erect there. He did not proudly profess to be, but meekly sought to find God. This man understands his place, and feels his needs; to him, therefore, knowledge is easy. To him that hath shall be given. He has the beginning of wisdom, and he will reach in good time his glad consummation. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom." — *Arnot.*

c Ex. xx. 16; xxiii. 1; Pr. vi. 19; xii. 17. Unfaithfulness in witnesses is one of the most serious difficulties felt in Eastern law courts.

"The bearing of this prob. is plainly directed against that superficial, trivial, seeming culture of the scoffers at religion (who, in the perverted sense of the word, are the enlightened), wh. lacks all genuine earnestness, and for that very reason all really deep knowledge and discernment."—*Zöckler.*

Pr. viii. 9; Jno vii. 17; Ja. i. 5, 6.

"He that comes to seek after knowledge with a mind to scorn and censure, shall be sure to find enough for his humor, but none for his instruction"—*Lord Bacon.*

7—9. (7) **when thou,** *etc.*, *better,* "and thou hast not known," *etc.*; however long you may be with the foolish man you will get nothing but folly from him. (8) **understand his way** carefully studying it, and considering what may be for the best. **deceit,** prob. self-deceit. Or, "the folly, not the wisdom, of fools is shown in their ceaseless effort to deceive." (9) **Fools . . sin,** some *trans.* "The sin-offering of fools mocks them." The expiatory sacrifice wh. ungodly fools offer to God is utterly useless, as it does not gain the favor of God.— *Zöckler.* **favour,** *R. V.*, "good will."

Beware of the foolish (*vs.* 7).—I. Or you may be classed with him. II. When you find him incorrigible. III. For you may excite him to greater folly. IV. Because folly is contagious. V. He may harm you. VI. You do him too much honor.—*Stems and Twigs.*—*True wisdom* (*vs.* 8).—I. The wisdom of some is to understand things which cannot be understood. II. The wisdom of others is to pry into things which, if understood, are of little or no use. III. Of others to understand the way of other men. IV. Our highest wisdom is to understand our own way through life to the heavenly home.—*Fuller.*

Mr. Wilmer.— Dr. Doddridge mentions in one of his letters that Mr. Wilmer, the eldest son of the then (1743) Member of Parliament for Northampton, died a few days before of a fright. He had been drinking the devil's health, with a profane debauchee, the son of a baronet, who was his intimate companion, and who, to try the young hero's courage, placed a servant under the bed, who first lifted it up, and then came out in some disguise with a noise, which shocked the wretched youth to such a degree that he never recovered from it. "Fools make a mock of sin," but they find, after all, that its "wages" is "death."—*R. T. S.*

"With regard to evil companions it has been said, 'One rotten apple will infect the store.' If I have found any good companions, I will cherish them as the choicest of men. If I have any bad ones I will study to lose them, lest by keeping them I lose myself in the end."—*Feltham.*

"Of all thieves fools are the worst; they rob you of time and temper."—*Goethe.*

10, 11. (10) **own bitterness,** *i. e.* "Men learn by experience the bitterness of suffering, better than anyone can tell them."[a]—*Stuart.* (11) **house,** wh. seems firmly established is contrasted with the tabernacle or tent, wh. seems so slight and unstable, *comp.* xii. 15; xvi. 25. **flourish,** ref. to the strength, vigor and increase of the family of the righteous.

The solitude of the soul.—I. We should feel a kind of awe in the presence of the humblest, the poorest, the most commonplace of mankind. II. How uncertain our judgments are concerning the moral character of men. III. Our ignorance of each other's life should teach us the right value of the good opinion of men. IV. We should care supremely for God's judgment of our character, and rely upon His support, *etc.* V. God's perfect knowledge makes His sympathy with us perfect.—*Dale.*

Desaugiers.—Few authors could be mentioned who had the reputation of being such entertaining companions as Desaugiers; no one could enliven a company of friends, or set the table in a roar like him. There is not one of his songs which does not breathe the most lively and most unfettered gaiety; and as to the figure of Desaugiers, it seemed the most complete type of the happiest man upon the face of the earth. Always singing, always laughing, the countenance of Desaugiers seemed to defy the attacks of sorrow; his whole life appeared to be spent in the midst of a continual feast. And yet Desaugiers was sad; melancholy overwhelmed his heart in his most joyous festivals, and amidst his most mirthful songs; if he celebrated so much the pleasures of wine, it was because he sought in it the forgetfulness of that gnawing grief which he concealed from every eye and would have wished to conceal even from himself.—*Whitecross.*

"Man's mind possesses in its interior mansions a solemn retired apartment, peculiarly its own, into wh. none but himself and the Deity can enter."—*Foster.*

"Within the range of human experience there is perhaps no expression of the ultimate solitude of each man's soul at all times, so striking in its truth and depth as this. Something there is in every sorrow, and in every joy, wh. no one else can share."—*Spk. Com.*

Solitude.—

Yes! in the sea of life enisled.
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone.*
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.
—*Matthew Arnold.*

1 Cor. ii. 11.

"Not e'en the dearest heart, and nearest to our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh."

"Impatient soul and murmuring heart,
Your murmuring cease and bear your part."

12—14. (12) **a way,** plainly the way of wilfulness and self-indulgence.[b] **seemeth right,** according to the man's ideas, not *is right* according to the law of God. **ways of death,** surely lead down to moral ruin. (13) **in laughter,** *i. e.* often in circumstances producing a superficial joyousness, there is often an underlying profounder sorrow. But the reference is better confined to the mirth of the foolish and self-willed. (14) **backslider,** one who falls away from God and God-fearing. **in heart,** this may come to pass before there are wrong-doings in the life.[c] But God knoweth the heart, and will be sure to bring on the man the bitter fruitage of his sin. **good . . self,** *better,* "a good man shall be filled from himself," *i. e.* from the holy thoughts and actions in which he delights. So the backslider and the good man shall each be filled with his own ways.

b Pr. xvi. 2.

c "Backsliding begins in the heart; it is the evil heart of unbelief that departs fr. God; and of all sinners backsliders will have most terror when they reflect on their own ways."—*Matt. Henry.*

Pr. i. 31. xii. 14

The backslider (*vs.* 14). — 1. Backsliding has its seat and source in the heart. II. It may be ascribed to various causes. III. It may be checked by a remembrance of former attainments, by a sense of present unhappiness, by an anticipation of future judgments. — *Brooks.*

His portion. — "He shall be filled with his own ways." Retribution will flow from both his past and present character. The remembrance of what he once was will embitter the present. To think of what might have been is in itself a hell when a man feels that by his own act he is now far lower in the moral scale than he once was. How it must embitter the misery of the fallen angels to remember that they once stood sinless before God's throne, and, but for their own act, would stand there still. In one of the writings of Lucian, he represents the ghost of a man who has left the world coming up for judgment before the bar of Rhadamanthus. He had lived so depraved a life that his judge exclaims that a new punishment is needed that will be in some degree adequate to his unparalleled villainy. A poor cobbler, standing by, suggests that it will be enough if the cup of Lethe, which was supposed to obliterate all remembrance of the past, and which each shade was permitted to drink as he passed from the dread tribunal, should, in this instance, be withheld. And the criminal was therefore condemned to remember forever what he had done in life, and this was held to be retribution sufficient for the worst of crimes. And if this is true of every wicked man, surely to be filled with the remembrance of what he once was will be the bitterest cup that can be the portion of every backslider. — *Hom. Com.*

"A long laugh naturally fills the eyes with tears and dies away in a sigh of weariness. Further, a season of undue elation is usually followed by one of depression. The mind rebounds from glee to gloom by natural reaction."—*Pul. Com.*

"As he that makes a bridge of his own shadow cannot but fall into the water, so neither can he escape the pit of hell who lays his own presumption in the place of God's promise"—*Trapp.*

"Bow to no patron's insolence; rely on no frail hopes; in freedom live and die."—*Seneca*

15—17. (15) **simple,** in the bad sense; the simpleton, ch. i. 22. He is credulous, does not give due heed, so is easily deceived. **looketh well,** pondereth, considereth, formeth good and wise judgments.[a] "Looks before he leaps." (16) **feareth,** suspecteth danger. **rageth,** *etc.*, acts proudly and conceitedly; rushes recklessly forward into mischief. **confident,** in his own opinion. (17) **soon angry,** hastily angry.[b] **foolishly,** gets himself into many and needless troubles. **wicked devices,** who deliberately plots and plans evil. **hated,** surely gains the enmity of those whom he seeks to injure. The hasty sinner and the deliberate transgressor are in this *vs.* set over against each other.

a Pr. xxii. 3.

Credulity. — I. Observe the nature of credulity. 1. It springs from mental weakness; 2. It is favored by prejudice; 3. It is increased by fear. II. Consider the evil of credulity. 1. It dishonors truth; 2. It tempts to fatal acts. III. Note the remedy of credulity. 1. This is not to be found in unlimited skepticism; 2. Unbelief is not the remedy; 3. The remedy lies in well-grounded faith. — *Pul. Com.*

Wise and foolish. — A wise man knows that the enemy is strong, and that his own defenses are feeble. His policy therefore is, not to brave danger, but to keep out of harm's way. The fool's character is mainly made up of two features; he thinks little of danger and much of himself. He stumbles on both sides alike. That which is strong he despises, and that which is weak he trusts. The dangers that beset him are great, but he counts them as nothing; the strength that is in him is as nothing, but he counts it great. Thus he is on all hands out of his reckoning, and stumbles at every step. — *Arnot.*

Fear a religious principle. — The beginning of religion in the heart is a subject of curious inquiry and of great practical importance. There is no sufficient reason for supposing that it is in all men alike; we have no rule for saying that religion must either necessarily, or that it does usually, proceed from the same cause. Different men are affected by different motives; and what sinks deep into the heart of one makes little impression upon another. . . Thus it is that religion sometimes, not seldom indeed, has a *violent* origin in the soul, and begins in terror: "A wise man *feareth* and departeth from evil." — *Paley.*

"Foams up quickly, flies into passion."—*Zöckler.*

"Listen to one of the greatest of Englishmen, when he bears testimony that 'the ablest men that ever were born all had an openness and frankness of dealing, and a name of certainty and veracity.' There is a fine line between the wisdom of reserve and the vicious cunning of concealment; nothing but the loving and true purpose of the heart can redeem any habit of secrecy from odium."—*Johnson.*

"No man should so act as to take advantage of another's folly."—*Cicero.*

"Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die."—*Young.*

18, 19. (18) **inherit,** the credulous simpleton falls naturally into possession of folly. **crowned with,** make a diadem of knowl. (19) **bow before,** *etc.*, "however triumphant for a time and apparently prosperous the wicked may be, their success is not lasting; they shall in the end succumb to the righteous, even as the Canaanite kings crouched before Joshua's captains (Josh. x. 24)." **at the gates,** as if they were suppliant beggars.[c]

Volney. — Volney, the infidel, while prosecuting his philosophical discoveries in North America, had taken a passage, with about twenty other per-

c "How did the 250 souls bow before Paul, the prisoner, amidst the dangers of the storm on the Adriatic sea! He became the moral commander of all on board as the

sons, in a vessel from one part of Lake Ontario to another. He was very communicative, allowed no opportunity to escape of ridiculing Christianity, and behaved altogether in a very profane manner. In the course of the voyage, a tremendous storm came on: the schooner struck upon a shoal or rock at a considerable distance from an inaccessible shore, and continued to beat so violently that they expected every moment that she would go to pieces, in which case their destruction would have been inevitable. In this awful situation the vain philosopher literally lost all the powers of reason. One moment he was quite frantic, and raged like a madman; another, in wild consternation, he looked into some of Voltaire's works, which he generally carried in his bosom; then despair took hold on him, and he uttered the most incoherent expressions, and offered a large sum of money to the captain, to prevail on him to attempt what was utterly impossible, namely, to put him ashore in a small boat. In all his misery he had a companion in the cook, who lashed himself to the foremast, and then, in the greatest agony of despair, uttered the most horrid imprecations. The vessel held together in that situation for above two hours, when the wind shifted about, and they got off, and arrived safely at the place of their destination. After the storm Volney showed himself no less weak, in requesting several of the passengers not to mention his behavior on this awful occasion. — *R. T. S.* — *Evil bowing before good.* — At one time or other, in one respect or other, the ungodly serve and crouch to the godly. Sometimes they that fear the Lord are lifted up to honor, and then the evil men bow themselves before them. Sometimes, again, the righteous wax rich through God's blessing on their labors, and then come the wicked to their gates for alms and relief. Not only the poor ones, but the great ones, who yet are wicked ones, seek and sue now and then with all submission to the godly for their counsel and help. And I cannot tell how, but such a majesty there is in the godly oftentimes, that most desperately wicked men reverence their faces, and are silent or courteous in their presence. — *Muffet.*

perils thickened around them." — *Dav. Thomas.*

"The amount of spiritual longing in the world — in the hearts of unnumbered thousands of men and women in whom we should never suspect it, among the wise and thoughtful, among the young and gay who seldom assuage and never betray their thirst — this is one of the most wonderful and touching parts of life." — *Henry Drummond.*

"The wicked serve the righteous; and whether they do it knowingly, they do it wholly, and through eternal ages." — *Miller.*

20, 21. (20) **hated,** repelled as disagreeable, obnoxious, troublesome.[a] *Comp.*, however, *vs.* 21. **rich . . friends,** *Heb.* "many are the lovers of the rich;" partly satirical. Many are those willing to profess friendship for the sake of gain. (21) **despiseth . . sinneth,** whether he be poor or rich, our neighbor should be to us an object of interest and love. **mercy . . poor,** *R. V.*, "pity," *comp. vs.* 20, for the contrast.[b] **happy is he,** finding for himself how charity is twice blessed; it blesses him who gives and him who takes.

Love of riches. — The bees were haunting the flowering trees in crowds, humming among the branches, and gathering honey in the flowers. Said Gotthold, "Here is an image of temporal prosperity. So long as there is blossom on the trees, and honey in the blossom, the bees will frequent them in crowds, and fill the place with their music; but when the blossom is over, and the honey gone, they too will disappear." Temporal gain is the world's honey, and the allurement with which you may entice it whithersoever you will: but where the gain terminates, there likewise do the love and friendship of the world stop. — *Hom. Com.* — *Care for poor.* — The money we spend upon our own pleasures, and to promote our own interests, is spent and gone; but the money given with an open hand to those poor children of God, to whom it is strictly due, is not spent at all, but laid up in the most secure of banks. There is no source of joy in this present world to be compared with the loving gratitude of the poor whom you have lovingly helped. Strangely enough, men will spend much to obtain a title which carries no honor with it, forgetting that the same money given to the needy and the suffering purchases the true honor, which gives the noblest title. For we are none of us so stupid as to think that the empty admiration of the crowd is so rich in blessing as the heartfelt love of the few. — *Exp. Bib.*

a "Few maxims in the book jar so upon our feelings as this, and yet it does but represent the generalization of a wide experience. We seem to hear what worldly moralizers have repeated in a hundred forms." — *Spk. Com.*

b "A beneficent person is like a fountain watering the earth, and spreading fertility; it is therefore more delightful and more honorable to give than to receive." — *Epicurus.*

"Through the gate of beneficence doth the charitable man enter into the city of peace. . . God makes some rich to help the poor; and suffers some poor to try the rich." — *T. Adams.*

22, 23. (22) **err,** *i. e.* wander fr. the ways of righteousness. **devise,** in their minds. Wickedness of heart surely finds its expression in wicked, wandering ways. The word used *lit.* means *carve out.* **mercy and truth,** God's manifestations of Himself to them. (23) **labour,** diligent activity.[c] "Every sort of doing is attended with profit; but lip-doings are rewarded by want." — *Stuart.* **talk of the lips,** talk, and nothing else; talk that is not associated with work.[d]

Cyrus a gardener. — When Lysander, a Lacedemonian general, brought mag-

c "It is only by labor that thought can be made healthy, and the two cannot be separated with impunity." — *Ruskin.*

d "He that is lavish in words is a nig-

nificent presents to Cyrus, he was shown, and much admired the royal gardens. Cyrus told him in answer to his inquiries, that he had himself drawn and entirely marked out the plan of the gardens, and had planted many of the trees with his own hands. "What," exclaimed Lysander, with astonishment, and viewing Cyrus from head to foot, "is it possible that, with those purple robes and splendid vestments, those strings of jewels and bracelets of gold, those buskins so richly embroidered, — is it possible that you could play the gardener, and employ your royal hands in planting trees?" "Does that surprise you?" said Cyrus: "I assure you that, when my health permits, I never sit down to my table without having fatigued myself either in military exercise, rural labor, or some other toilsome employment, to which I apply myself with pleasure." Lysander, still more amazed, pressed Cyrus by the hand, and said, "You are truly happy, and deserve your high fortune, since you unite it with virtue."

Labor. —

Get leave to work
In this world — 'tis the best you get at all;
For God, in cursing gives us better gifts
Than man in benediction. God says "Sweat
For foreheads," men say "Crowns," and so we are crowned,
Ay, gashed by some tormenting circle of steel
Which snaps with a secret spring. Get work, get work;
Be sure 'tis better than what you work to get.
. . . . . .
Be sure, no earnest work
Of any honest creature, howbeit weak,
Imperfect, ill-adapted, fails so much,
It is not gathered as a grain of sand,
To enlarge the sum of human action used
For carrying out God's end. — *Mrs. Browning.*

gard in deeds. The shuttle, the needle, the spade, the brush, the chisel, all are still but the tongue." — *Sir W. Raleigh.*

"The idle man is the devil's cushion." — *Bishop Hall.*

"To be truly and really independent, is to support ourselves by our own exertions." — *Porter.*

"He that labors is tempted by one devil; he that is idle by a thousand." — *Italian Proverb.*

"Let the lowliest task be mine,
Grateful, so the work be thine." — *Whittier.*

"The path of sin is much more easily avoided than relinquished. We can far more easily keep out of the course of the stream than stem the torrent." — *Bridges.*

24. crown . . riches, riches are an ornament to a wise man; they enhance and set off his wisdom in the eyes of others, enable him to use it to advantage, and are not the snare which they might be because they are employed religiously and profitably for the good of others. But **the foolishness of fools is** (only) **folly,** that is even though it were accompanied with riches. Decorate folly as you may, trick it out out in gaud and ornament, it is still nothing but folly.[a] — *Pul. Com.*

A rich fool. —

Thee, senseless stock, because thou'rt richly gilt
The blinded people without cause admire,
And superstition impiously hath built
Altars to that which should have been the fire.

Where shall my tongue consent to worship thee,
Since all's not gold that glisters and is fair?
Carving but makes an image of a tree;
But gods of images are made by prayer.

Sabean incense, in a fragrant cloud
Illustriously suspended o'er thy crown
Like a king's canopy, makes thee allow'd
For more than man. But let them take thee down,
And thy true value be once understood,
Thy dull idolators will find thou'rt wood. — *Fanshawe.*

a "Why, was it not foolishness before they were rich? Yes, but now it has become egregious foolishness." — *Trapp.*

"As a horse is of no use without the bridle, so are riches without reason." *Cawdray.*

"Nothing hides a blemish so completely as cloth of gold." — *Hare.*

25—27. (25) **true witness,** *vs.* 5. **delivereth souls,** saves those who are in danger by false accusation — saves lives. **speaketh lies,** and thereby endangers lives.[b] (26) **strong confidence,** or sense of security. They have God on their side.[c] **his children,** children of the good man whose personality is implied in this first part of the *vs.* (27) **fountain,** *etc.*, ch. xiii. 14; also x. 11.

The source of true confidence (*vs.* 26). — I. In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence. 1. Fear of God includes inward and outward religion; 2. Such religion inspires the soul with confidence; 3. With confidence at all times,

b "It is prob. that the intended antithesis relates not so much to the *actual fact* of truth saving and falsehood condemning, as to the *dispositions and intentions* of the faithful witness on the one hand, and the lying witness on the other. The faithful witness delights in giving testimony that will save life, that will be salutary, beneficial to his fellow-creatures" — *Quoted by Dav. Thomas.*

c "Creature extremity can never

poverty, sickness, persecution, temptation, *etc.* II. And His children have a place of refuge. 1. Here in the mercy and favor of God; 2. Hereafter in the heavenly world. — *Sigma in* 400 *Sks.*

Fear of God. — It is not a servile fear; the worshiper is not a croucher, waiting in an abject position in order to be noticed by a tyrannical despot; fear means reverence, veneration, awe, a sense of the grandeur and majesty of the Lord, not only as that term stands for infinity, brilliance, and attributes of an intellectual kind, but as it stands for holiness, truth, purity, justice, and every expression that indicates moral supremacy. He who fears the Lord is strong in the confidence of ultimate justice; he is confident also in the final exposition of Providence, being assured that the way of God to man will be so revealed at last that it will be seen to have been the right way, the only true way, notwithstanding the varieties of the road, the steep hills, the bleak deserts, the stony paths, the cold rivers that had to be crossed in the dark night, the afflictions that had to be endured when heart and flesh had failed and strength had been exhausted, — at the last it will be seen that God has not given one stroke too much, taken away one treasure too many, or dug one grave too deep; the righteous will be the first to confess that God has done all things wisely, well, and lovingly. — *J. Parker.*

28, 29. (28) **multitude of people,** in contrast with mere pomp, conquest or gorgeous array. The true glory is a numerous, prosperous, and happy people.[a] **honour,** *R. V.*, "glory." (29) **slow to wrath,**[b] not suddenly roused to passion, able to command his own spirit. **hasty of spirit,** *Heb. short of spirit.*[c] **exalteth folly,** *i. e* flaunts in the eyes of men, makes plain exposure of it, by giving passion the throne and sceptre, and placing the soul under her capricious and violent dominion.

Slow to wrath. —Giacomo Benincasa, the father of that fairest of pre-Reformation saints, St. Catherine of Sienna, was a just and upright man, ruling his spirit in the fear of God, and with a temper as even as a calm. If he saw any of his household vexed and jarred, he would say cheerfully, "Now then, don't put yourself out, or give way to unkindness, and God will bless you." And once when brought to the brink of ruin by an enemy, he still preserved his sweetness of spirit, and would calm his wife's complaints by saying, "Let him alone, dear; let him alone, and God will bless you, and show him his error." — *Anec. Illus of O. T. — Sir Isaac Newton and his dog.* — Sir Isaac Newton's temper, it is said, was so equal and mild that no accident could disturb it; a remarkable instance of which is related as follows: Sir Isaac had a favorite little dog, which he called Diamond. Being one evening called out of his study into the next room, Diamond was left behind. When Sir Isaac returned, having been absent but a few minutes, he had the mortification to find that Diamond had overturned a lighted candle among some papers, the nearly finished labor of many years, which were soon in flames, and almost consumed to ashes. This loss, from Newton's advanced age, was irreparable; but, without at all punishing the dog, he exclaimed, "Oh, Diamond, Diamond, you little know the mischief you have done!" — *R. T. S.*

30. sound heart, *LXX*, "The man of gentle mind is the physician of the heart," "one in wh. all emotions and appetites are in a healthy equilibrium. The contrast with this is the envy[d] wh. eats, like a consuming disease, into the very bones and marrow of a man's moral life." — *Spk. Com.*

Envy destructive. — When a statue had been erected by his fellow-citizens of Thasos, to Theogenes, a celebrated victor in one of the public games of Greece, we are told that it excited so strongly the envious hatred of one of his rivals, that he went to it every night, and endeavored to throw it down by repeated blows, till, at last, unfortunately successful, he was able to move it from its pedestal, and was crushed to death beneath it on its fall. This, if we consider the self-consuming misery of envy, is truly what happens to every envious man. He may, perhaps, throw down his rival's glory; but he is crushed in his whole soul beneath the glory which he overturned.—*Brown.* — *True happiness.* — The Nile, contrary to the analogy of other great streams, flows more than a thousand miles without receiving the waters of a single tributary; the consequence is, that it grows no greater as it courses over that vast line. Other rivers are ever now and then receiving converging streams from the right and left, and thereby their volume continually increases until it reaches the sea. The happiness of man is like the flow of water in a river.

reach beyond the help of omnipotence."—*Nicholls.*

"A beautiful expression is 'His children.' Here in the very midst of the Proverbs, a book of merely sententious maxims it might be thought, we find the sublime doctrine of the fatherhood of God."—*J. Parker.*

"I do not know what is before me, but I know Who is behind me."

"Christ is not valued at all unless He be valued above all." — *St. Augustine.*

a "This is the teaching of a true political economy." — *Fausset.*

"It is the wisdom of princes, by a mild and gentle government, by encouraging trade and husbandry, and by making all easy under them, to promote the increase of their people."—*Matt. Henry.*

b Nu. xii. 3; 1 Pe. iii. 21–23.

c Matt. v. 22; Eph. iv. 26, 27

"Wise anger is like fire from the flint, there is a great ado to bring it out; and when it does come, it is out again immediately."—*Henry.*

d Ja. iii. 16.

"A fretful, envious, discontented spirit is its own punishment; it consumes the flesh, preys upon the animal spirits, makes the countenance pale, and is the rottenness of the bones."—*Matt. Henry.*

"Socrates called envy the soul's saw; and wished that envious men had more eyes and

ears than others, that they might have the more torment by beholding and bearing other men's happiness."—*Trapp.*

If you enjoy nothing but what is your own, your tiny rivulet of contentment, so far from increasing, grows smaller by degrees, until it sinks unseen into the sand, and leaves you in a desert of despair; but when all the acquisitions of your neighbors go to swell its bulk, your enjoyment will flow like a river enriched by many affluents, growing ever greater as life approaches its close. It is some such river that makes glad the city of God.—*Arnot.*

31. oppresseth, *comp.* term "mocketh" in ch. xvii. 5. All kinds of injuries done to the poor are included: all forms in which positions of power and authority are used for unjust, tyrannical, or unbrotherly ends. **his Maker,** *i. e.* the Maker of the poor; regarded as having appointed his lot.[a] **honoureth . . poor,** better read, "He that hath mercy on the poor[b] honoreth Him," *i. e.* God: "for he shows that he has proper regard to God's ordinance, acts on high motives, and is not led astray by wordly considerations."

Godliness and inhumanity (*vs.* 31).—Godliness and humanity are essentially one. The text teaches—I. That inhumanity is ungodliness. Oppression of the poor is a reproach of God—1. By disregarding that identity of nature with which our Maker has endowed all classes; 2. By disregarding those laws which our Maker has enjoined respecting the poor. II. True humanity is godliness.—*Thomas.*

Humanity.—When the Romans had ravaged the province of Azazane, and 7,000 Persians were brought to Armida, where they suffered extreme want, Acases, the bishop of that city, observed, that as God said, "I love mercy better than sacrifice," He would certainly be better pleased with the relief of His suffering creatures, than with being served with gold and silver in their churches. The clergy were of the same opinion. The consecrated vessels were sold, and with the proceeds the 7,000 Persians were not only maintained during the war, but sent home at its conclusion with money in their pockets. Varenes, the Persian monarch, was so charmed with this humane action, that he invited the bishop to his capital, where he received him with the utmost reverence, and for his sake conferred many favors on the Christians.—*Whitecross.*

32. driven away, *R. V.*, "thrust down" by a violent death.[c] **in his wickedness,** *R. V., marg.* "calamity," under wh. he collapses completely. **hope . . death,** of a gracious Div. presence and help.[d] The poetical parallelism of the verse is preserved by rendering "In his misfortune (or adversity) the wicked is overthrown, but the righteous has confidence even in his death."—*Rucetschi.* Even in the greatest danger the good man loses not his trust in God.

A contrast (*vs.* 32).—We have here two deaths. I. The death of the wicked. 1. In his wickedness, died as he lived, resolutions of amendment unfulfilled, not a death-bed penitent; 2. Driven away, compelled to go, notwithstanding all his reluctance; 3. Driven away in his wickedness. II. The death of the righteous. 1. He has hope in the Divine presence; 2. He has the hope of immediate admission into glory; 3. Of a blessed resurrection; 4. And of a glorious immortality. Note—(1) We must all die; (2) Death shall not wear the same aspect to all.—*Brooks.*

Hope in death.—Socrates, and some of the wiser heathen, comforted themselves against the fear of death with this weak cordial, that it is common to men, the way of all the earth. Hence it was, when the Athenians condemned Socrates to die, he received the sentence with an undaunted spirit, and told them that they did nothing but what nature had before ordained for him. But the Christian hath a greater ground for a holy resolution, and a stronger cordial against the fears of death, even the hope of eternal life; and surely, if he that exceeds others in his cordials be excelled by them in courage, he disgraceth his physician.—*Swinnock.*—*Joy in death.*—It is storied of Godfrey, Duke of Bouillon, that when, in his expedition to the Holy Land, he came within view of Jerusalem, his army, seeing the high turrets, goodly buildings, and fair fronts, being even transported, with the joyfulness of such a sight, gave a mighty shout that the earth was verily thought to ring with the noise thereof. Such is the rejoicing of a godly man in death, when he doth not see the turrets and towers of an earthly, but the spiritual building of a heavenly Jerusalem, and his soul ready to take possession of them. How doth he delight in his dissolution, when he sees grace changing into glory, hope into fruition, faith into vision, and love into perfect comprehension.—*Spencer.*

"True humanity consists not in a squeamish ear; it consists not in starting or shrinking at tales of misery, but in a disposition of heart to relieve it. True humanity appertains rather to the mind than to the nerves, and prompts men to use real and active endeavors to execute the actions which it suggests."—*Charles James Fox.*

"I am sick, not to death, but to life."—*Myconius.* "I am almost well."—*Richard Baxter.* "Mercy is triumphant."—*Rice.*

"The hope wh. abides even 'in death' must, like that of the Psalmist, look beyond it."—*Spk. Com.*

"I shall be the most glorious instance of sovereign grace in all heaven."—*Thomas Walter.*

"My hope is in the mercy of God through Jesus Christ."—*Fisher Ames.*

Bishop Hooper, to one that tendered a pardon upon recantation, said, "If you love my soul, away with it; if you love my soul away with it." One of the commissioners prayed him to consider that life is sweet and death is bitter. "True," said he, "but the death to come is more bitter, and the life to come is more sweet."

[a] Matt. xxv. 40; also 1 Sa. ii. 8; Job xxxi. 13-15; Ps. cxiii. 7; Pr. xxii. 2.

[b] Mat. xi. 5; xxvi. 11; Ja. ii. 5

[c] Ps xxxv. 5, 6; xxxvi. 12; lxii. 3; lxxiii. 18, 19.

[d] "The hope wh. abides even 'in death' must, like that of the Psalmist, look beyond it."—*Spk. Com.*

33. **resteth,** contrast with the words "made known" in the second clause. On these terms the point of the verse rests. In the one case wisdom is preserved in quietness and silence, without forwardness or boastfulness; in the other it is noisy and boastful. The half-learned are always the foremost to make show of their knowledge.[a] **in the midst,** R. V., "in the inward part."

Reticence and Loquacity (vs. 33).—I. Reticence is often a mark of wisdom, not always; sometimes a sign of stupidity, sometimes of sulkiness. Two things tend to this. 1. Humility; 2. Conscientiousness. II. Loquacity is even an indication of folly.—Thomas.

The Hidden Made Manifest.—In all natural life there is a law by which its hidden secrets are manifest in outward signs. The health of the root is seen in the health of the tree, and disease of the internal bodily organs manifests itself in the outward appearance. So it is with moral health and disease. However men may try to appear what they are not, the natural tendency of human nature often proves too strong for the artificial restraint that is put upon it, and sooner or later men reveal what they really are. "That which is in the midst of moral fools is made known," although time is needed for the folly fully to develop itself.—Hom. Com.

34, 35. (34) **Righteousness,** a designedly comprehensive word, meaning all just principles and actions. "Religious and moral rectitude in every relation and direction."[a] **exalteth,** i. e. it involves, and leads to, a general elevation and advancement of the condition of the people. (35) **wise,** in sense of discreet, statesmanlike. Thus Joseph was advanced to the highest post in Egypt, owing to the wisdom which he displayed; so, too, in the case of Daniel.[b] **causeth shame,** or doeth shamefully.

The Political and Social Importance of Moralty (vss. 34, 35).—I. The political importance of morality. 1. Rectitude exalts a nation, in material wealth, in social enjoyments, in moral power; 2. Unrighteousness degrades a nation. II. The social importance of morality. 1. Men who are ruled by righteousness are the men most to be valued in a country; 2. The promotion of true morality is the best way to promote the interests of a State.—Thomas.

National Righteousness.—Morality has not yet been sufficiently applied to politics. It is forgotten that the ten commandments relate to communities as well as to individuals, because they are based on the eternal and all-embracing principles of righteousness. Men have yet to learn that that which is wrong in the individual is wrong in the society. Nations make war on one another for reasons which would never justify individual men in fighting a duel. Yet if it is wrong for a man to steal a field, it must be wrong for a nation to steal a province; and if an individual man may not cut his neighbor's throat out of revenge without being punished as a criminal, there is nothing to justify a whole community in shooting down thousands of people for no better motive. If selfishness even is sinful in one man, selfishness cannot be virtuous in thirty millions of people. The reign of righteousness must govern public and national movements if the will of God is to be respected.—Pul. Com.

A State.—

What constitutes a State?
Not high-raised battlements, or labored mound,
Thick wall or moated gate;
Not cities proud, with spires and turrets crowned,
Nor bays and broad-armed ports,
Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride;
Nor starred and spangled courts,
Where low-browed baseness wafts perfume to pride.
No! men,—high-minded men.—Jones.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

1, 2. (1) **soft,** gentle, soothing, quieting.[a] **turneth,** etc., or **beateth down,** so as to damp and put out the fires. **grievous,** or irritating: including passionate and spiteful words. "Rather than lose a jest some will lose

[a] "Fools carry their wisdom, wh. is, however, in fact only folly, always upon their tongues, and seek most assiduously to make it known. The expression is pointed and ironical, and yet not for that reason unintelligible."
—O. Zockler.

"Learn to hold thy tongue. Five words cost Zacharias forty weeks' silence."
—Fuller.

Hebrew adage says, "A vessel full of coins will make no noise; but if there be only one coin in it, it will make a rattle."

[a] A righteous administration of the government; impartial equity between man and man; public countenance given to religion; the general practice and profession of virtue; the protecting and preserving of virtuous men; charity and compassion to strangers,—these exalt a nation, uphold the throne, and elevate the people.

[b] Da. vi. 1—3; Mat. xxv. 21; Luke xii. 37.

"Whatever is morally wrong cannot be politically right."
—Burke.

"Surely well is favor bestowed, where it reflecteth unto the giver's honor: worthily is favor received, where wisdom's hands are the receivers of it."—Jermin.

[a] "Therefore be not sullen and silent, but give an answer, and let it be a gentle one." — Lord Bacon.

Ju. viii. 1—3; contrast xii. 1—3.

a "So live with men as considering always that God sees thee. Do nothing which thou wouldest not have God see done" — Bp. Henshaw.

2 Chr. xvi. 9; Ps. cxxxix. 1; Mat. x. 30; He. iv. 13.

b Comp. the different tone of Mat. v. 45.

c "Including the ideas of 'tranquil' and 'placable."—Spk. Com.

d "Disturbance and destruction by restless passion of the regulated and normal state of the spirit. See Is. lxv. 14.
—O. Zockler.

"By directing a child's attention to a fault, and thus giving it a local habitation and a name, you may often fix it in him more firmly; when, by drawing his thoughts and affections to other things, and seeking to foster an opposite grace you would be much more likely to subdue it. In like manner a jealous disposition is often strengthened when notice is taken of it, while the endeavor to cherish a spirit of love would do much toward casting it out."
—Hare.

"Too often there is guilt and a curse; there is pride and passion, and envy, and contention, and those are troublesome lusts, which rob them of the joy of their revenues, and make them troublesome to their neighbors."
—Mat. Henry.

b Not sound, not right.

a friend." (2) **aright,** i. e. in attractive and useful ways. **poureth forth,** or "bubbleth" out in a way that disgusts those who listen.

3. **eyes .. place,** so we may associate the immediate Divine approval, or disapproval, with all our words and works.[a] **beholding,** taking note; watching fr. a high place.[b].

Omniscience (vs. 3).—I. God's inspection is thorough. 1. He sees the thoughts; 2. He appreciates the motives. II. God's inspection is universal. 1. No hiding-place from His eyes; 2. No escape from His notice. III. God's inspection is personal. 1. The good shall be encouraged; 2. The sinner should take warning; 3. All should be circumspect.—Whythe.

One May Forget.—A man who was in the habit of going to a neighbor's corn-field to steal the grain, one day took his son with him, a boy eight years of age. The father told him to hold the bag, while he looked if any one was near to see him. After standing on the fence, and peeping through all the corn-rows, he returned to take the bag from the child, and began his sinful work. "Father," said the boy, "you forgot to look somewhere else." The man dropped the bag in a fright, and said, "Which way, child?" supposing he had seen someone. "You forgot to look up to the sky, to see if God was noticing you." The father felt this reproof of the child so much, that he left the corn, returned home, and never again ventured to steal; remembering the truth his child had taught him, that the eye of God always beholds us.—R. T. S.

4, 5. (4) **wholesome tongue,**[c] one that soothes and heals with pacifying and gentle language. Comp. term "sound" in ch. xiv. 30. **tree of life,** see ch. iii. 18, xi. 30. **perverseness,** i. e. cross, ill-natured, irritating language. **breach,** etc.,[d] it makes a breach; it grieves instead of appeasing. Stuart translates, "is a crushing of spirit." (5) **A fool,** Ps. xiv. 1. **despiseth,** etc., ch. x. 1. **is prudent,** R. V., "getteth prudence." Stuart, "shall become wary," acts discreetly. Exactly what the fool does not do.

Speech of the Wise and of the Foolish (vss. 4, 7).—I. The speech of the wise—1. Is healing; 2. Living; 3. Enlightening. II. The speech of the foolish—1. Is wounding; 2. Empty.—Thomas.

A Wholesome Tongue.—Not a silent tongue; mere abstinence from evil is not good. Idleness is evil under the administration of God. Not a smooth tongue: it may be soft on the surface, while the poison of asps lies cherished underneath. The serpent licks his victim all over before he swallows it. Smoothness is not an equivalent for truth. Not a voluble tongue; that active member may labor much to little purpose. Not a sharp tongue: some instruments are made keen-edged for the purpose of wounding. Not even a true tongue. Truth is necessary, but it is not enough. The true tongue must also be wholesome. Before anything can be wholesome in its effects on others it must be whole in itself. "Winged words" have fluttered about in poetry and prose through all the languages of the civilized world from old Homer's day till now. The permanence and prevalency of the expression proves that it embodies a recognized truth. Words have wings indeed, but they are the wings of seeds rather than of birds or butterflies. We are all accustomed in autumn to observe multitudes of diminitive seeds, each balanced on its own tiny wing, floating past on the breeze. Words are like these seeds, in their winged character, their measureless multitude, and their winged speed. They drop off in inconceivable numbers: they fly far: they are widely spread. It is of deep importance that they should be for good, and not for evil. The tongue is a prolific tree, it concerns the whole community that it should be a tree of life, and not of death.—Arnot.

6, 7. (6) **much treasure,** "the treasure stored up in such a house is the righteousness that prevails in it, a source and pledge of abiding prosperity." **revenues .. trouble,** i. e. "great revenues acquired by wrong, or expended badly bring trouble, vexation, and ruin upon a man and his family."—Pul. Com. (7) **disperse,** Rucetschi suggests the rendering, "sift or winnow knowledge," separating the chaff from the grain. They have the true critical spirit. **not so,**[b] a simple declaration of contrast. An expressive suggestion of the mighty difference between the influences that go forth from the wise man and from the fool.

True and False Gains.—I. A man may be poor, yet possess all things. (2 Cor. vi. 10). Deus meus, et omnia! II. A man may be rich, yet destitute, poor, blind, and miserable. If we are not satisfied, we are not rich.

If we are content, we are never poor. III. God is the true and only gain of the soul. We have a nature which will be satisfied with nothing short of the Infinite. To attempt to feed it with anything less is found to be a cheat and a self-delusion.—Johnson.

Cato and Marius Curius.—Cato, a pattern of moderation, was very early taught the happy art of contentment by the following circumstance: Near his country seat was a cottage, formerly belonging to Marius Curius, who was thrice honored with a triumph. Cato often walked thither, and reflecting on the smallness of the farm and the meanness of the dwelling, used to meditate on the peculiar virtues of the man who, though he was the most illustrious character in Rome, had subdued the fiercest nations, and driven Pyrrhus out of Italy, cultivated this little spot of ground with his own hands, and after three triumphs retired to his own cottage. Here the ambassadors of the Samnites found him in the chimney-corner dressing turnips, and offered him a large present of gold; but he absolutely refused it, remarking, "A man who can be satisfied with such a supper, has no need of gold; and I think it more glorious to conquer the possessors of it, than to possess it myself." Full of these thoughts, Cato returned home; and taking a view of his own estate, his servants, and his manner of life, increased his labor and retrenched his expenses.—Cheever.

8, 9. (8) **abomination,** etc.,[a] bec. however costly the sacrifice may be, it is only a thing, and God accepts the heartfelt prayer unaccompanied by any gift in preference to any sacrifice.[b] "The lesson was needed that the value of sacrifice depended upon the mind and disposition of the offerer, the tendency being to rest in the opus operatum, as if the external action was all that was necessary to make the worshiper accepted."—Pul. Com. (9) **way of the wicked,**[c] the walk or conversation; the conduct so far as it is based on the wrong principle of serving self. **loveth,** etc., regardeth with favor, and giveth to such the sense of acceptance with Him. **followeth after,** searcheth after, pursueth; a term indicating earnestness and intensity.

Praying and Living.—I. God loves righteous men with a special love. II. One act of a righteous man which God regards with special pleasure. The prayer of the upright. 1. Because it is an expression of conscious need. 2. It is an expression of filial confidence. 3. It is an act of obedience. III. God abhors the way of the wicked. 1. Because they are at war with their better nature. 2. Because their ways are at war with His purpose to bless them. IV. Their acts of worship are especially displeasing to Him.—Hom. Com.

Hindrance to Prayer.—A man that is wounded may call upon the surgeon to have some ease of his pain, but if he will not endure to have the splinter or the arrow-head pulled out that sticketh fast in the flesh and causeth the grief, he may cry long enough, but all in vain; and if people pray to God to stay the fury of the burning, when a house is on fire, and themselves in the meantime pour on oil or throw on fuel, there will be but small hope of quenching the same. So there can be no comfortable return of our prayers unto God till sin be removed; it is but folly to seek unto God by prayer till the partition wall of sin that is betwixt us and Him be broken down. It is sin that crosses and hindereth the effect and fruit of prayer: like those heathen of whom the cynic made this observation, that they prayed indeed to their gods for health, but at the very same time, when they prayed, they used such excess as could not but greatly impair their health, and so wilfully deprived themselves of that they prayed for.—Spencer.

10, 11. (10) **Correction,** etc., R. V., "There is grievous correction," etc., i. e. so sharp as to be nothing less than physical and moral death. **the way,** that right way wh. God marks out for him. **hateth reproof,**[a] wh. might help to keep him in the way. (11) **Hell,** Heb. Sheol. De. xxxii. 22. **destruction,** R. V., Abaddon, the abyss, the place of the destroyer.[b] "Sheol is used generally as the place to which the souls of the dead are consigned—the receptacle of all departed spirits, whether good or bad. Abaddon is the lowest depth of hell, the 'abyss' of Luke viii. 31; Rev. ix. 2, etc.; xx. 1, etc."—Pul. Com. Comp. ch. xxvii. 20. God's eye penetrates even the remotest recesses of the unseen world. **hearts,** etc., wh. seemed to the writer an easier thing to sound and know than the depths of hell.[c]

"Many children grow up like plants under bell-glasses. They are surrounded only by artificial and prepared influences. The object of training is to teach the child to take care of himself; but many parents use their children only as a kind of spool on which to reel off their own experience; and they are bound and corded until they perish by inanity, or break all bonds and cords, and rush to ruin by reaction."
—Beecher.

a "Even the costly sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord, and even the prayer of the righteous, the breath of his lips (contrasted with the steam of the sumptuous sacrifice)—is His delight." —Burgon.

b 1 Sa. xv. 22; Isa. i. 11, lxvi. 3; Je. vi. 20.

c Ge. iv. 3—5; Is. xxix. 13, 14.

"When an ungodly man prays, it is not the act of prayer that constitutes the sin, it is the want of a praying heart. The sin is in him, not in his prayer."
—Wardlaw.

"When a lady once told Archbishop Sharpe that she would not communicate religious instruction to her children until they had attained the years of discretion, the shrewd prelate replied, 'Madam, if you do not teach them, the devil will!" —J. Whitecross.

a 2 Chr. xxv. 16.

b Job xxvi. 6; Ps. cxxxix. 8.

c "Our inward disposition is the life of our

actions; according to that doth the God of spirits judge us, while men censure according to our external motions."
—Bp. Hall.

Je. xvii. 9, 10; 1 Jno. iii. 20.

"A child rightly brought up will be like a willow branch, which, broken off and touching the ground, at once takes root. Bring up your children so that they will root easily in their own soil, and not for ever be grafted into your old trunk and boughs." —H. W. Beecher.

a "A scorner is one that not only makes a jest of God and religion, but bids defiance to the methods employed for his conviction and reformation. We ought not only to bid the wise welcome when they come to us, but to go to them, as beggars to the rich man's door for an alms."
—Mat. Henry.

1 Ki. xxii. 8; Am. v. 10.

b "Emotions of joy and sorrow show themselves in outward look and act."—Spk. Com.

c "Avoid frivolous amusements, unprofitable reading, the profane wit, vain superstitions, curious speculations on subjects beyond the reach of the human mind; avoid seeking to be wise above what is written." —Nicholls.

"This word merriment is of frequent use among our old writers. It is Foxe's favorite description of the holy joy of the martyrs."
—Bridges.

The Principle of Judgment (vs. 10).—I. It is never causeless. II. The connection of cause and effect is often mysterious. Hence we should be slow to trace the judgment of God upon sinners. III. Some sins that foretell judgment. 1. Desertion of duty; forsaking of God's ways; traveling in paths we know to be crooked or unclean. 2. Indifference to rebuke. For even in error, if we will heed the timely warning and correct the discovered fault, judgment may be averted. If not, there is no way of avoiding the law of doom. The soul that sinneth shall and must die.—Johnson.

God's Knowledge of Men's Hearts.—This terrible truth these hearts secretly know, and their desperate writhings to shake it off show how much they dislike it. The Romish confessional is one of the most pregnant facts in the history of man. It is a monument and measure of the guilty creature's enmity against God. We have wondered at the blindness and stupidity of our common nature in permitting a man, not more holy than his neighbors, to stand in the place of God to a brother's soul. There is cause for grief, but not ground for surprise. The phenomenon proceeds in the way of natural law. It is the common, well understood process of compounding for the security of the whole, by the voluntary surrender of a part. The confessional is a kind of insurance office where periodical exposure of the heart to a man is the premium paid for fancied impunity in hiding that heart altogether from the deeper scrutiny of the all-seeing God.—Arnot.

12. scorner, Pr. i. 22. One in whom the habit of scorning is confirmed. "Scorners are conceited, arrogant persons, free-thinkers, indifferent to or sceptical of religion, and too self-opinionated to be open to advice or reproof." **will he go,** to seek fellowship with.[a] "With wise men he doth not associate."—Hitzig.

The Scorner (vs. 12).—I. He requires reproof—1. For his self-ignorance; 2. For his presumption. II. He shuns reproof. 1. He will not read books that will deal seriously and honestly with his character; 2. He will not attend a ministry that will expose his character in the broad light of eternal law; 3. He will not join the society that will deal truthfully with its members. III. He hates reproof.—Thomas.

The Swearer Reproved by a Child.—Some little children were sitting one day on the steps of a door singing, as they often do, some of their favorite hymns. They were suddenly surprised by a half-drunken man, who came up to them, and, uttering an oath, said, "Does your master teach you nothing but singing those foolish hymns?" "Yes," said a sharp little fellow, about six years of age, "He tells us it is wicked to swear." The poor worthless man seemed ashamed of his conduct, and passed on without further remark. The Scorner.—There is none that loveth more truly, that loveth more profitably, than he that lovingly reproveth what he seeth amiss. And yet there is none that a scorner loveth less. But what marvel if he loveth not another, that loveth not himself! Where scorning is, there can be no love, that was never love's disposition. Let no one that reproveth a scorner look for love from him.—Jermin.

13—15. (13) **merry heart,** ch. xvii. 22. cheerful, bright, pleasant. **spirit is broken,** lit. the breath is oppressed, made laborious: there is much sighing, and so the countenance is made gloomy and sad.[b] "Happiness is shown in the outward look, but sorrow has a deeper and more abiding influence; it touches the inner life, destroys the natural elasticity, creates despondency and despair." (14) **heart .. knowledge,** the gist of the verse is this: The wise grow ever wiser, the foolish become ever more foolish.[c] (15) **afflicted,** contrast vs. 13, those of a merry heart. Reference is not so much to distressing circumstances as to a depressed and desponding habit of mind. **evil,** by reason of anxious thought and forecasted misfortune. **continual feast,** "life to the cheerful is as one perpetual banquet, whether he be poor or rich."

Human Hearts (vss. 13—15).—I. Here is the merry and the mournful heart. 1. The merry heart is a radiance to the countenance and a feast to the soul; 2. The mournful heart breaks the spirit and curses the whole life. II. Here is the understanding and the foolish heart. 1. The one seeketh knowledge; 2. The other feedeth on foolishness.—Thomas.

The Effect of Sorrow Upon the Human Spirit.—It "breaks" it. When a vessel's timbers are shivered by the fury of the storm she may not go to

pieces altogether. But she is no longer able to hold her own against the elements, which she could once use as forces to convey her from land to land. If she were now to put to sea, instead of riding over the waves and making them her servants, she would be a passive thing in their hands, a mere helpless bundle of timbers to be tossed whithersoever they pleased, instead of "walking the waters like a thing of life." So it is with the human spirit when the cross seas and angry winds of adverse circumstances have quenched the hope and paralyzed the energy that once governed and inspired the man. He is no longer able to face the storms of life, and outride them, or even make them advance his interests. He is passive amid the changes and chances of mortal life, and they drift him on wheresoever they will. But this can never be the case unless a man has lost faith in the character of God and his own high and immortal destiny. Then, indeed, the elements which he was built to rule will rule him, and he will fail to fulfil the end for which God launched him on the sea of life. —Hom Com.

16, 17. (16) **little,** a small portion of earthly goods. All possessions are proportionate to needs. The needs increase almost faster than the riches, so that the poor man's "little" is practically to him more than the rich man's "much."[a] **and trouble,**[b] i. e. the anxiety and solicitude wh. attend the acquirement and investment of riches. (17) **dinner of herbs,**[c] the meal of the poor man, who cannot afford meat: lit. "a portion of green;" i. e. vegetables. **stalled ox,** one tied up for fattening. Fatted oxen are holiday fare. Lu. xv. 23, 30. **hatred,** "such a feast is little worth if accompanied with feelings of hatred, jealousy, and ill will. This and the preceding verse emphasize and explain vs. 15."

Alternatives.—I. Poverty with piety, or riches with discontent. Which shall we choose? Naturally all, or nearly all, will prefer to take riches with its risks rather than poverty with its certain privations. Our Bible is precious because it reminds us that there is another side in this matter. Riches are too dearly gained at the expense of peace of conscience; poverty is blessed if it brings us nearer to God. II. Scanty fare with rich spiritual seasoning, or rich fare with a poor heart. Which? For ourselves and our personal comfort? For others and the hospitality we should like to dispense to them? For ourselves, high thinking with low living; for others, slight fare with large welcome will make a true feast.—Johnson.

Riches vs. Poverty.—It is not the great cage that makes the bird sing. It is not the great estate that brings always the inward joy—the cordial contentment. The little lark with a wing sees farther than the ox with a bigger eye, but without a wing. Birds use not to sing when they are on the ground, but when got into the air, or on tops of trees. If saints be sad, it is because they are too busy here below. If the bramble bear rule, fire will arise out of it that will consume the cedars; the lean kine will soon eat up the fat, and it shall not be seen by them. It is hard to handle these thorns hard and not to prick one's fingers. Riches, though well got, are but as manna; those that gathered less had no want, and those that gathered more, it was but a trouble and annoyance to them.—Trapp.——True Riches.—A missionary in India says, "I rode to Nallamaram, and saw some people of the congregation there, together with the catechist. The clothes of one of the women were rather dirty, and I asked her about it. 'Sir,' said she, 'I am a poor woman, and have only this single dress.' 'Well, have you always been so poor?' 'No, I had some money and jewels, but a year ago the Maravers (thieves) came and robbed me of all. They told me,' she said, 'If you will return to heathenism, we shall restore to you everything.' 'Well, why did you not follow their advice? Now you are a poor Christian.' 'O, sir,' she replied, 'I would rather be a poor Christian than a rich heathen. Now I can say respecting my stolen property, The Lord gave it, and the Lord hath taken it again.'"—Whitecross.

18, 19. (18) **wrathful man,** one easily roused to anger.[a] **strife,** R. V. "contention." **slow to anger,** ch. xiv. 29. (19) **hedge of thorns,**[b] "it pricks, lacerates, and entangles the miserable wretch." He is always encountering obstacles and hindrances. "Those that have no heart to their work pretend that their way is hedged up with thorns, so they cannot do it."

"Like new liquor, which works over in foam and froth when thick and troubled the joy of the sinner runs over in empty laughter and effervescent spirits when the heart is brimful of the wrath of God."—Bp. Hopkins.

"Happiness is the consciousness of having made another glad."—R. G. Sutherland.

[a] Ps. xxxvii. 16; 1 Ti. vi. 6.

"Riches and poverty are more in the heart than in the hand; he is wealthy that is contented, he is poor that wanteth more."—Bp. Hall.

[b] "Possibly refers to the confusion and disorder in human society attendant upon riches without the fear of God."
—Rucetschi.

[c] Heb. arucah, an appointed portion, or ration, as for a march; then any allowance or diet.

"Lord, who would live turmoil'd in the court, and may enjoy such quiet walks as these? This small inheritance my father left me contenteth me, and's worth a monarchy. I seek not to wax great by others' waning, or gather wealth, I care not with what envy; sufficeth that I have maintains my state, and sends the poor well pleased from my gate."
—Shakespeare.

[a] Pr. xxvi. 21, xxix. 22.

[b] "The Prov. condenses a parable. The slothful goes on his journey, and for him the path is

thick set with thorns, briars, fences, through wh. he cannot force his way. For the upright the same path is as the broad raised causeway of the king's highway.

—Spk. Com.

"God giveth the righteous pleasure, even in the troubles of serving Him. . . . In their conversation, by the light someness and leap, as it were, of eternal hope and internal contemplation, they do pass over the impediments of temporal adversity."

—Jermin.

"I remember a great man coming into my house at Waltham; and seeing all my children standing in the order of their age and stature, he said, 'These are they that make rich men poor.' But he straight received this answer, 'Nay, my lord, these are they that make a poor man rich; for there is not one of these whom we would part with for all your wealth.'"

—Bp. Hall.

c Pr. x. 23; Eph. v. 15.

"The intoxication of anger, like that of the grape, shows us to others, but hides us from ourselves."

—Southgate.

"St. Ambrose saith, all vile dispositions are delighted with the follies of others: but how vile, then, is his disposition who is delighted with his own folly."

—Jermin.

a "The Heb. word used is almost an official title, and brings before us the picture of the divan or council

made plain, Heb. "raised up as a causeway." "The upright man, who treads the path appointed for him resolutely and trustfully, finds all difficulties vanish; before him the thorns yield a passage."

A Plain Way.—The continued repetition of acts makes habit, and he who pushes boldly and fearlessly forward in the way of righteous exertion finds the hard become easier and the stony places smoother by the very constitution of his nature. He makes his way plain by his resolution to walk in it, he leaps the hedge while his slothful neighbor is counting the number of feet it is from the ground. It is well to look before we leap, but some look so long that they never take the leap, and the slothful man looks so long at the difficulties in his way that he never finds courage enough to grapple with them. But the very resolve to try brings strength for action, and the power grows by use until what is a hedge of thorns to an indolent man is a level road to his righteous neighbor. The word righteous being here placed in antithesis to slothful shows how great a sin it is to neglect to use the opportunities which God has given to men to ensure their real and highest interests.—Pul. Com.——Oriental Gardens (vs. 19).—The Oriental gardens were either open plantations or enclosures defended by walls or hedges. Rauwolf found about Tripoli many gardens and vineyards enclosed for the most part with hedges, and separated by shady walks. Some fences in the Holy Land, in later times, are not less beautiful than our living fences of white thorn, and perfectly answer the description of ancient Jewish prophets, who inform us that the hedges of their time consisted of thorns, and that the spikes of these thorny plants were exceedingly sharp. A hedge composed of rose bushes and wild pomegranate shrubs, then in full flower, mingled with other thorny plants, adorned in the varied livery of spring, must have made at once a strong and beautiful fence. The wild pomegranate tree, the species probably used in fencing, is much more prickly than the other variety; and when mingled with other thorny bushes, of which they have several kinds in Palestine, some whose prickles are very long and sharp, must form a hedge very difficult to penetrate. These facts illustrate the beauty and force of several passages in the sacred volume: thus, in the Proverbs of Solomon, "The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns;" it is obstructed with difficulties, which the sloth and indolence of his temper represent as galling or insuperable, but which a moderate share of resolution and perseverance would easily remove or surmount.—Paxton.

20, 21. (20) **wise son,** ch. x. 1. **despiseth,** putteth to shame. The mother especially is reproached as the most intimately associated with his training. Such reproach would be a mother's deepest grief. (21) **Folly,** or unreasonable conduct, senseless action. **joy,** it gives a sort of pleasure.[c] **destitute,** etc., better, "void of heart." **walketh uprightly,** R. V. "maketh straight his going." "Lives a sober, orderly, regular life."

Understanding.—A vessel is held on her course by reason at the wheel, and wind in the sails. The wind impels her to go forward, but if the understanding at the compass did not hold the wind in subjection, there would be no safety for the vessel; nobody could say where she might be carried. Yet without the wind she could not be carried forward at all—the compass and the helm would be useless. So, although the "man of understanding" is a man of emotion—a man whose life is under the influence of that which gives him joy, he brings his emotions into subjection to the dictates of moral wisdom, and before he follows their leadings he makes sure that they are in harmony with that which is pure and holy. Then he may safely yield himself to their guidance, and be sure that they will impel him straightforward. Such a man is constrained by the delights which godliness yields to him to press on to higher attainments (2 Cor. v. 14; Phil. iii. 12, 13), while the man to whom "folly is joy" allows the pleasures of the world and the flesh to hold him from the right path, even against his conscience and his better judgment. Such a man can give no more convincing proof that he is destitute of wisdom. Pul. Com.

22, 23. (22) **purposes,** designs, or plans. **disappointed,** fr. lack of concerted, purposeful action. **counsellors,**[a] provided they be honest and wise. (23) **answer . . mouth,** the idea of the preceding verse concerning counsel is maintained. A counsellor gives wise and skilful advice, or makes a timely speech; and, knowing how much harm is done by rash or evil

words, he naturally rejoices that he has been able to be useful, and has avoided the errors which the tongue is liable to incur.—Pul. Com. **word .. in season,** advice or sympathy given at the right moment, when the occasion demands it.

A Word in Season (vs. 23).—I. There are certain seasons in the lives of most men when a word aptly spoken may be of incalculable advantage. 1. The time of dawning manhood; 2. Of impending danger; 3. Of thoughtless sin. II. But in such seasons there will be no word spoken unless there is the speaking gift.

Wisdom in Reproof.—Reproof ought to be in season. Nature unloosed in a flying speed cannot come off with a sudden stop. To admonish a man in the height of his passion is to call a soldier to counsel in the midst—in the heat of a battle. Let the combat slack and then thou mayest expect a hearing. A word seasonably given, like a rudder, sometimes steers a man quite into another course. A blow bestowed in the striking time is better than ten delivered unseasonably.—Feltham.——A Word in Season.—Mr. Howe being at dinner with some persons of fashion, a gentleman expatiated largely in praise of King Charles I., introducing some harsh reflections upon others. Mr. Howe observing that the gentleman mixed many oaths with his discourse, told him that, in his humble opinion, he had omitted a singular excellence in the character of that prince. The gentleman eagerly desired him to mention it, and seemed all impatience to know what it was. "It was this, sir," said Mr. Howe; "he was never heard to swear an oath in common conversation." The hint was as politely received as given; and the gentleman promised to break off the practice.—R. T. S.——While Hopu, a young Sandwich Islander, was in America, he spent an evening in a company where an infidel lawyer tried to puzzle him with difficult questions. At length the native said, "I am a poor heathen boy. It is not strange that my blunders in English should amuse you. But soon there will be a larger meeting than this. We shall all be there. They will ask us all one question, namely, 'Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?' Now, sir, I think I can say 'Yes.' What will you say, sir?" When he had stopped, all present were silent. At length the lawyer said that, as the evening was far gone, they had better conclude it with prayer; and proposed that the native youth should pray. He did so; and as he poured out his heart to God the lawyer could not conceal his feelings. Tears started from his eyes, and he sobbed aloud. All present wept too; and when they separated, the words, "What will you say, sir?" followed the lawyer home, and did not leave him till he was brought to the Saviour.

24, 25. (24) **way of life,** the whole course and tenor of life. **above,** contrasted with "beneath." It is high-toned, and tends heavenwards, R. V. "goeth upward;" to higher degrees of moral purity, elevation, and power. **hell beneath,**[a] the path of the wicked leading ever lower, down to the gloom of Sheol. (25) **house,** contrasted in its grandeur with the "border,"[b] or little estate, wh. is all the lot of the widow.[c] In Scrip. the widow is often made the type of desolateness. Yet such are safer in God's protection than the self-confident rich and proud. **border,** i. e. landmark, De. xix. 14.

True Piety (vs. 24).—I. It is elevated in principle. 1. The religion of the wise is elevated in principle above the received maxims of worldly prudence; 2. And above the accredited standard of worldly morality; 3. And above the authority of prevailing opinions. II. The wise who are in the way of life are elevated in taste. 1. Above the mere decorations of their persons and dwellings; 2. Above the desire of human applause; 3. They are superior to the admiration of merely talented men; 4. Above the feeling of enthusiastic delight in the works of mere art, of taste, or of fancy. III. They are elevated in pursuit. 1. Above what might be deemed their worldly interest; 2. Above the present benefits of religion.—C. Jenkins.

Two Paths.—On the summit of one of those distant mountains—upon whose snowy tops, as they throw back the sunlight, we can look from our Eastern coast—there trickles forth a silvery spring. Near the source there is a slight obstruction in the way of the flow of the streamlet, and the waters are divided right and left. Part trickles down the mountain

chamber of Eastern countries, arranged for a solemn conference of the wise."
—Spk. Com.

"Many eyes see more than one, and many souls think more than one: therefore never esteem thyself so wise that thou shouldest not seek others' counsel."
—Hasius.

"Never commence with an attack; which, as an enemy's position, naturally provokes resistance. Study a pointed application. A word spoken for every one, like a coat made for everyone, has no individual fitness."—Bridges.

"The Spaniards in Chili believed that no water was so wholesome or of so delicate a flavor as that which flowed through veins of gold; certainly no conversation is so edifying to the hearers as that which pours forth from a heart stored with sacred knowledge, sanctified experience, and devout contemplations."
—Spurgeon.

[a] "Suggests a hopeless abode in the dark kingdom of the dead, as the final destination of the sinner's course of life."
—O. Zockler.

[b] Sometimes used for a space within borders.

[c] "Here the innocent widow who is in danger of being wronged by the proud through encroachment upon her borders."
—Lange.

"Oh, that they that have their hands elbow-deep in the earth, that are rooting and dig-

side towards a river, and thence is borne on to the limitless sea. Part goes the other side, and is lost, ere long, midst the thirsty sands, that are never satiated. Thus divergent are man's two paths—the shining and the dark one; thus dissimilar their course in life—their close at death. And these two paths are the only ones leading out into eternity. And when we seek in spiritual union and communion with our Maker the noblest exercise of the soul's faculties and powers, and there comes to the heart peace, sure and certain, because depending upon the inviolable Word of God, and love springing from the outwellings of the Divine love, and hope reaching into the eternal world, and grasping there at blissful immortality and joy ineffable, and prepared of God—oh! then even the foregleamings of these things, reserved for us, or else already the heritage of the soul—light up a path so shining that earth's glare and glitter fade, in comparison, wholly out of sight. For into eternity itself do these divergent paths lead. The soul, in choosing the one or the other here, is choosing for the life to come, as well as for the life that now is.—B. Perry.

26, 27. (26) **thoughts,** R. V., "Evil devices are," etc., as ch. vi. 18. **pleasant words,** or words of pleasantness: pleasing to God. Better read the second clause, "Words of pleasantness are pure," as an offering acceptable to God. (27) **greedy of gain,**[a] as a corrupt judge, who thinks more of bribes than of just judgments. It may be taken generally for "avarice." **gifts,** used as bribes.[b] **live,** shall prolong his days.

Thoughts.—Set thy thoughts, examine thy thoughts: thy conscience must not only extend to deeds and words but even to secret thoughts. They that are accustomed to evil thoughts can seldom bring forth good words, never good deeds. As the corn is so will the flour be; if the meal be bad, the fault is not in the millstones that ground it, but in the miller that put in such base corn. All thy senses and members are but the millstones; the heart is the miller; if thy words and works be ill meal, thank the miller, thy heart, for such corrupt thoughts. As the wood is, so will the fire be: if it be wet and stinking wood, look for an unsavory and unwholesome fire; if the wood be sweet and dry, it will perfume the room with a sweet and pleasant air. Such fuel as you lay on your thoughts, such fire shall you have in your actions.—Adams.——The Penalty of Avarice (vs. 27).—A peasant once entered the hall of justice at Florence, at the time that Alexander, Duke of Tuscany, was presiding. He stated that he had the good fortune to find a purse of sixty ducats, and learning that it belonged to Friuli, the merchant, who offered a reward of ten ducats to the finder, he restored it to him, but that he had refused the promised reward. The duke instantly ordered Friuli to be summoned into his presence, and questioned why he refused the reward? The merchant replied that he conceived the peasant had paid himself; for although when he gave notice of his loss, he said this purse contained sixty ducats, it in fact had seventy in it. The duke inquired if this mistake was discovered before the purse was found. Friuli answered in the negative. "Then," said the duke, "as I have a very high opinion of the honesty of this peasant, I am induced to believe that there is indeed a mistake in this transaction; for as the purse you lost had in it seventy ducats, and this which he found contains sixty only, it is impossible that it can be the same." He then gave the purse to the peasant, and promised to protect him against all future claimants.—Percy Anec.

28, 29. (28) **studieth,** i. e. "meditation," thinks before speaking. **poureth out,** speaking before thinking. "Caution is the fruit of wisdom, rashness of folly."—Fausset. Comp. our Lord's teaching, Mat. x. 19. The harmony of those two forms of counsel may easily be recognized. **evil things,** injurious things. (29) **far from,**[c] see John ix. 31. **prayer,** etc.,[d] Ps. xxxiv. 18.

Men of Thought.—The great men of earth are the shadowy men, who, having lived and died, now live again and for ever through their undying thoughts. Thus living, though their footfalls are heard no more, their voices are louder than the thunder, and unceasing as the flow of tides or air. Moses was not half living when he was alive. His real life has been since he died. The Prophets seemed almost useless in their time. They did little for themselves or for the Church of their day; but when you look at the life they have lived since you will find they have been God's

ging in it, as if they would that way dig themselves a new and nearer way to hell!—oh, that these greedy moles would be warned to flee from the wrath to come, to take heed of hell beneath, and not sell their souls to the devil for a little pelf."—Trapp.

[a] Je. xvii. 11; Ha. ii. 9.

[b] Ex. xxiii. 81. "Like a bee that gets into a barrel of honey, and there drowns himself, so a covetous man takes in more gold to the increasing of his estate that he damns himself in perdition." — Watson.

"The progress of a private conversation betwixt two persons of different sexes is often decisive of their fate, and gives it a turn very distinct perhaps from what they themselves anticipated. Gallantry becomes mingled with conversation, and affection and passion come gradually to mix with gallantry. Nobles, as well as shepherd swains, will, in such a trying moment, say more than they intended; and queens, like village maidens, will listen longer than they should." — Sir Walter Scott.

[c] 1 Pe. iii. 12. God never leaves any till they leave Him first.

[d] "He that is much in prayer shall grow rich in grace, and have most of heaven upon earth." — Archbp. Leighton. "I think we feel that those who give to us out of the exuber-

pilots guiding the Church through all perils. From their black bosoms they sent forth the blast of His lightning and the roar of His thunder; and to-day, if the Church needs rebuke and denunciation, it is they who must hurl it. I could have killed old Jeremiah, if I could have got at his ribs; but I should like to see the archer that could hit him now. Martin Luther was mighty when he lived; but the shadowy Luther is mightier than a regiment of fleshly Luthers. When he was on earth, he in some sense asked the pope leave to be, and the emperor and the elector leave to be; he asked the stream and the wheat to give him sustenance for a day; but now that his body is dead, now that that rubbish is out of the way, he asks no leave of pope, or elector, or emperor, but is the monarch of thought, and the noblest defender of the faith to the end of time.—H. W. Beecher.——Value of Prayer.—There is a legend to this effect: A certain preacher, whose sermons converted men by scores, received a revelation from heaven that not one of the conversions was owing to his talents or eloquence, but all to the prayers of an illiterate lay brother, who sat on the pulpit steps, pleading all the time for the success of the sermon. It may, in the all-revealing day, be so with us. We may discover, after having labored long and wearily in preaching, that all the honor belongs to another builder, whose prayers were gold, silver and precious stones, while our sermonisings being apart from prayer, were but hay and stubble.—Anec. Illus. of O. T.

30, 31. (30) **light of the eyes,** "the beaming glance that shows a pure, happy mind and a friendly disposition, rejoices the heart of him on whom it is turned. There is something infectious in the guileless, joyful look of a happy man or child, which has a cheering effect upon those who observe it." **good report,** the good news a friend may bring to us. **fat,** flourish. (31) **heareth,** R. V. "hearkeneth to." **reproof,** instruction respecting the way of life. **abideth among,** dwells with, in the midst of, the wise.

Self-Conquest.—Peter the Great made a law in 1722 that if any nobleman beat or ill-treated his slaves he should be looked upon as insane, and a guardian should be appointed to take care of his person and of his estate. This great monarch once struck his gardener, who, being a man of great sensibility, took to his bed, and died in a few days. Peter, hearing of this, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "Alas! I have civilized my own subjects; I have conquered other nations; yet I have not been able to civilize or to conquer myself."—Cheever.

32, 33. (32) **instruction,** or correction.[a] **despiseth,** etc., acts as if he had no regard for his own best interests. **heareth,** so as to obey. **understanding,** moral and intellectual wisdom. (33) **fear,** etc.[b] Job xxviii. 28; Ps. cxi. 10. **instruction,** i.e. leads to wisdom. **before . . humility,** in the face of; in front of.[c] **is,** R. V. "goeth."

Despising the Soul (vs. 32).—I. Who are they that despise their own souls? 1. Those who deny the spirituality and immortality of the soul; 2. Those who in their practice disregard the law of righteousness. II. Show the folly of such a course. Consider—1. The nature of the soul; 2. Its nearness; 3. Its purchase; 4. The projects laid for souls; 5. The perpetual duration of souls. III. Application. Let us—1. See and bewail the folly of having such low thoughts of the soul; 2. Make it appear that we do value our souls; 3. Value other things as they have relation to our souls; 4. If we must not despise our own souls, neither should we the souls of others.—M. Henry.

Wellington and the Officer.—In the early part of the Duke of Wellington's career, when as Sir Arthur Wellesley, in India, an officer dining at the mess where he presided was sporting his infidel sentiments. Sir Arthur, wishing to put down such conversation, said, "S——, did you ever read Paley's Evidences?" The reply was in the negative. "Well, then," said Sir Arthur, "you had better read that book before you talk in the way you are doing." The occurrence passed away, and the conversation was soon forgotten; but the reference to Paley's work led Colonel S—— to inquire after it, and, having obtained a copy, he read it with the most serious attention. He rose from the perusal of it with the fullest conviction of the falsehood of the system he had formerly adopted, and of the Divine origin of Christianity. But he did not stop here; he was de-

ance of a rich character, who do not need to seek us out and of set purpose to exert themselves to help us, but who do help us by letting us live near them and touch them with our trusting fingers, are our greatest benefactors." — Alex. McKenzie.

"Some men appear to have what is called a gift of prayer, but in reality they are only cursed with a fatal fluency in phrases." — Adeney.

"Men with grey eyes are generally keen, energetic, and at first cold; but you may depend upon their sympathy with real sorrow. Search the ranks of our benevolent men, and you will agree with me." —Leask.

[a] "Nothing but grace can teach us to make a right use of others' judgments." — Bp. Hall.

[b] "The fear of God and humility go togeth er; where the one is the other is, and as the one is the way to wisdom the other is the way to glory."—Gill.

[c] "The more humble the fitter to come to God, and He the more willing to come into the soul and dwell in it. The highest heavens are the habitation of God's glory, and the humble heart hath the next honor to be the habitation of His grace." — Archbp. Leighton.

"Humility preserves the true and noble freedom of the mind of man, secures his dear liberty and peaceful dominion of him-

termined to examine the Book itself, which he was thus satisfied was a revelation from God. The result was that he cordially received this revelation of mercy, saw and felt his need of a Saviour, and, believing in Jesus, became a Christian not in name only, but in deed and truth. Colonel S——, feeling his obligation to Sir Arthur, afterwards wrote to him, thanking him for his kindness in recommending to him Dr. Paley's valuable work, and earnestly advised him not to be satisfied with merely knowing the external evidence of Christianity, but to inquire what this Divine communication really contains.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

1—3. (1) **preparations**, R. V. marg., "plans."[a] **answer .. tongue,** i. e. answer to its requests. God only can do what is desired; "man proposes, God disposes." (2) **clean .. eyes,** the last thing a man is willing to see is his own failings and faults.[b] **weigheth,** tests, tries, judges the value of. God is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (3) **Commit,** etc., lit. roll.[c] **thoughts,** plans which thou wouldest work out.

Spirit-weighing (vs. 2).—I. Man deceived. Why? 1. Because they adopt the moral standard of the circle in which they move; 2. Because they judge themselves by those who are worse than they are; 3. Because they take false views of moral evil; 4. Because there is an absence of careful examination about them. II. Deity investigating. Here is suggested to us—1. The wonderfulness of God's power; 2. Of God's pitifulness.—H. J. Martyn.

Weighing Our Plans.—Before proceeding to any work we should weigh it. Letters are charged in the Post Office according to weight. I have written and sealed a letter containing several sheets: I desire that it should pass, I think that it will, but I know well that it will not be allowed to pass because I desire that it should or think that it will. I know well that it will be tested by imperial weights and measures. Before I plunge it beyond my reach, I place it on a balance before me, not constructed to please my desire, but honestly adjusted to the legal standard. I weigh it there, and check it myself by the very rules which Government will apply. So should we weigh our purposes in the balance, before we launch them forth in action.—W. Arnot.

4—6. (4) **for himself,** R. V., "for its own end;" fitting it to the precise object for which He designed it. **wicked .. evil,** any day of calamity is meant, either in this life or in another.[a] "It is an ordinance of God that the wicked shall receive that retribution wh. corresponds to their conduct."—Stuart. (5) **proud,** etc., ch. vi. 17. **hand,** etc., even if he exercises all his powers in resistance to God yet must he suffer the penalty, ch. xi. 21. (6) **mercy and truth,**[b] love to God and man, and fidelity to social obligations are set in contrast with ritual sacrifices and ceremonies. **purged,** cleared out of our heart, R. V. marg., "atoned for."

The Secret of Deliverance from Evil (vs. 6).—There is evil in the world: the evil of sin. How am I to get quit of this evil? This is the great question. 1. Not by time—time cures many things, but not this; 2. Not by effort; 3. Not by human wisdom; 4. Not by law; 5. Not by terror; but by the fear of the Lord, which unfolds itself in—(1) Obedience; (2) Fellowship; (3) Love; (4) Zeal. If we fear God we must—1. Try to please Him; 2. Give up sin; 3. Do His will; 4. Seek to be like Him.—Bonar.

God's Ways.—The Just and Merciful One, as He disposes the deeds of mortals, vouchsafes some things in mercy, and permits other things in anger; and the things which He permits He so bears with that He turns them to the account of His purpose. And hence it is brought to pass in a marvelous way that even that which is done without the will of God is not contrary to the will of God. For while evil deeds are converted to a good use, the very things that oppose His design render service to His design.—St. Gregory.——Human Reverses.—Bajazet having observed, after his enemy made him prisoner, that the latter laughed at him, said, "Do not laugh, Tamerlane, at my misfortune, for God, not you, has subdued me; and He is able to-morrow to undo what He has

self. This is the effect of excellent wisdom." — W. Bates.

"Descend, that ye may rise up to God; for you have fallen by rising up against God." — Augustine.

a "Thoughts come and go, as it were, spontaneously, but true, well-ordered speech is the gift of God.." — Spk. Com.

b "Conscience then, simply as conscience, is no safe guide; it requires to be informed and regulated by God's will and Word. A right intention is not enough to make a good action." — Wordsworth.

c Ps. xxii. 8, xxxvii. 5, lv. 22.

The statesman looks with partial eyes upon the law that he has introduced. Most men are disposed to judge partially of their own deeds; ungodly men always regard their "own ways" as "clean." —Hom. Com.

a Job xxi. 30; Is. xliii. 21.

"It is one of the greatest praises of God's wisdom that He can turn the evil of men to His own glory." — Bp. Hall.

b Ps. l. 13, 14, li. 16, 17; Mic. vi. 6—8.

"No man can subdue the pride of his own heart. Again and again we are brought to the solemn truth that that heart is an instrument which God alone can attune, and on which he alone can discourse music acceptable to his own ear." —J. Parker.

done to-day, and reverse our situations." Tamerlane immediately assumed a serious countenance, and answered, "I laughed not with a design to exult over you, but from a sudden impression that thrones and kingdoms must be held in low estimation in heaven, since one crown has been bestowed on such a blink-eyed man as you, and another on such a crippled man as myself." Thrones and rickety chairs are of equal reckoning in the arithmetic of heaven. Nothing, so far as regards man, is of value there, except "the pearl which is beyond price"—"the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, imputed to us by God, and received by faith alone."—Whitecross.

7, 8. (7) **at peace with him,** that goodness wh. is acceptable to God tends also to pacify and to win men.[a] (8) **Better,** etc., Ps. xxxvii. 16; Pr. xv. 16.[b] **without right,** ref. either to wickedness in general, or to fraud and oppression, in obtaining the "revenues."

Pleasing God (vs. 7).—Consider this subject—I. As a glorious possibility of being. The ways are not merely external service, but a loving obedience to His will. If we please Him we shall—1. Please ourselves: 2. The spiritual universe. II. As winning the good will of enemies. 1. A good man may have enemies; 2. The overcoming of their enmity is a desirable thing; 3. Pleasing the Lord is the surest way to overcome it. —Thomas.

A Little With Righteousness.—Abraham would not take to himself of the spoils of Sodom so much as the value of a shoe-latchet, that it might never be said in after times that the king of Sodom had made Abraham rich; so neither will any godly man that hath learned the art of contentation, suffer a penny of the gain of ungodliness to mingle with the rest of his estate, that the devil may not be able to upbraid him with it afterwards to his shame, as if he had contributed something towards the increasing thereof.—Bishop Sanderson.

9, 10. (9) **deviseth,** arranges it with anxious thought. Comp. vs. 1. The form of the verb suggests the idea of laborious consideration. **directeth,** determines precisely how they shall go. (10) **divine sentence,** as representative of God, the king's decisions had a special validity and dignity. **transgresseth not,** doth not speak wickedly;[c] or with Stuart, "should not:" the sentence of a king ought to be just.

Providence.—The great drama of a nation's politics, and the most mighty changes in the history and character of mankind, may hinge on circumstances of the most trivial nature. One of the most remarkable instances of this sort is found in the history of Mohammed. When his pursuers followed hard upon him to take his life, they were turned away from the mouth of the cave in which he had the moment before taken shelter by the flight of a bird from one of the shrubs that grew at its entry. For they inferred that if he had recently passed that way, the bird must previously have been frightened away, and would not now have made its appearance. It is a striking remark of the historian, that this bird, by its flight on this occasion, changed the destiny of the world —instrumental as it was in perpetuating the life of the false Prophet, and with him the reign of that superstition which to this day hath a wider ascendency over our species than Christianity itself. Such are the links and concatenations of all history. It is well that God has the management, and that what to man is chaos, in the hands of God is a sure and unerring mechanism.—Cheever.

11—13. (11) **just weight,** R. V., "just balance and scales," see ch. xi. 1. **are the Lord's,** "they come under His law, are subject to the Divine ordinances which regulate all man's dealings. The great principles of truth and justice govern all the transactions of buying and selling; religion enters into the business of trading, and weights and measures are sacred things."—Pul. Com. **weights . . bag,**[a] lit. stones. "The trader's weights take their authority from certain eternal principles which God has established. What man's chicanery and fraud make of them does not come into view." (12) **abomination,** in God's sight and men's. The high position and influence of kings makes their character of supreme importance. **righteousness,** etc., not by deceit, not by pomp, not by armies, but by the exalted char. of a ruler is the throne rendered

"Virtue begins in the forsaking of vice; and the first part of wisdom is not to be a fool."

"Out of evil God brings good; and men keep Him busy." — R. G. Sutherland.

[a] Pr. xxv. 21, 22.

[b] The fewer desires the more peace. The only sure way to peace is to give the heart entirely to God." — Bp. Wilson.

"It is our peace with God that maketh Him to make our enemies to be at peace with us, and it is our enmity against God's enemies that maketh God to be at peace with us." — Jermin.

[c] "The passage lays down the principle that the King can do no wrong, in a narrower assertion of it, and with this difference, that it is here no political fiction, but a believing conviction." — Hilzig. 1 Ki. iii. 9, Ps. lxxii. 1.

"Ah that Deceit should steal such gentle shapes, and with a virtuous visor hide deep vice!" — Shakespeare.

" Who dares think one thing, and another tell, my heart detests him as the gates of hell." —Pope.

[a] "The principle that social justice is an essential part of religion is exemplified in our own country, where the standard weights are enshrined in a sacred building attached to the Church where the sovereigns of England are crowned."—Wordsworth.

secure. (13) **Righteous lips,** speaking truth and goodness. **right,** i. e. upright things.[b]

Just Weights.—The point of this proverb is different from that of our low-toned though oft useful saying, "Honesty is the best policy." Every day we are discovering more and more how profoundly true that saying is, if not in the narrow view some take of it, yet in its broad issues and in the long run. But no man will be truly honest who puts policy before honesty, and bases his morality on selfish expediency. Therefore, if we are ever to reap the personal profit promised in the English proverb, we must mold our conduct on higher principles, such as that of the Hebrew proverb, which teaches us that dishonesty in trade is hateful to God, and that justice is His delight.—Pul. Com.——Our Duty to Our Neighbors.—In a Christian country surely we should have some regard for the great maxim of Christ, that we should do to others as we would that they should do unto us. The tradesman should put himself in the customer's case, the buyer in that of the seller. Brotherly kindness is the best human safeguard for integrity; but above this should be our regard for the approval of God. We please God not so much by singing hymns and offering sacrifices as by honest business. "A just weight is His delight."—Pul. Com.

14, 15. (14) **wrath .. death,** the means for executing his wrath are close to his hand. Specially true of irresponsible and capricious Eastern sovereigns.[c] Est. vii. 5—10. **pacify it,** take care not to arouse the anger. (15) **light,** or smile, sign of favor and acceptance. **is life,** not only assuring the preservation of life, but also the joy and pleasure of life. The king's smile makes glad those it shines upon. **cloud,** etc., wh. is most welcome to the parched and thirsty earth. **latter rain,** wh. fell just before harvest, to mature the crop:[d] its month was March or April.

A King's Wrath (vs. 14).—Executions in the East are often very prompt and arbitrary. In many cases the suspicion is no sooner entertained, or the cause of offense given, than the fatal order is issued; the messenger of death hurries to the unsuspecting victim, shows his warrant, and executes his orders that instant in silence and solitude. Instances of this kind are constantly occurring in the Turkish and Persian histories. "When the enemies of a great man among the Turks have gained influence enough over the prince to procure a warrant for his death, a capidgi (the name of the officer who executes these orders) is sent to him, who shows him the order he has received to carry back his head; the other takes the warrant of the grand seignior, kisses it, puts it on his head in token of respect, and then having performed his ablutions, and said his prayers, freely resigns his life. The capidgi having strangled him, cuts off his head, and brings it to Constantinople. The grand seignior's order is implicitly obeyed; the servants of the victim never attempt to hinder the executioner, although these capidgis come very often with few or no attendants." To such silent and hasty executioners the royal preacher seems to refer in that proverb, "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death; but a wise man will pacify it;" his displeasure exposes the unhappy offender to immediate death, and may fill the unsuspecting bosom with terror and dismay, like the appearance of a capidgi; but by wise and prudent conduct, a man may sometimes escape the danger.—Paxton.

16, 17. (16) **better,** etc., see ch. vii. 11.[a] Wordsworth notices the distinction in the values attached to wisdom (Heb. chocmah), the guide of life, and to intelligence (Heb. binah), lit. discernment, the faculty of distinguishing between one thing and another. (17) **highway,** raised, well-graded road: representing the habitual course of the righteous.[b] **keepeth,** by godly watching and care.

Keeping in the Way.—Every traveler has something very precious in his custody—his own soul. You will lose it, pilgrim, if you go off the way. The miners in the gold-fields of Australia, when they have gathered a large quantity of the dust, make for the city with the treasure. The mine is far in the interior, the country is wild, the bush is infested by robbers; the miners keep the road and the daylight. They march in company, and close by the guard sent to protect them. They do not

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[b] Is. xl. 2—4. "An honest death is better than a dishonest life. " — Socrates.

"There never was a kingdom so corrupt that its courts of justice were not used, in the main, against wickedness. There never was a Nero, or a Borgia, who, on the very account of his own crimes, did not find crime sore, and a trouble to him, in those about him."—Miller.

[c] " An angry word from an incensed prince has been to many a messenger of death, and has struck so great a terror upon some as if a sentence of death had been pronounced upon them." — Mat. Henry.

Pr. xix. 12, xx. 2.

[d] De. xi. 14; Je. iii. 3, v. 24.

" What sudden anger's this ? how have I reaped it? He parted frowning from me, as if ruin leap'd from his eyes; so looks the chafed lion upon the daring huntsman that has gall'd him; then makes him nothing." — Shakespeare.

"In a penitent disposition, nothing is so sweet as to fall into the loving and most gracious hands of the living God." — Du Bosc.

[a] Pr. iii. 13 — 16, iv. 5.

[b] "A noble paradox; the highway of the upright is a byway from evil; the byway of the wicked is a highway to evil. Mat. vii. 13. " — Wordsworth.

"Gold changes in value ; gold sometimes flies away like a

stray from the path among the woods, for they carry with them a treasure which they value, and they are determined to run no risks.—W. Arnot.

18, 19. (18) **Pride,** etc., see ch. xi. 2, xviii. 12. **destruction,** as seen in Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, etc. **haughty spirit,** the lifting up of the spirit. **fall,** a tottering, a downfall.[c] (19) **lowly,** R. V., "poor." **divide the spoil,** as they do who conquer in battle.

Pride and Humility.—I. The evil of pride. 1. It is based on falsity; 2. It is irreverent and ungrateful; 3. It is ugly and offensive in the sight of man; 4. It is repeatedly and severely condemned by God as a serious sin. II. The excellence of humility. 1. It is founded on a true view of our own hearts; 2. It is admirable in itself; 3. It is the very gateway into the kingdom of God; 4. It is an attribute of Christian character which commends us to the love and to the favor of our Lord; 5. It is the only ground on which we are safe.—Clarkson.

Pride.—It is a strange truth that God should dwell in a human heart at all, but it is almost self-evident that if He is to dwell in any human heart it must be in one which has been emptied of all pride, one which has, as it were, thrown down all the barriers of self-importance, and laid itself open to the incoming Spirit. If we cling to ever so little of our natural egotism; if we dwell on any imagined excellence, purity, or power of our own; if we are conscious of any elation, any springing sense of merit, which would set us, in our own judgment, on some equality with God,—how could the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity enter in? That thought of vanity would seek to divide our nature with Him, would enter into negotiations for a joint occupation, and the insulted Spirit of God would depart.——A Wise Answer.—The answer of St. Francis was very characteristic. Could he really believe that he was so vile as he said, when he compared himself with others who were obviously worse? "Ah," he said, "it is when I recount all God's exceptional mercies to me that I seem to myself the worst of men, for others have not had such favors at His hands."——Modesty.—A French writer remarks, that "the modest deportment of those who are truly wise, when contrasted with the assuming air of the young and ignorant, may be compared to the different appearance of wheat, which, while its ear is empty, holds up its head proudly, but as soon as it is filled with grain, bends modestly down, and withdraws from observation."—Whitecross.

20, 21. (20) **handleth,**[a] etc. Vulg, etc., rend. "He that attendeth to the Word of God," ch. xiii. 13. **find good,** ch. xvii. 20, xix. 8. **trusteth,** etc., led by the Word to a real and practical reliance on God.[b] (21) **wise in heart,** who have moral wisdom. **prudent,** bec. they will be sure to consider carefully their conduct. **sweetness .. learning,** lit. "grace of lips." "He who has the gift of uttering moral wisdom in winning speech increases it in himself and in others."—Spk. Com.

How to Take Hold of Life (vs. 20).—I. Wisdom is man's true strength; and, under its guidance, he best accomplishes the ends of his being. II. Wisely handling the matter of life gives to man the richest enjoyment, and presents the noblest occupation for his powers; hence by it he finds good in the fullest sense. III. The true way to handle a matter wisely is to trust in the Lord. IV. He who trusts in the Lord has a diploma for wisdom granted by inspiration: happy is he now, and happier shall he be above.—C. H. Spurgeon.

Rev. S. Lowell.—The late Rev. Samuel Lowell, of Bristol, being once at Brighton, expressed a wish to walk on the Steyne, and to have the public characters pointed out to him. Amongst the rest, a celebrated comedian was noticed. "Ah," said Mr. Lowell, "is that ——, my old schoolfellow? I'll speak to him." He accosted him, and the following conversation took place:—Lowell: "Sir, I believe I have the pleasure of addressing Mr. ——." Player: "Yes, sir, my name is ——; but I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with you." L.: "What! not know your old schoolfellow, Samuel Lowell?" P.: "What! are you Samuel Lowell?" L.: "Yes, I am." P.: "Well, I am very glad to see you; now tell me your history in five minutes." L.: "First, my name is Samuel Lowell; I am a Dissenting minister at Bristol, where I have lived up-

frightened bird from the nest which it has warmed; but wisdom abides in winter and in summer." — Parker.

[c] Comp. Bunyan's Pilgrim Song —

"He that is down need fear no fall, he that is low no pride."

[d] "Humility is much better than that high-spiritedness which, though it carry away the honor and wealth of the world, makes God a man's enemy and the devil his master." — Mat. Henry.

"Pride is a slippery place, where we are sure to slip and fall; humility is the ground where devotion finds its home, where God is ready with the shield of his guardian ship, where human souls attain to their maturity in Jesus Christ their Lord." — Clarkson.

[a] "Discretion in speech is more than eloquence." —Lord Bacon.

[b] "This is the way to walk contentedly and cheerfully homewards, leaning and resting all the way on Him who is our guide and our strength." — Archbp. Leighton.

"A half-religion does not give even half-happiness. Serve God with a whole heart, if you want whole-hearted enjoyment.'"

"It is not uncommon with bad men to set off their corrupt sentiments by dressing them in all the beauties of language, and by this means multitudes are seduced into error and folly."—Lawson.

wards of twenty years; I have a large family." P.: "So you are a Dissenting minister; well, you are a happy man, for you go to your work with pleasure, and perform it with pleasure: you are a happy man. I go to my work like a fool, to please fools: I am not a happy man.—R. T. S. Trust in God.—If a man is following a guide in some difficult and dangerous path, it is necessary to his peace of mind that he should know enough about his guide to be assured that he will lead him aright. If he does not know enough about him to know this, he may be haunted by underlying doubts and fears which will banish all comfort from his mind. When a ship's crew have so little knowledge of their captain's character and ability as to be uncertain whether he is able or whether he intends to bring his ship safely to her destined port, they will be possessed by a spirit of uneasiness. But if they know that all his powers will be directed to that end, and that his ability is equal to the task, they will sail through the deep in comparative rest and peace. So no human soul can possess a confidence in God which will keep it calm and restful amid the waves of life's sea, unless he has made himself acquainted with the character of God—unless he knows so much about Him as to feel assured that His ways and works are perfectly wise and good.—Hom. Com.

22. Understanding, i. e. discretion. **wellspring,**[c] ch. xiv. 27, a fountain always flowing, and never dry. "The possessor of understanding has in himself a source of comfort and a vivifying power, which is as refreshing as a cool spring to a thirsty traveler." **instruction .. folly,** R. V., "correction of fools," etc.; "his own folly is the scourge which punishes him; refusing the teaching of wisdom, he makes misery for himself, deprives himself of the happiness which virtue gives, and pierces himself through with many sorrows."

Vigor of the Understanding.—Nobody knows what strength of parts he has till he has tried them. And of the understanding one may most truly say that its force is greater generally than it thinks, till it is put to it. And therefore the proper remedy here is but to set the mind to work, and apply the thoughts vigorously to the business; for it holds in the struggles of the mind as in those of war, dum putant se vincere, vicere. A persuasion that we shall overcome any difficulties that we meet with in the sciences, seldom fails to carry us through them. Nobody knows the strength of his mind, and the force of steady and regular application, till he has tried. This is certain; he that sets out upon weak legs will not only go farther, but grow stronger, too, than one who, with a vigorous constitution and firm limbs, only sits still.—Locke.

23, 24. (23) **teacheth,** or maketh wise; prompteth wise words. Wisdom in the heart is the main matter. **learning,** sound reasoning, and forcible argument, wh. may convince the judgment. (24) **honeycomb,** comp. Ps. xix. 10. **sweet,** and so giving pleasure; and healing, so as to renew health. "This implies that honey took its place not only among the luxuries, but also among the medicines of the Israelites." **bones,** regarded as the strength of the man: "our innermost and most essential being."—Miller.

Pleasant Words.—I. Pleasant words are good in social intercourse. They are said to cost little, while they are worth much. But often they are not to be had without trouble. 1. Sympathy; 2. Self-repression; 3. Thought. II. Pleasant words are needed in Christian teaching. 1. In teaching the young; 2. In interesting the careless; 3. In comforting the sorrowful. III. Pleasant words are found in the gospel of Christ. 1. They tell us of God's love; 2. They portray Christ; 3. They invite men to salvation; 4. They reveal the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven.—Pul. Com.

Pleasant Words.—Words of honey soon cloy if no satisfying thoughts lie behind them. Pleasant words should be more than words—they should be messengers of healing, suggestions of helpfulness. Now, as some trouble is required for the production of this kind of speech in daily intercourse, it is well to consider how valuable it is. It draws hearts together. It lightens the load of life and oils its wheels. There are enough of clouds about the souls of most men to make it desirable that we should shed all the sunshine that we possibly can. It would be like

" 'Tis the property of all true knowledge, especially spiritu a l, to enlarge the soul by filling it; to enlarge it without swelling it; to make it more cap a b l e, and more earnest to know, the more it knows." —Sprat.

c "The thought is here in the first instance unquestionably of the blessing wh. comes directly to the possessor fr. his wisdom, and not of its life-dispensing, life-promoting influence on others." —O. Zockler.

"Extremes meet in a liv e l y Christian. He is at once very high and very lowly. God puts all His treasures in the power of a soul that rises to reach the upper springs, as the Andes intercept water from the sky sufficient to fertilize a continent." — Arnot.

"There is no sweetness t h a t entereth into the lips to be compared to the sweetness that cometh from the lips."

"Though wisdom in the heart is of the chiefest worth, yet eloquence of the lips is an addition to it. St. A u g u s t ine, speaking of himself, saith, that when he heard S t. Ambrose prea c h i n g, 'I stood by as one careless of the matter he spake, and a contemner of it, and I was delighted with the sweetness of his words; but together with the words which I respected, th e matter came into my heart which I neglected, and while I opened my heart to receive how elo-

a migration from Northern gloom to Southern sunshine for all speech to be seasoned with truly pleasant words.—Pul. Com.

25, 26. (25) **There is,** etc., ch. xiv. 12. (26) **He that laboureth,** etc., R. V., "The appetite of the laboring man laboreth for him." Hunger is a strong incentive to work. **mouth,** etc., R. V. marg., "urgeth him thereto." His mouth (we should say "stomach") must have food to put in it. The necessity of satisfying his appetite urges him to work.[a]

The Blessing of Hunger.—I. At bottom, hunger, the need of bread, is the great sting and goad to all exertion, to useful activity in general. II. Hence hunger is the helper of our toil. And we may thank God for every stimulus to do our best. Have not the best things been done for the world in every department by poor men? III. As applied to religion, it is the hunger of the soul which prompts us to seek for righteousness; the emptiness of other joys which sends us to the feast of the gospel. Through toil and trouble, the worst unrest and distress can alone be overcome.—Johnson.

Oubliettes (vs. 25).—On the Lake of Geneva there stands a gloomy castle, where prisoners used to be confined, and in it there was a dark dungeon, with a dreadful staircase called the "oubliettes." Sometimes the keeper went to a poor prisoner, and told him that now he was to obtain his life and liberty, and requested him to follow him. The prisoner went along thankful and glad, with visions of home and happiness. He reached the staircase, and was told to go down, step by step, in the darkness, that he might reach the castle gate, and so be free. Alas! it was a broken stair. A few steps down into the darkness, and the next step he took he found no footing, but fell down fifty or sixty feet, to be dashed to pieces amongst rocks, and then to have his mangled body buried in the lake.—Anec. Illus. of O. T.

27—30. (27) **diggeth,** etc., shovels out evil, R. V., "deviseth mischief." He does not work to satisfy hunger, but toils hard at mischief and wickedness. **burning fire,** i. e. "heated calumnious speeches." (28) **soweth,** R. V., "scattereth abroad." **strife,** one feature of the evil at wh. he works. **whisperer,** or backbiter: one who suggests, rather than states, evil things. A prater, talebearer. **separateth,** alienateth, divideth, makes misunderstandings between. **chief friends,** those in closest intimacy. (29) **violent man,** or man of mischief, ch. iii. 31, marg. (30) **shutteth,** etc., as ch. vi. 12—14.[a] **moving,** R. V., "compresseth," this denotes firm determination, hence evil is sure to follow.

A Law Against Bad Company.—An ancient historian, mentioning the laws which Charondas gave the Thurians, says: "He enacted a law with reference to an evil, on which former lawgivers had not animadverted—that of keeping bad company. As he conceived that the morals of the good were sometimes quite ruined by their dissolute acquaintance; that vice was apt, like an infectious disease, to spread itself and extend its contagion, he expressly enjoined, that none should engage in any intimacy or familiarity with immoral persons; appointed that an accusation might be exhibited for keeping bad company; and laid a heavy fine on such as were convicted of it."—Bib. Ill.

The Backbiter.—

He that shall rail against his absent friends,
Or hears them scandalized, and not defends,
Sports with their fame, and speaks whate'er he can,
And only to be thought a witty man,
Tells tales, and brings his friends in disesteem,
That man's a knave—be sure beware of him.—Horace.

31. **If,** this word should be omitted; read, "it shall be found." "Grace is the glory of old age." The O. Test. teaches that the wicked shall not live out half their days, hence gray hairs are the reward of righteousness.

32, 33. (32) **slow to anger,** not easily roused: ch. xiv. 17, 29. **ruleth,**[b] etc., here meaning the temper, the passionate movement and excitement of the spirit. "That is the noblest victory wh. we obtain over ourselves." Comp. the death of Alex. the Great at the age of 32 fr. debauchery. (33) **lot,** forecasting the future. **lap,** or fold of the garment: sometimes called

quently he spake, it entered also into my heart how truly he spake.' " — Jermin.

[a] Ecc. vi. 7: 2 Th. iii. 10 — 12.

"The animal soul as distinguished fr. the higher intellectual, moral, and religious nature, feels the pressure of life's necessities and impels to efforts for their relief." —O. Zockler.

"Self - love is a damning sin where it reigns as the chief principle of action ; but the want of self - love where it is required as no less criminal." — Lawson.

" Sluggish idleness — the nurse of sin." —Spencer.

" There is nothing so well meant, but it may be ill-interpreted." — Bp. Patrick.

[a] "The physiognomy of the slanderer, the man of Belial,— the half - closed eyes that never look you straight in the face, the restlessness or cunning of wh. biting the lips is the surest indication." —Spk. Com.

"We honor them whose heads have been encircled with crowns by the hands of men, and will we refuse honor to those whom God Himself hath crowned with silver hairs? " — Lawson.

"As the completion of a work is more glorious than the beginning, so is age more glorious than youth. " — Pulsford.

[b] Mat. v 5.

the bosom.[c] **disposing,** etc., the final decision; the result of drawing.[a] The events that seem most fortuitous are really ordered by God.

Self-control.—A young man desired to become the disciple of a philosopher and attend his lectures. "Go first," said he, "to the marble quarries and carry stones for three years, among the malefactors condemned to the mines." He did so and reported to the philosopher at the end of the time. He was sent back to repeat his experience, and to pay money to those who should most bitterly insult and revile him, but to make no answer. He obeyed, and after another three years reported to his tutor. He was told that he might now go to Athens and be initiated into the schools of the philosophers. At the city gate an old man sat, who made it his business to abuse all who passed. The young man said nothing, but laughed to hear himself so outrageously abused. The old man asked the reason for his conduct. He said, "I have given money these three years to all who have treated me as you do; and shall I not laugh now it costs me nothing to be reviled?" The old man answered, "Welcome to the schools of philosophy! You are worthy of a seat in them." He added, "Behold the gate of heaven. All the faithful servants of the Lord have entered into this joy by suffering injuries and humiliations with meekness and patience." It is related of many that they have so disciplined themselves as to be able to endure reviling, opposition or slight without the least emotion of anger or resentment by the power of philosophy alone.—Foster's Cycl.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEETH.

1. **Better,** or sweeter. **dry morsel,** i. e. a dry piece of bread, without any wine, or vinegar, to take with it.[b] **quietness,** freedom from quarrelling.[c] **sacrifices,** R. V. "feasting." "A house full of sacrifices is one abounding in sumptuous feasts."—Spk. Com.

Family Scenes (vss. 1, 2).—We have here three things which are often found in household life. I. A discontented temper. II. A worthless son. III. A valuable servant. 1. A well-tried servant gets moral influence in a house; 2. And sometimes shares the fortunes of the house. Learn—(1) That the temper of a man's soul is more important to him than his temporal condition; (2) That the power of character is superior to the power of station.—Thomas.

Family Worship.—Philip Henry was most exemplary in his practice of family devotion. Besides the regular plan of reading and expounding the Scriptures, morning and evening, he used strongly to recommend singing: saying that it was a way of exhibiting godliness, like Rahab's scarlet thread, to such as pass by our windows. His children and servants used to take notes of his expositions; and the foundation of Matthew Henry's Commentary was laid from these notes. Besides this, on Thursday evening, instead of reading, he used to catechise his children and servants upon the Assembly's Catechism, with the proofs, or sometimes in a smaller catechism; or else they read, and he examined them in some other useful book; and on Saturday evening they gave him an account of what they could remember of the chapters they had read through during the week, each a several part in order. Besides this, he had also days of humiliation with his family. The consequence was that, in addition to the blessings resulting to his own children, many who came to live with them dated their first impressions from these services, and gave God thanks that they ever came under his roof.—Bowes.

2. **wise servant,** ch. xiv. 35: such as Eliezer of Damascus, Ge. xv. 2. **have rule,** as Ziba, 2 Sa. xvi. 4. **causeth shame,**[a] lit. a degenerate, bad, unprofitable son. **part .. brethren,** i. e. from his place as slave he shall rise to get a place as son.

Influence of a Wise Man.—A servant who understands his duties, and conscientiously fulfils them, will win respect and confidence, and these will give him influence in his master's house, and over all with whom his business brings him into contact. There are many instances, both in the history of private families and in the history of courts, in which the judicious conduct of a subordinate person has averted evils which would other-

c Pr. xxi. 14.

"We are wont to call the doubled or folded front of the dress the lap."— O. Zockler.

a "How sweetly doth God dispose of all second causes, that while they do their own will they do His."— Bp. Hall.

"None were to triumph in Rome that had not got five victories; and he shall never triumph in heaven that subdueth not his five senses." — Isidorus.

"Such an one is more excellent than he that is strong of body; for he can bear reproaches, which are more intolerable burdens than any that are wont to be laid upon the backs of the stronge st. " — Muffet.

b Pr. xv. 17; 1 Ti. vi. 6.

c "There may be peace and quietness where there are not three meals a day, provided there be a joint satisfaction in God's providence, and a mutual satisfaction in each other's prudence. " — Mat. Henry.

"The secret of happiness lies rather in limiting our desires than in increasing our substance."

"If love be the entertainer, it matters not much what the provision be." — Jermin.

a Pr. x. 5.

"The author of the Prov. felt keenly on this point, and had bitter apprehensions, wh. were too fully verified in his son's career. " — Wordsworth.

wise have followed the crimes of a son of the house, and the father of such a son can but acknowledge such services, and reward them, if he is possessed of any gratitude. But whether he does so or not, it is an ordination of God's providence, which we see in constant operation around us, that a wise man is a fool's master. It is a law of nature that a stronger physical body shall govern the weaker, if no other power interferes, and it is a law in the universe of mind that the stronger mind shall rule the weak, and make it serve his purpose in some way. This is the secret of many of the social changes which are always going on, in which some who were born to affluence come down to penury, and those who were born in obscurity take their places.—Hom. Com.

3. **fining pot,**[b] see ch. xxvii. 21. The intimation is that man's work of testing and trying can only concern things. Man's fining pot is for metals, he has no fining pot for hearts, God only has the power to prove and try hearts; see Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

Trials Polish.—It is rough work that polishes. Look at the pebbles on the shore! Far inland, where some arm of the sea thrusts itself deep into the bosom of the land, and, expanding into a salt loch, lies girdled by the mountains, sheltered from the storms that agitate the deep, the pebbles on the beach are rough, not beautiful; angular, not rounded. It is where long white lines of breakers roar, and the rattling shingle is rolled about the strand, that its pebbles are rounded and polished. As in nature, as in the arts, so in grace; it is rough treatment that gives souls, as well as stones, their lustre; the more the diamond is cut, the brighter it sparkles; and in what seems hard dealing, their God has no end in view but to perfect His people's graces. Our Father, and kindest of fathers. He afflicts not willingly: He sends tribulations, but hear Paul tell their purpose: "Tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, experience hope."—Guthrie.

4. **wicked doer,** one inwardly corrupt. Such a one readily attends to deceit, mischief, and injury when it is spoken. **a liar,** one full of inward insincerity and hypocrisy. **naughty,** or calumnious tongue, R. V. "mischievous." These men find food and pleasure in all kinds of wicked discourse.

Liars.—In the general postoffice sorting room there is a hole in the wall, darkened by a grating through which a frequent watch is kept upon the letter-sorters. Notwithstanding this, deceit often goes undetected by man, but never undetected by God. A confirmed liar is like a crooked, knotty tree, fit only for the fire. We despise and discard a watch that never tells the true time, a ruler that will not enable you to rule a straight line, a portrait that is not faithful; so God will, at the judgment-day, dismiss from His presence "all liars."—J. H. Vincent.

5, 6. (5) **mocketh,** etc., ch. xiv. 31. **glad at calamities,** by wh. men are sometimes suddenly made poor. Rejoicing in evil that befalls others is one of the most hateful forms of sin. **unpunished,** Heb. "held innocent." They shall surely come into the judgments of God.[a] (6) **Children's children,** descendants in two or three generations to continue the family name and estate. **fathers,** or honored ancestors. Parents rejoice in a virtuous line of descendants; children in a long line of noble ancestors.

A Godly Ancestry.—John Paton, that noble missionary to the New Hebrides, has given us a vivid picture of his early home. It was a plain lowland cottage, with its "but and ben," and between the two a small chamber with a diminutive window shedding diminutive light on the scene. To this room the children saw the father retire oftentimes a day, and shut to the door; they would occasionally hear the pathetic pleadings of the voice that prayed, and they learnt to slip past the door on tiptoe. They got to understand whence came that happy light upon their father's face; they recognized it as a reflection from the Divine presence, in the consciousness of which he lived. Let a child draw his first breath in a house which possesses a sanctuary like that; let him come to know by his quick childish perceptions that there is in his home a ladder set up from earth to heaven, and that the angels of God go up and down on it; let him feel the Divine atmosphere in his face, the air all suffused with heavenly light, the sweetness and the calm which prevail in a place where a constant communion is maintained,—and in after years he will

"Better, the poorest hold upon the Church, if there be the humbler hold upon the service of the Most High." —Miller.

b "The art of smelting ore, wh. must have been known to the Israelites fr. the time of their sojourning in Egypt, but had probably been brought into fresh prominence through intercourse with the Phoenicians and with Sheba, here becomes a parable." — Spk. Com.

"When we are burned in the heat of persecution then are we tried in the holdfast of our faith." — Tertullian.

" Falsehood is fire in stubble; it likewise turns all the light stuff around it into its own substance for a moment, one crackling, blazing moment, and then dies; and all its contents are scattered in the wind, without place or evidence of their existence, as viewless as the wind which scatters them." — S. T. Coleridge.

a Eze. xxv. 6, 7.

"That was a beautiful motto of Tyndale, the translator of the English Bible, who was an earnest preacher and teacher—'Banish me to the poorest corner of the world if you please, but let me teach little children and preach the Gospel.' "

"To pour contempt upon the current coin with the king's image on it, is treason against the sovereign. No less contempt is it of the Sacred Majesty, to despise

the poor, who have, no less than the rich, the king's image upon them." —Bridges.

"One so corrupt as to take a bribe, evinces his high estimate of it by subjection to its influence." —Fausset.

Ex. xxiii. 8; Pr. xviii. 16, xix. 6.

"The heights of Mount Taurus are infested by eagles, who prey upon any cranes that may fly near them. When flying, the crane keeps up a constant cackle. This noise brings the eagles down upon them. It is said that the older cranes, sensible of their weakness, before they venture upon a flight, take a stone in their mouths large enough to enforce silence."

"Force not thyself above, degrade not thyself below thy condition." — Wohlfarth.

a "The warning is directed against the tendency which leads a man to dwell with irritating iteration on a past offense, instead of burying it in oblivion." — Spk. Com.

1 Ti. v. 13.

"Indeed, the more a person is emptied of real worth the more room is there in him for self-inflation."

b "There are some that are actuated by a spirit of opposition, that will contradict for contradiction sake, that will go on frowardly in their wicked ways in spite of all restraint and check." — Mat. Henry.

c 1 Ki. ii. 29 — 34.

be aware of voices which call and hands which reach out to him from his childhood, connecting him with heaven, and even the most convincing negations of unbelief will be powerless to shake the faith which is deep as the springs of his life.—Harper.

7, 8. (7) **Excellent speech,** better as R. V. marg. "arrogant speech." A nabal, a "vicious fool," ought not to flaunt his unwisdom and his iniquities before the eyes of men, but to keep them hidden as much as possible. **lying lips,** such as could not be trusted or relied on. **prince,** or noble, princely-minded. To such, crafty sly artifices of speech are very unbecoming. (8) **gift,**[b] bribe. "The gnome expresses the idea that a bribe is like a bright jewel that dazzles the sight and affects the mind of him who receives it." The tone of this verse is half satirical. **precious stone,** dazzling the eyes of him that receives it. **turneth,** a well-cut jewel sparkles in every direction. "Wheresoever he turneth himself he dealeth wisely."—Delitzsch, i. e. the craven ally works hard to please his master. "Inflamed by sordid hopes and the love of gain, he acts with all possible skill and prudence in order to work out his wages and show that he was rightly selected to receive the present. The verse merely states a common trait among unscrupulous men, and pronounces no judgment upon it."—Pul. Com.

Truth Rewarded.—Hegiage was a celebrated Arabian warrior, but ferocious and cruel. Among a number of prisoners whom he had condemned to death was one who, having obtained a moment's audience, said, "You ought, sir, to pardon me, because, when Abdarrahman was cursing you, I represented to him that he was wrong; and ever since that time I have lost his friendship." Hegiage asked him if he had any witness of his having done this; and the soldier mentioned another prisoner, who was likewise about to suffer death. The prisoner was called and interrogated, and, having confirmed the fact, Hegiage granted the first his pardon. He then asked the witness if he had likewise taken his part against Abdarrahman. But he, still respecting truth, answered that he had not, because he believed it was not his duty to do so. Hegiage, notwithstanding his ferocity, was struck with the prisoner's greatness of spirit. "Well," said he, after a moment's pause, "suppose I were to grant you life and liberty, should you still be my enemy?" "No," said the prisoner. "That's enough," said Hegiage; "your bare word is sufficient; you have given undoubted proof of your love for truth. Go, preserve the life that is less dear to you than honor and sincerity; your liberty is the just reward of your virtue."

9, 10. (9)**covereth,** casteth a veil over it: is unwilling to blazon it abroad, but helps the sinner to recover himself from it. **seeketh love,** tries to act on the principle of "charity," wh. "hideth a multitude of sins." **repeateth,** etc., R. V. "harpeth on;" spreads evil report.[a] **separateth,** etc., comp. ch. xvi. 28. (10) **reproof,** wh. is correction by counsel. **entereth,** Heb. "aweth;" has a more gracious and humbling influence upon. **more,** R. V. "deeper."

Feuds.—He that always returns to old grievances separateth very friends; that is to say, he cannot let a matter rest; he must go again and again to it; even when it is apparently buried, he must exhume it, and dwell upon its enormity, and show how impossible it is to overlook a transgression so great. Sometimes men forgive sins or errors on the part of others, but their friends insist upon keeping up the old feud, saying that whatever the original sufferer may have pardoned or overlooked, his friends must insist upon inflicting penalty upon the offender. There would be more forgiveness in the world were controversies confined to the two parties immediately interested in them; but friends or outsiders or critics will make note of the matter, and irritate and exaggerate and do all in their power to make every sore a continually open wound. The one cure for this is baptism into the Spirit of Christ, a full and glowing realization of the presence of Christ in all the thought and intention of life.—Parker.

11, 12. (11) **evil man,** or a contumacious person.[b] **rebellion,** is always on the outlook for opportunity of raising insurrection. **cruel messenger,**[c] "the king's officer sent to punish him." (12) **bear .. whelps,** the strongest type of brute ferocity. **in his folly,** i. e. in one of his paroxysms of passion.

Phases of Evil.—I. The main characteristic of a sinner is that he is a rebel against the moral order of the universe. II. A sinner is a restless being. III. A sinner is an injurious man. IV. A sinner is an ungrateful being. V. God will, sooner or later, call His rebellious subjects to account. VI. The sinner brings evil upon his posterity.—Hom. Com.

A Bear Robbed of her Whelps.—The furious passions of the female bear never mount so high, nor burn so fiercely, as when she happens to be deprived of her young. When she returns to her den, and misses the objects of her love and care, she becomes almost frantic with rage. Disregarding every consideration of danger to herself, she attacks with intense ferocity every animal that comes in her way, "and, in the bitterness of her heart, will dare to attack even a band of armed men." "A more desperate attempt, therefore, can scarcely be performed than to carry off her young in her absence. The moment she returns and misses them her passions are inflamed; her scent enables her to track the plunderer; and unless he has reached some place of safety before the infuriated animal overtake him, his only safety is in dropping one of the cubs, and continuing to flee; for the mother, attentive to its safety, carries it home to her den before she renews the pursuit." Dreadful as it is to meet a bear in such circumstances, it is yet more dangerous to meet a "fool in his folly," a furious and revengeful man, under the influence of his impetuous passions, and his heart determined on their immediate gratification. It is possible to escape the vengeance of a bereaved bear by surrendering part of the litter, and diverting part of her pursuit; but no consideration of interest or duty, no partial gratifications, can arrest his furious career, or divert his attention. Reason, degraded and enslaved, lends all her remaining wisdom and energy to passion, and renders the fool more cruel and mischievous than the bear, in proportion as she is superior to instinct.—Paxton.

13, 14. (13) **evil for good,**[a] evil in the sense of injury. **evil .. house,** evil in the sense of misfortune. "The punishments of ingratitude descend to a man's posterity."—Nicholls. (14) **letteth out water,** when the water first trickles over the dam it can be easily remedied, but when it has eaten away the dam then the torrent rushes through.[b] **meddled with,** R. V. "before there be quarrelling;" "before it waxes warm."—Gesenius. "Before it shows its teeth."—Hitzig.

15, 16. (15) **justifieth,** etc., a forensic term meaning to declare righteous: i. e. he who treats the unjust as though he were just, and the just as though he were unjust. So confusing moral relations. **abomination,** or abhorrence. (16) **price,** or wealth. Render, "Why is there a price in the hand of a fool? Is it to get wisdom when he has no heart for it?"[c] i. e. wisdom cannot be purchased for any price.

17, 18. (17) **friend,** etc., ch. xviii. 24. **a brother,** better, he is a brother, more than a friend, in the time of adversity. R. V. marg. "and is born as a brother for adversity." **born for,** the time of adversity brings him out and shows him at his best. Stuart reads, "a brother for adversity must be born," i. e. none such are now to be found. (18) **striketh hands,** in making bargains, without duly weighing the responsibilities under wh. he comes. **in .. friend,** R. V. "neighbour;" who can be a witness and make the pledge obligatory.

A Brother's Highest Use (vs. 17).—I. Adversity is the common lot of brotherhood. II. The ties of brotherhood are formed for adversity. III. Adversity tends to sanctify the intercourse of the brotherhood. IV. In adversity we are led to know, in an especial manner, the presence of the Elder Brother with the brotherhood. V. It is by adversity that the whole brotherhood are gathered at last into our Father's house above.—Studies for the Pulpit.

Friendship.—A friend shares my sorrow and makes it but a moiety; but he swells my joy and makes it double. For so two channels divide the river and lessen it into rivulets and make it fordable, and apt to drink up at the first revels of the Syrian star; but two torches do not divide, but increase the flame. And though my tears are the sooner dried up when they run on my friend's cheek in furrows of compassion; yet when my flame has kindled his lamp, we unite the glories, and make them radiant, like the golden candlesticks that burn before the throne of God;

"Had I a careful and pleasant companion, that would show me my angry face in a glass, I should not at all take it ill. To behold a man's self so unnaturally disguised and disordered will conduce not a little to the impeachment of anger."—Plutarch.

"A door of mercy! and a ransom fixed for sin! and only one class to fail! and they spontaneously rebels! These are the men that go in search of evil, and this is the meaning of the wise man."—Miller.

[a] Comp. Ro. xii. 17; 1 Th. v. 15; 1 Pe. iii. 9.

"To render good for evil is Divine; good for good is human; evil for evil is brutish; evil for good is devilish."—Bridges.

[b] "He who begins strife is like him that tears away the dam fr. the waters."—Luther.

[c] "Why is he, as it were, sent into the market with so much money in his hand for buying wisdom, and his heart is not set on the purchase?"—Wordsworth.

"It is bad to live in a state where everything is forbidden, but worse to live in a state where everything is allowed. The Roman empire suffered more oppression under the administration of the mild Nerva than in the bloody reign of Domitian."

"The essential note of true friendship is invariability of affection."

"The men who go with us into Gethsemane are the men who are our truest friends."

because they shine by numbers, by unions, and confederations of light and joy."—Jeremy Taylor.

19—21. (19) **loveth strife,** Jas. i. 20. The quarrelsome involve themselves in guilt. **exalteth his gate,**[a] R. V. "raiseth high," builds a stately house; a sign of ambition and arrogancy. **destruction,** it is as if he did, for he surely makes himself conspicuous to the robber, etc. (20) **froward,** etc., comp. ch. xi. 20, xvi. 28. **perverse tongue,** i. e. turned hither and thither, says one thing today, and something contrary tomorrow. (21) **fool,** first clause kesil, conceited, offensive, folly; second clause, nabal, dull, stupid child.

[a] "Private houses were sometimes built ostentatiously with a lofty gateway, wh. would naturally breed jealousy in the neighbors, and invite the visits of the tax-gatherer; and in a time when law was weak and property very unsafe, might easily lead to the ruin of its owner." —Sharpe.

"High towers must look for lightning."

Danger of Ambition.—Matthew Henry gives the general bearing of this passage when he says, "Those that are ambitious and aspiring expose themselves to a great deal of trouble, such as many times ends in their ruin. He that exalteth his gate builds a stately house, at least a fine frontispiece, that he may overtop and outshine his neighbors; he seeks his own destruction, and takes a deal of pains to ruin himself; he makes his gate so large, that his house and estate go out at it." The moral here suggested is, that extravagance leads to ruin; or, it may be, that the most humble are the most safe. It is the practice of the Arabs to ride on horseback into the houses of those they intend to plunder, and hence the doors are designedly built low to prevent the intrusion. Thus a French abbé, describing his admission into a monastery near Jerusalem, says, "The passage is so low that it will scarcely admit a horse, and it is shut by a gate of iron, strongly secured on the inside. As soon as we entered, it was again made fast with various bolts and bars of iron—a precaution extremely necessary in a desert place, exposed to the incursions and insolent attacks of the Arabs." Among the Persians, too, the same defensive measures are employed, in order "to hinder the servants of the great from entering it on horseback, which, when any act of oppression is going on, they would make no scruple to do."—The Quiver.

[b] Lit. "A merry heart giveth a happy heating."

"Those who live on high lands and breathe the pure mountain air, are conscious of an exuberance of animal life, of which even perfectly healthy people who live in the valleys know nothing. So, men who live in the higher regions of spiritual life know a "joy in God"—are sensible of an uplifting of spirit—to which ordinary and everyday Christians are strangers." —Preacher'sCom.

"True friends visit us in prosperity only when invited, but in adversity they come without invitation." —Theophrastus.

"Friendship contracted with the wicked decreases from hour to hour, like the early shadow of the morning; but friendship formed with the virtuous will increase like the shadow of evening till the sun of life shall set."—Herder.

22, 23. (22) **doeth good,** R. V. "is a good," ch. xii. 25. **medicine,** or "promoteth health." **broken spirit,** broken by afflictions or conscience of sins. **drieth the bones,** wastes the radical moisture, exhausts the very marrow, destroys all life and vigor. (23) **gift,** or bribe. **bosom,** fold of dress where the purse was kept. **pervert . . judgment,** judges had no stated salary, hence the unprincipled were corruptible.

The Merry Heart.—What will conduce to cheerfulness of spirit? 1. A heart at peace with God. 2. A vivid realization of unseen realities. 3. A life of active love.—Hom. Com.

Cheerfulness.—Give me, Oh, give us the man who sings at his work! Be his occupation what it may, he is equal to any of those who follow the same pursuit in silent sullenness. He will do more in the same time —he will do it better—he will persevere longer. One is scarely sensible of fatigue whilst he marches to music. The very stars are said to make harmony as they revolve in their spheres. Wondrous is the strength of cheerfulness, altogether past calculation its power of endurance. Efforts to be permanently useful, must be uniformly joyous—a spirit all sunshine—graceful from very gladness—beautiful because bright.—Carlyle. ——Cheerfulness.—Cheerfulness is the best promoter of health. Repinings and secret murmurs of heart, give imperceptible strokes to those delicate fibres of which the vital parts are composed, and wear out the machine insensibly, not to mention those violent ferments which they stir up in the blood, and those irregular disturbed motions which they raise in the animal spirits. I scarce remember in my own observation, to have met with many old men, or with such who (to use our English phrase) wear well, that had not at least a certain indolence in their humor, if not a more than ordinary gaiety and cheerfulness of heart. The truth of it is, health and cheerfulness mutually beget each other; with this difference, that we seldom meet with a great degree of health which is not attended with a certain cheerfulness, but very often see cheerfulness where there is no great degree of health.—Addison. If any man has springs of cheerfulness and of good nature in him, in the name of God of benevolence, let him not stop them up. Let him rather keep them open that they may be a source of joy and consolation to his fellow-men.—Beecher.

24, 25. (24) **before,** i. e. in the sight of; in the presence of. **understanding,** i. e. the discerning man. **ends .. earth,** the fool is looking everywhere, dissipating his powers, and never accomplishing anything. (25) **grief,** or cross, vexation, see vs. 21.

Authority of Parents.—It is a great mistake to suppose that what will make a child stare, or tremble, impresses more authority. The violent emphasis, the hard, stormy voice, the menacing air, only weakens authority; it commands a good thing as if it were only a bad, and fit to be no way impressed, save by some stress of assumption. Let the command be always given quietly, as if it had some right in itself and could utter itself to the conscience by some emphasis of its own. Is it not well understood that a bawling and violent teamster has no real government of his team? Is it not practically seen that a skilful commander of one of those huge floating cities, moved by steam on our American waters, manages and works every motion by the waving of a hand, or by signs that pass in silence—issuing no order at all, save in the gentlest undertone of voice? So when there is, or is to be, a real order and law in the house, it will come of no hard and boisterous, or fretful and termagent way of commandment. Gentleness will speak the word of firmness, and firmness will be clothed in the airs of true gentleness.—Bushnell.

26. punish, R. V. marg. "fine." **is not good,** i. e. is very wicked, just as we say "not a few" when we mean "many." **for equity,** better read, "is not equity." To strike one who is noble is against right. It may, however, mean to strike a prince for judging right.

Condemning the Just.—Those who have thus unjustly condemned the righteous, have found in their own personal experience that "to punish the just is not good"—not good for their own peace of mind—not good for their future reputation—not good for the nation who instigated them or permitted them to do the deed. Haman found that it was not good for him to aim a blow at the upright Mordecai when he was himself hanged upon his own gallows; the Persian princes found it was not good to strike a prince for equity when they were themselves cast into the den of lions; Judge Jeffries found it out when he lay face to face with death in the Tower. And among all the nations whose history has confirmed the truth of the text, none stands out so prominently as that one whose king was the author of the proverb. The punishment of the just—the striking of moral princes for equity—was one of the most prominent of their national crimes, and He whose death at their hands filled up the measure of their iniquity, declared that it was the great cause of their national ruin. (Matt. xxiii. 29—35). The Jewish nation has been for nearly nineteen centuries a witness that "to punish the just is not good, nor to strike princes for equity."—Hom. Com.

27, 28. (27) **spareth,** does not give them forth too freely.[a] **excellent,** or cool spirit; calm, considerate. (28) **holdeth his peace,** does not utter and show what is in him, may pass for a wise man. Silence is good.[b] The man who says little may learn much. The man who is constantly talking learns little.

Speech.—Considering what mischief may be done with the tongue, it is not to be wondered at that we are cautioned against excessive speech. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression, but he that refraineth his lips doeth wisely." One who is always pouring out talk is sure to be pouring out folly. The wise man, feeling that all his words must be tested and weighed, is not able to talk very much. When your money is all in copper, you may afford to throw it about, but when it is all in gold you have to be cautious. A Christian feels that for every idle word he utters he will have to give account, and as none of his words are to be idle they must be comparatively few. Shall we not put our lips under our Lord's control, that the answer of our tongue may be from Him? While we seek daily to subject our hearts to Him, shall we not in a peculiar and a direct manner subject our tongues, to Him? for while a subjected heart may keep the mouth from speaking evil, if the tongue is to speak well and to be employed for all its noble uses it must be immediately moved by God, our lips must be touched with a coal from the

"Cheerful Christians are strong Christians; for 'the joy of the Lord is your strength.'" Neh. viii. 10.

"We can do our work best when we do it gladly."

"Thou art the only comfort of my age: like an old tree, I stand amongst the storms; thou art the only limb that I have left me, my dear green branch! and how I prize thee, child, heaven only knows."—Lee.

"In exalting the faculties of the soul, we annihilate, in a great degree, the delusion of the senses." —Aime Marten.

"To be perfectly just is an attribute of Divine nature; to be so to the utmost of our abilities, is the glory of man." — Addison.

"When one struck our Henry VI., he only said, 'Forsooth, you do wrong yourself more than me, to strike the Lord's anointed!'" —Trapp.

[a] "The more a man knows the less he is apt to talk; for his wisdom gives him such an excellent composure of spirit that it represses his heat, his forwardness and haste, and makes him coolly deliberate what and when it is fit to speak."—Bp. Patrick.

[b] "Silence may be eloquence, and speak thy worth above the power of words."—Sir Thos. Browne.

"If the silence of the wise is wisdom, much more is a tongue-tied condition expedient for a fool."—Jacox.

altar, our speech must be chastened and purified, inspired and impelled, by Him.—Exp. B.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

1. **Through .. wisdom,** R. V. "he that separateth himself seeketh his own desire, and rageth against all sound wisdom," i. e. "through self-love a man, having separated himself, seeks only his own interest, rebels against all wisdom;" cares nothing for counsel, but is hurried on recklessly by his wilfulness towards his own private ends.—Wordsworth. Interpretations, however, greatly differ. Comp. the margin.

The Separated.—The most appalling discovery in a great city is that multitudes have become mere selves,—hungry, hollow, ravening, thirsty, shrivelled selves. The father and mother are dead, or left far away, probably never known; no one is brother to them, they are brothers to no one. Friend has no significance to their understanding, or means only one who, from most interested motives, ministers to their craving appetites; they are not citizens of London, nor of any other city; they are not Englishmen, though they were born in England, nor have they any other nationality,—hideous, clamorous, esurient selves, nothing more. . . . It becomes therefore a necessity to every wise human being to recognize, to maintain, and to cultivate all those wholesome relationships which make us truly human. "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place." Sometimes when a great ship is far off in mid-ocean, a tired land-bird will fall panting and exhausted upon the deck: the wings can beat no longer; the eyes glaze; and the eager wanderer fails and dies. The true bird-life is the life of the woods, of the toilsomely-woven nest, of the mate and the brood and the fledglings. In the same way on those ocean steamers—ay, and in many a weary bye-path and lonely desert of the earth—may be found men who have broken away from the ties which formed their strength and their truer being, and now fall, faint and purposeless, to languish and to die. For true human life is the life of our fellows, of the diligent laborious housebuilding, of the home, of the young, of the rising nestlings which are to form the next link in the long chain of the generations.—Exp. B.

2, 3. (2) **understanding,** in getting knowledge, especially self-knowledge, which makes a man modest and humble. **discover itself,** R. V. "reveal," by overmuch and foolish talk, about himself and his opinions, which only display his folly.[a] (3) **also contempt,**[b] lxx., "when the wicked cometh into the depth of evil, he turns a despiser," i. e. of all that is good and pure. **ignominy,** or baseness, the inward condition fr. wh. wicked acts spring. **reproach,** wh. is the manifestation of the contempt felt for those who impede the sinner in his evil courses.

Wickedness (vs. 3).—The words suggest—I. That wickedness is a contemptible thing. 1. When it comes into political life it brings contempt on the nation; 2. When it comes into ecclesiastical life it brings contempt upon the Church. II. It is a contemptuous thing.—Thomas.

Sin Not Forsaken Leads to Desperation.—As he who is plunged into a well is confined to the bottom of it, so would the mind fall in, and remain, as it were, at the bottom, if, after having once fallen, it were to confine itself within any measure of sin. But when it cannot be contented with the sin into which it has fallen, while it is daily plunging into worse offences, it finds, as it were, no bottom to the well into which it has fallen, on which to rest. For there would be a bottom to the well, if there were any bounds to his sin. Whence it is well said, "When a sinner hath come into the lowest depth of sins, he contemneth." For he puts by returning, because he has no hope that he can be forgiven. But when he sins still more through despair, he withdraws, as it were, the bottom from the well, so as to find therein no resting-place.—St. Gregory.

4, 5. (4) **deep waters,** difficult to fathom and exhaust.[a] A description true only of the words of discreet and wise men. **well spring,** the second hemistich explains the first. "A man's words are now called a wellspring of wisdom, gushing forth from its source, the wise and under-

"Even triviality, imbecility, that can sit silent, how respectable is it in comparison with the vapid verbiage of shallow praters!" —Carlyle.

"The precept may be taken as a warning against self-will and the self-assertion wh. exults in differing from the received customs and opinions of mankind."—Spk. Com.

"Other com. take the expression in an unsocial and misanthropic spirit, 'separates himself from intercourse with others,' 'separateth himself,' as Zockler.

"The recluse seeks his own pleasure or inclination; he laughs at or derides everything solid or wise."—Parkhurst.

"By all means use sometimes to be alone;
Salute thyself; see what thy soul doth wear;
Dare to look in thy chest, for 'tis thine own,
And tumble up and down what thou find'st there."
—Geo. Herbert.

[a] Comp. Pr. vii. 23, xiii. 16, xv. 2, etc.

[b] Pr. xi. 2.

"Education, indeed, has made the fondness for fine things next to natural: the corals and bells teach infants on the breast to be delighted with sound and glitter."-H. Brooke.

"The mortal who is himself most disgraced, shows the readiest mind to cry shame upon and to reproach and that even the Most High."

[a] Pr. xx.5; Ecc. vii. 24.

standing heart, pure, fresh, and inexhaustible." **flowing brook,** one that never dries up, but continually pours down its refreshing streams.[b] The wise man's speech is clean and fresh, cleansing and refreshing. (5) **accept the person,** to take sides with him; show unjust favor to him. **to overthrow,** R. V. "nor to turn aside." To disregard their plea, and favor unjustly the wicked.[c] "To give sentence against a righteous man whose cause the judge knows to be just."

Three Bad Things (vs. 5).—I. Voluntary connection with wicked men is bad—1. Matrimonially; 2. Mercantilely; 3. Politically; 4. Ecclesiastically. II. The overthrow of good men. 1. Sometimes in social life; 2. Sometimes in judicial courts. III. The overthrow of good men by the employment of the wicked. Learn:—1. Shun the wicked; 2. Adhere to the righteous.—Thomas.

Disputes.—A gentleman who was in company with Mr. Newton lamented the violent disputes that often take place among Christians respecting the non-essentials of Christianity, and particularly Church government. "Many," he said, "seem to give their chief attention to such topics, and take more pleasure in talking on these disputable points, than on spiritual religion, the love of Christ, and the privileges of His people." "Sir," said the venerable old man, "did you ever see a whale ship? I am told that when the fish is struck with the harpoon, and feels the smart of the wound, it sometimes makes for the boat, and would probably dash it to pieces. To prevent this, they throw a cask overboard; and when it is staved to pieces they throw over another." "Now sir," added Mr. Newton, "Church government is the tub which Satan throws out to the people of whom you speak."—R. T. S.

6, 7. (6) **into contention,**[a] they lead him into disputes and quarrellings.[b] **for strokes,** or stripes. He says such things as deserve to be punished with stripes. (7) **destruction,** brings on him destruction. **snare,** in the figure of the huntsman; bringing his life into danger.[c]

The Fool's Tongue (vss. 6, 7).—I. Its characteristics. 1. Haste; "enters into contention;" 2. Ignorant: "calleth," etc. II. Its fruit; destruction. Destroys any reputation for wisdom he may accidentally gain; exposes his character.

Contention.—It may seem a very insignificant deed to strike a flint and steel together so as to produce a single spark, but one spark may produce a terrible and destructive fire. When a settler in a forest rubs two dry sticks together the act seems a trifling one, but the friction in time develops the latent heat of the wood, and there is enough fire brought into activity to lay low many a mighty forest tree. None but foolish men and children ever play with fire, and when they do it they generally suffer themselves first, but they are often not the only sufferers. So it is with contention, or a dispute in words. Wise men are often obliged to contend for truth and right, but they never seek an occasion of dispute. But there are moral fools who think it only an amusement to pick a quarrel, little heeding what the consequences of it may be, not caring if blows succeed to angry words, or perhaps even desiring that they should do so. But although a man may play with fire and escape unharmed, or may even apply a torch to his neighbor's house without singeing so much as a hair of his own head, no fool's lips enter into contention or call for strokes without bringing retribution upon his own head. "His mouth," is his own "destruction," and "his lips are the snare of his soul," for it is a law as old as the universe that "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. vi. 1, 2). The man who seeks contention will always find others like-minded with himself who will be willing to do for him what he has done for others, and he who "calls for strokes" upon his fellow-creatures will receive them upon his own head with compound interest.—Hom. Com.

8, 9. (8) **talebearer,** or whisperer, ch. xvi. 28: backbiter. **wounds,** R. V. "dainty morsels," only too readily welcomed, and, once admitted, gaining a central settled place.[d] **innermost parts,** lit. chambers: recesses of man's nature; there to be stored up for mischievous use. (9) **slothful,** R. V. "slack." **brother,** or one in effect, just like. **waster,**[e] who uselessly squanders what he does get. "Wastefulness implies a lack of that sense of individual responsibility apart from which there is no virtue.—Thomas.

[b] "Wise speech is like an exhaustless stream of benefit." —Fausset.

[c] De. i. 16, 17; Le. xix. 15. "Talleyrand defined speech to be the art of concealing one's opinions. Speech must be endlessly deep and wide as uttering all our being. Who can translate all its outgoings? If this be so with man, who shall judge of God and censure His obscurer revelations?" —Miller.

[a] Comp. Pr. xix. 29.

[b] "I consider your very testy and quarrelsome people in the same light I do a loaded gun, wh. may by accident go off and kill me."—Shenstone.

[c] "When a fool, by his foolish speaking, has run himself into a premunire, and thinks to bring himself off by justifying or excusing what he has said, his defence proves his offence, and his lips are still the snare of his soul, entangling him yet more and more." — Matt. Henry.

[d] "Sol. is here describing the greedy avidity with which some men gulp down slander and calumny, as if they were dainty and delicious viands; and the care with wh. they retain them, and lay them up as in a chamber or storeroom, as if they were something wholesome and precious, although they come from the mouth of one whom they know to be a talebearer and backbiter." —Wordsworth.

[e] Lit. master of wasting, i.e. a great prodigal.

"The moral atmosphere in which we live should be so pure that no talebearer could live in it."—Parker.

a "The name always designates God Himself, as man knows Him, as he receives Him to his knowledge and faith, and bears Him in his heart." —Rucetschi.

b Mat. vii. 24—27.

"God always provides a light through every one of his tunnels. A tunnel is the safest part of the road, because unusual care is used in passing through it." — Christian Standard.

"Dangerous conceits are in their nature poisons, which at the first are scarce found to distaste, but with a little act upon the blood, burn like the mines of sulphur." — Shakespeare.

"Men succeed only when they have fallen into line with God's plan for them." —R. E. Speer.

"We must look up for shelter. We must climb to God. Our safety is in aspiration."

a "Cultivate self-control, free the mind from all prepossessions, shake off all mental sloth, 'be not wise in your own conceits,' and then you will listen fully to a matter before you will make an answer." — Dav. Thomas.

"Those who take a pride in being quick commonly fall under the just reproach of being impertinent." — Mat. Henry.

Job xxxii. 4, 10, 11.

Wasting.—Time is the most precious thing in the world. When God gives us a moment, He does not promise us another, as if to teach us highly to value and improve it, by the consideration, for aught we know, it may be the last. Time, when gone, never returns. We talk about "fetching up" a lost hour, but the thing is impossible. A moment once lost, is lost forever. We could as rationally set out to find a sound that had expired in air, as to find a lost moment.—J. A. James.

10, 11. (10) **name,** put for the Div. essence and attributes; all that God is in himself, his love, power, knowledge; wh. allow man to regard him as a sure refuge. The name Jehovah is the covenant name wh. pledges God's love and care.[a] **strong tower,** comp. Ps. xviii. 2, xxvii. 1, cxliv. 2. **safe,** or set aloft; up above danger. (11) **wealth,** here put in contrast with the name of God. **own conceit,** or imagination. Wealth is no real defence. It is very apt to fail us in the evil day. Trust in it is but building our house upon the sand.[b]

God's Interposition.—In a Western cabin, far away from all other residences, there sat a Christian mother rocking her babe to sleep. The husband and the father had been called suddenly off on business, and there had been no defence provided for that house that night in the wilderness. As the mother sat there in the cabin rocking her babe to sleep, miles away from any other tenement, glancing to the floor she saw a ruffiian's foot projecting from under the table. Having rocked her child to sleep she put him in the cradle, and then knelt down and said: "Oh! Lord, keep this child; keep me. Oh! Thou who never slumbereth, watch over our cabin to-night. Let no harm come to us. If there be those abroad who wish us ill, bring them to a better mind. The Lord have mercy upon all wanderers, all who do deeds of violence and death. Bring them to Thyself—bring them to pardon and to heaven." As she arose from the prayer the ruffian came out from under the table and said: "There will be no harm to you to-night. Pray for me, I am the wanderer that you spoke of. Pray for me." Years passed on, and that Christian woman sat in a great meeting called in the interest of reform. There was a great orator that day to be present, and as he preached righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, his eye fell upon the countenance of that woman. His cheek was blanched and he almost failed in his speech. At the close of the meeting they joined hands, and a few words of conversation passed, and some one said: "Why, where did you form the acquaintance of that orator?" "Never mind," she said, "I have known him many years." Who was it watching the mother that night? Who was it watching the babe? Who was it that brought the ruffian to God in repentance for his sin? Who is it that watches all our cradles, and all our tables, and all our homes, and all our way? Blessed be His glorious name for ever. He is a shelter to which we may all run. He is a fortress in which we may all be safe.—Talmage.

12, 13. (12) **Before destruction,** etc., comp. ch. xvi. 18. **honour,** etc., comp. ch. xv. 33. (13) **answereth,**[a] the evil indicated here is impetuous flippancy. "Secularly, this is beyond a doubt; judicially, here is a great outrage; socially, a something very impolite; but religiously, a thing altogether a 'shame.'"—Miller.

Answering Before Hearing (vs. 13).—I. How this is done. 1. When one only sees that which seems the sign of something and is not; 2. When only a part of the matter is heard; 3. When what is heard is the utterance of malice, etc. II. Why is doing so a folly and shame? 1. It exposes the hastiness of his temper; 2. The sentence he pronounces on insufficient evidence has to be reversed, or remains as a proof of his want of justice.

Humility the Entrance to Honor.—In Caius College, Cambridge, there are three gateways in succession: "the first is called Humilitatis, the next Virtutis, the third (which opens towards the Senate House) Honoris. Not in vain did our forefathers make these emblems of an under-graduate's progress; and happy would it be if every youth entered by the gate of humility, to pass through the gate of Christian virtue, that he might come forth in the highest sense to that of honor.—R. F. Walker.

Honor of Humility.—

The bird that soars on highest wing
Builds on the ground her lowly nest;
And she that doth most sweetly sing
Sings in the shade when all things rest;
In lark and nightingale we see
What honor hath humility.

When Mary chose the "better part,"
She meekly sat at Jesus' feet;
And Lydia's gently opened heart
Was made for God's own temple meet;
Fairest and best adorned is she
Whose clothing is humility.

The saint that wears heaven's brightest crown
In deepest adoration bends;
The weight of glory bows him down
The most when most his soul ascends;
Nearest the throne itself must be
The footstool of humility.—Montgomery.

14, 15. (14) **spirit,** the highest faculty in man; here a "firm, resolute temper of mind." The word as used in the first clause of the verse is masculine; as used in the second clause it is feminine, as if to intimate that it had lost its manly strength.—Zöckler. **sustain,** etc., or support his sickness. **wounded,** R. V., "broken." (15) **heart . . ear,** these are connected. The ear is the external agent in gaining knowledge, the heart, or mind, works within, studying the material stored. Both are conceived as ever earnestly active.

The Unbearable Wound (vs. 14).—Physical sufferings are endurable, so are merely mental sufferings; but this unbearable wound is moral; the wound of remorse, compunction, etc., the wound that Cain and Judas felt. Why? I. Because it disqualifies the mind from availing itself of any of the ordinary means of support. 1. As a consciousness of rectitude; 2. An unshaken confidence in God; 3. An assurance of the unavoidableness of suffering; 4. Hope in a brighter future; 5. The expressions of friendly sympathy. II. Because it impels the mind to use its chief faculties to enhance its agony. It directs thought, memory and conscience to—1. The crimes of the past; 2. The retributive judgment of the future.—Thomas.

Patience.—So many things fall out contrary unto our minds every day, that he who wants patience in this world is like a man who stands trembling in a field without his armor, because every one can strike him and he can strike none. So the least push of pain, or loss, or disgrace, troubles that man more who has not skill to suffer, than twenty trials can move him who is armed with patience, like a golden shield in his hand, to break the stroke of every cross, and save the heart though the body suffers. For while the heart is whole, all is well. "A sound spirit," says Solomon, "will bear his infirmity, but a wounded spirit what can sustain?"—Henry Smith.

16. gift, the meaning here is: "the present wh. duty or friendship offers to one whom one wishes to please."—Pul. Com. **maketh room,** acts like the "friend at court," to introduce him to high places.[a] There are two kinds of gifts, the bribe and the gift of kindness. **great men,** "the Oriental custom of offering suitable gifts to one in authority, when a favor or an audience is desired, is here alluded to."

The Price of Admission (vs. 16).—I. What is here referred to as an object of desire? The presence of great men: the miserable jealousies of such. II. The means to the end: bribes. 1. The gift of money to the underling; 2. Of flattery to the great one whose presence is coveted. III. The gift of knowledge, etc., will introduce us to the only great men whose acquaintance is worth having. Note—1. The ways by which some men will crawl into favor; 2. How much great men, who think they are the rulers of the world, are under the influence of underlings.

"It is hard starving this sin; there is nothing but it can live on; nothing so base that a proud heart will not be lifted up with, and nothing so sacred but it will profane, even dare to drink in the bowls of the sanctuary; nay, rather than starve, it will feed on the carcasses of other sins." —Gurnall.

"It is surprising with what agility this spirit of self-conceit gets over difficulties. It sees none—no, never." — Hom. Com.

[b] "The spirit, which sustains, being wounded, no support is left, except, as implied, in God." —Fausset.

"This Prov. shows the need of the grace of God for the continual strengthening and lifting up of the spirit of man, and is a sequel to vs. 10." — Wordsworth.

"One of the sweet things about pain and sorrow is that they show us how well we are loved; how much kindness there is in the world; and how easily we can make others happy in the same way, when they need help and sympathy." — Louisa M. Alcott.

[a] "The gift goeth like a lacquey before him, and ushers him into the great man's presence, and prepares a seat for him on the divan at the great man's side."—Wordsworth.

"Referring to Jacob's offering for the appeasing of Esau, it is said, 'Jacob did not miscalculate the influence of his princely of-

ferings,' and I verily believe there is not an ameer or sheikh in all Gilead, at this day, who would not be appeased by such presents." — Thomson.

a "One tale is good till another is told. This appears true in private conversation, in lawsuits, before judges, and in theological controversies, and suggests the importance of hearing both sides." — Nicholls.

Comp. 1 Sa. xv. 13 and 26; 2 Sa. xvi. 1—3 and xix. 26.

a The closer the relationship in cases of dispute, the wider the breach, and the more difficult the reconciliation.

" Whoever is afraid of submitting any question, civil or religious, to the test of free discussion, is more in love with his own opinion than with truth." —Bp. Watson.

"The sweeter the wine, the sharper the vinegar; and the greater the natural love, the more violent the hate where that love has been injured."

a Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue.

"Let us guard this little member—the tongue—more than the pupil of the eye, and the more cautious we should be bec. we are of unclean lips."—St. Chrysostom.

Matt. xii. 36, 37.

"When a man's general conversation is such as to procure for him a character for discretion,

17. first, R. V., "He that pleadeth his cause first," or has the first telling of his tale. **own cause,** brought before the judge. A matter of dispute or controversy. **just,** he who makes out a plausible case, and seems to have the right of it, until his statements are tested and compared. One-sided statements are rarely reliable. **neighbour,** the other party concerned in the matter. **searcheth him,** by giving his very different representation of the case, wh. demands a new examination of the matter at issue, and compels the first man to be cross-examined.[a]

Social Disputes (vs. 17).—I. Their settlement requires the hearing both disputants. A fact may be dealt with falsely. 1. By denial; 2. By omission; 3. By addition. II. A mutual agreement to abide by a certain test to terminate the dispute. III. The bitterness of disputes often aggravated by blood-relationships. 1. Great love has been wounded; 2. Great services have been ill-requited; 3. Great hopes are frustrated; 4. Great reluctance on the offender's side to acknowledge the fault and seek reconciliation.—Thomas.

18, 19. (18) **lot,** ch. xvi. 33. This was regarded as an appeal to the direct decision of God; and this ought at once to settle any vexed question. **parteth .. mighty,** "keeps from hostile collision those who in reliance on their physical strength might be specially inclined to quarrel." Arbitration takes now the position of the old lot. (19) **brother,** quarrels between relatives are proverbially bitter. Here an alienated or litigious brother. **bars .. castle,** hard to thrust back or to burst.[a]

Decision by Lot.—John Patton, the missionary to the New Hebrides, uncertain whether to go back to Scotland and plead for more missionaries, and receiving no light from human counsel, says, "After many prayers and wrestlings and tears, I went alone before the Lord, and on my knees cast lots with a solemn appeal to God, and the answer came 'Go home.' In my heart I believe that . . . the Lord condescended to decide for me the path of duty, otherwise unknown; and I believe it the more truly now, in view of the aftercome of thirty years of service to Christ that flowed out of the steps then deliberately and devoutly taken." Autobiography.——In nearly all cases where reason cannot decide, or where the right of several claimants to one article has to be settled, recourse is had to the lot, which "causeth contentions to cease." Though an Englishman might not relish such a mode of having a wife assigned to him, yet many a one in the East has no other guide than this in that important acquisition. Not long ago the son of a medical man and another youth applied for the daughter of Sedambara-Suppiyan, the rich merchant. The old gentleman caused two "holy writings" to be drawn up; the names of the lovers were inscribed thereon: the son of Kandan, the doctor, was drawn forth, and the young lady became his wife.—Roberts.

20, 21. (20) **man's belly,** etc., ch. xii. 14, xiii. 2. Belly is used to represent the "inward man." "The words may be rendered,—a man's moral self shall be satisfied."—Thomas. **fruit of his mouth,** words which flow from it: but to this end his speech should be conscientiously truthful, and intentionally useful; a man must accept the consequences of his words, good or evil. (21) **Death .. tongue,** see Jas. iii. 5.[a] The tongue may be an agent in the greatest good or the greatest evil. **love it,** i. e. the tongue: they who use it much must abide the consequences of their words, whether they contribute to life or involve the speaker and others in immortal sin.—Pul. Com.

The Tongue (vs. 21).—I. Look at the tongue as an instrument of the mind. 1. As the communicator of thought; 2. As a link of fellowship; 3. As the great agent in active life. II. Look at the tongue as influenced by will. 1. The flattering; 2. The lying; 3. The impure; 4. The malignant; 5. The proud; 6. The profane; 7. The cursing; 8. The blaspheming tongue. III. Look at the renewed and sanctified tongue. 1. It is wise; 2. Wholesome; 3. Truthful; 4. Restrained; 5. Benevolent; 6. Devotional; 7. Praising tongue. Learn—(1) The tongue is the most difficult of management; (2) The most important; (3) The tongue of the sainted soul will glorify Him for ever.—Burns.

A Word in Season.—The views of the Rev. Martin Boos, a late Catholic clergyman in Austria, though afterwards decidedly evangelical,

were at the commencement of his ministry erroneous. About the year 1788 he went to visit a woman distinguished by her humility and piety, who was dangerously ill. In endeavoring to prepare her for death, he said to her, "I doubt not but you will die calm and happy." "Wherefore?" asked the sick woman. "Because your life has all been made up of a series of good works." The sick woman sighed: "If I die," said she, "confiding in the good works which you call to my recollection, I know for certain that I shall be condemned; but what renders me calm at this solemn hour is, that I trust solely in Jesus Christ my Saviour." "These few words," said Boos, "from the mouth of a dying woman, who was reputed a saint, opened my eyes for the first time. I learned what that was—'Christ for us.' Like Abraham, I saw His day. From that time I announced to others the Saviour of sinners whom I had myself found, and there are many who rejoice in Him along with me."—Whitecross.——Death and Life in the Power of the Tongue.—In Mungo Park's relation of his travels in Africa, he gives a striking example of the good effects of Christian forbearance, even among uncivilized men. He says after having passed through the greatest distresses, he arrived at the village of Song, where the people refused to receive him within the gate, though the country was infested with lions. Here Mungo Park with much difficulty collected grass for his horse, and lay down under a tree near the gate; but being aroused by the roar of a lion, he climbed the tree for safety. The inhabitants, who having believed him to be a Moor, would not admit him, notwithstanding the danger that threatened him, till midnight, when convinced of their error, they opened the gate, declaring that no Moor ever waited long at the gate of any city without cursing all the inhabitants.—Old. Test. Anec.

22. **findeth a wife,** plainly, one who is really a wife; i. e. a good wife;[a] a partner and head of the household, such as she should be, a wife who really stands by her husband's side as a "help meet for him."[b] **favour .. Lord,** to obtain a good wife is a sign that God delights in a man to do him good.

The Secret of a Happy Home.—No ideal of human life can be more beautiful than that of the happy home. This is obtained: 1. By adaptation. Every woman is not suitable for every man. The choice of a companion for life is not to be lightly undertaken if there is to be any hope of its issuing in happiness. 2. By sympathy. There must be mutual confidence between husband and wife if the marriage is to be one of true and lasting blessedness. It is possible for husbands and wives to share one another's interests and enlarge one another's lives by conceding the fullest mutual confidence. 3. By self-sacrifice. Selfishness is fatal to marriage. Love must learn to give, to suffer, to endure. The happiness is most complete when each seeks it chiefly for the other. 4. By religion. The true marriage must be ratified in heaven.—Pul. Com.——A Good Wife.—There was a young man in Switzerland, engaged in observing and classifying the Hymenoptera of his native land, when he was suddenly smitten with blindness. The calamity was so hopeless that marriage was absolutely forbidden by the father of his beloved. She waited, like a dutiful child, until she was twenty-one years of age; then, without concealment, and, in great sorrow, but honoring her father in disobeying him, she married the scientist, and immediately persuaded him to resume his studies. She carried on his experiments under his direction. She soon became more skillful than he had ever been in watching the operation of the curious creatures. And he became more exact in his generalization, in consequence of being shut up to his own reflections. The result was a work which astonished the world, and remains a classic and the first authority on the subject—the immortal treasure of Huber on bees! What will not the faithful love of a wife accomplish! God in heaven looks down upon nothing on earth so like the paradise above as trustful and helpful married love.—Bib. Ill.

23. **intreaties,** not violence, wh. his position does not warrant. **roughly,** his wealth making him masterful.[c] "The rich man not only does wrong, but accompanies the injury with passionate language and

courtesy, gratitude, straightforward integrity, and trustworthiness, this may surely contribute, eminently and directly, to the temporal sustenance and comfort of the man himself and his family: while an opposite style of intercourse may tend to penury and starvation."—Wardlaw.

a "A good wife is heaven's last, best gift to a man; his angel of mercy; minister of graces innumerable; his gem of many virtues; his casket of jewels. Her voice his sweetest music; her smiles his brightest day; her kiss the guardian of innocence; her arms the pale of his safety, the balm of his health, the balsam of his life; her industry his surest wealth, her economy his safest steward; her lips his faithful counsellors; her bosom the softest pillow of his cares; and her prayers the ablest advocates of heaven's blessing on his head."—Jeremy Taylor.

b Ge. ii. 18, 20.

"Blessed is the man that has a virtuous wife, for thereby his life is doubled. A woman made for a man rejoices her husband, and he shall fulfil the years of his life in peace. A virtuous wife is a good portion, in the portion of them that fear the Lord shall she be given."—Ecclesiasticus.

c "Here, again, is a paradox. The poor man, of whom one might

abuse, as if he were the sufferer; while the poor man has humbly to ask pardon, as if he were in the wrong."—Pul. Com.

24. man, etc., the precise meaning of the original is not given in our version; R. V., "He that maketh many friends doeth it to his own destruction: But, etc." One who is a friend to everybody is of little worth to anybody, and receives but little benefit fr. his friends in the day of adversity wh. they help to inaugurate. **there is a friend,**[b] "yet there is another, and a real kind of friendship, the opposite of this; and it sometimes rises higher than that wh. even a brother ordinarily exhibits."—Stuart.

A Faithful Friend (vs. 24).—I. Christ is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. II. The reason why we may depend on Christ as being a faithful friend. 1. True friendship can only be between true men, whose hearts are the soul of honor; 2. Faithfulness to us in our faults is a certain sign of fidelity in a friend; 3. There are some things in His friendship which render us sure of not being deceived when we put our confidence in Him; 4. The friendship which will last does not take its rise in the chambers of mirth, nor is it fed and fattened there; 5. A friend who is acquired by folly is never a lasting friend, nor is the friendship of ignorance desirable; 7. Friendship and love to be real must lie not in words but in deeds; 8. A purchased friend will never last long; 9. There cannot by any possibility arise any cause which could make Christ love us less. III. An inference to be derived from this. 1. If Christ sticks close, then our enemies will stick close also; 2. Is Christ your friend?—C. H. Spurgeon.——Friendship.—Whoever employs many assistants in his affairs must in gratitude repay his service to as many when they need it; and as Briareus, who, with his hundred hands, was daily obliged for his bare subsistence to feed fifty stomachs, could thrive no better than ourselves, who supply a single one with two hands, so a man of many friends cannot boast any other privilege but that of being a slave to many, and of sharing in all the business cares and disquiet that may befall them.—Plutarch.

Friends.—

"The best friend is an atmosphere
Warm with all inspirations dear,
Wherein we breathe the large free breath
Of life that hath no taint of death.

Our friend is an unconscious part
Of every true beat of our heart;
A strength, a growth, whence we derive
God's health, that keeps the world alive."

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

1, 2. (1) **poor,** the word used means poor in circumstances. **integrity,** upright though humble. Character is ever of more value than any circumstances. **perverse,** etc., the proud rich man who haughtily and scornfully misuses his lips. **fool,** the intentional opposite of humble innocence. (2) **without knowledge,**[a] or "Even the soul (i. e. life itself) without knowledge is not a blessing."—Wordsworth. **hasteth,** etc., does things inconsiderately and with precipitation. Rashness is the result of ignorance.[b] **sinneth,** R. V. marg., "misseth his way." Stuart brings the two parts of the vs. into closer relations to each other by translating: "Moreover in the soul's lack of knowledge there is no good; and he who hasteneth with his feet, goeth astray;" haste indicating the lack of proper knowledge.

The Better Man (vs. 1).—I. He is a better man in himself. 1. He is a better character—contrast the principles, the worth of the two; 2. He has better enjoyments. II. He is a better man to others. 1. Relation; 2. Neighbor; 3. Citizen. Application:—A word to the pious poor; many things are better than wealth—intellect, knowledge, friendship, religion. —Thomas.——Divine Knowledge Most Desirable (vs. 2).—Without it a

expect roughness, supplicates; the rich, well-nurtured, from whom one might look for courtesy, answers harshly and roughly." —Spk. Com.

1 Sa. xxv. 11, 12.

"Solomon warns against a vainglorious passion of aspiring to a universal acquaintance, and an empty popularity, wh. will bring with it no support in adversity, but will ruin a man by pride and rashness, and prodigal expenditure." —Wordsworth.

b "The brother and the friend are, through the goodness of God, with more or less of imperfection, often found among our fellows, but they are complete only in Him who is the fellow of the Almighty." —Arnot.

"The friendship of high and sanctified spirits loses nothing by death but its alloy; failings disappear, and the virtues of those whose 'faces we shall behold no more' appear greater and more sacred when beheld through the shades of the sepulchre." —Robert Hall.

a "Ignorance is mere privation, by which nothing can be produced; it is a vacuity in which the soul sits motionless and torpid for want of attraction. And, without knowing why, we always rejoice when we learn, and grieve when we forget."—Johnson.

b "Do nothing rashly. Stay a little, that you may make an end the sooner." —Lord Bacon.

man has no—I. Directory for his ways. II. Remedy for his sins. III. Support in his troubles. IV. Strength for his duties. V. Hope in his end. Apply:—Learn—1. To pity those who are in ignorance of the truth of Christ; 2. Improve the means of grace; 3. Make a good use of the knowledge you possess.—Simeon.

3. **foolishness,** etc., inconsiderate wilfulness. **perverteth,** R. V., "subverteth," overturns. **fretteth,** or rageth. Blames God for his own failures.[a]

Blaming the Wrong Party (vs. 3).—I. By their folly men often pervert their own way through the world; by profligacy, intemperance, etc., they come to want. II. So reduced they often accuse Providence, or talk of ill-luck, etc. III. Men ought honestly to take the blame to themselves; that would be a step towards improving their lot.

Folly of Fretfulness.—Two gardeners, who were neighbors, had their crops of early peas killed by frost; one of them came to condole with the other on this misfortune. "Ah!" cried he, "how unfortunate we have been, neighbor! do you know I have done nothing but fret ever since. But you seem to have a fine healthy crop coming up already; what are these?" "These!" cried the other gardener, "why, these are what I sowed immediately after my loss." "What! coming up already?" cried the fretter. "Yes; while you were fretting, I was working." "What! don't you fret when you have a loss?" "Yes; but I always put it off until after I have repaired the mischief." "Why, then you have no need to fret at all." "True," replied the industrious gardener; "and that's the very reason."—Arvine.

4, 5. (4) **Wealth,** etc., see ch. xiv. 20. **poor,** here Heb. dal, the poor regarded as weak. **separated,** etc., bec. his neighbor is afraid lest he may want something of him; so he shuns intercourse with him.[b] (5) **false witness,** see ch. xvii. 5.[c] **unpunished,** Heb. "held innocent." **not escape,** appropriate judgment.

The Power of Money (vs. 4).—I. This is seen by its presence. It makes friends. 1. It is a question if such friends are worth the making, whose friendship depends on the balance at the banker's; 2. There is nothing said about the mode of getting the wealth, that is often a small matter so that one be rich. II. By its absence tends to separate the poor from their neighbors. 1. But what neighbors! 2. Yet there is some advantage in the fact stated; with this before them the poor are more likely to be industrious. Learn:—The folly and misery of making money the standard of respectability.

Pillaging the Poor.—The nets which we use against the poor are just those worldly embarrassments which either their ignorance or their improvidence are almost certain at some time or other to bring them into; then just at the time when we ought to hasten to help them, and teach them how to manage better in future, we rush forward to pillage them, and force all we can out of them in their adversity. For, to take one instance only, remember this is literally and simply what we do whenever we buy, or try to buy, cheap goods—goods offered at a price which we know cannot be remunerative for the labor involved in them. Whenever we buy such goods, we are stealing somebody's labor.—Ruskin.——A Legacy with a Moral.—A more extraordinary legacy than that bequeathed to his fellow-citizens by Father la Loque cannot well be imagined. At his death his body was found stretched on a miserable bed in an attic of the Quartier de Grenelle, which is anything but a fashionable district of Paris. He was an old man, had lived in the simplest way, sustaining himself almost entirely on bread. His room contained hardly any furniture, yet hid in a corner was found a little cupboard with numerous shelves, and on these were sorted with the greatest order regiments of corks. In the center was a manuscript written by the Père la Loque, on which he stated that he had formerly been in possession of considerable wealth, now squandered; that of all his greatness there remained but these corks, drawn in better times to welcome many a friend who now had forgotten him; that age and ruin had taught their moral, and that on each cork would be found written its history. This the old man did, hoping that it would serve as a timely warning, and that, placed on the shelves of some museum or of a phil-

"Things are not to be done by the effort of the moment, but by the preparation of past moments."—Cecil.

Is. xxvii. 11; Ho. iv. 6.

[a] Is. xlv. 9. "It is only a man who does not know God, who 'frets against the Lord.' Men wilfully ignorant that whenever God says 'Thou shalt not' He is only saying 'Do thyself no harm,' chafe and fret against His moral laws."—Preacher's Com.

[b] "Bec. men's consciences tell them they ought to relieve and succor such poor neighbors, they are willing to have the excuse that they did not see them."—Mat. Henry.

[c] "When Aristotle was asked what a man could gain by telling a falsehood, he replied, 'Never to be credited when he speaks the truth.'"—Dav. Thomas.

"The study of truth is perpetually joined with the love of virtue; for there is no virtue which derives not its original from truth, as, on the contrary, there is no vice which has not its beginning in a lie. Truth is the foundation of all knowledge, and the cement of all societies."—Casuerba.

"Why pull down thy barns and 'build greater?' Thou hast barns enough—the bosoms of the needy, the houses of widows, the mouths of orphans."—St. Ambrose.

"He is rich enough who owes nothing."—French Proverb.

"Help somebody worse off than yourself, and you will find you are better off than you fancied."

"It is right to be content with what we have, but never with what we are." —T. Mackintosh.

"Want is the scorn of every wealthy fool, and wit in rags is turn'd to ridicule." — Juvenal.

Wine and good dinners make abundance of friends; but in the time of adversity not one is to be found.

"A long life may be passed without finding a friend in whose understanding and virtue we can equally confide, and whose opinion we can value at once for its justness and sincerity." — Johnson.

He who cannot keep his own secret, is of all men the most unfit to be entrusted with the secrets of others.

"Let falsehood be a stranger to thy lips. Shame on the policy that first began to tamper with the heart, to hide its thoughts! And doubly shame on that inglorious tongue that sold its honesty and told a lie!"—Havard.

"It does not follow that we are not to be angry, but we are to remember that anger is all the nobler for being deferred and for being matured by the reasoning of conscience." — Parker.

[a] Plato said to his servant, "I would beat thee but that I am angry."

osopher's study, they might be found to illustrate human nature. On one of the corks was an inscription to this effect:—"Champagne cork; bottle emptied 12th of May, 1843, with M. B——, who wished to interest me in a business by which I was to make ten millions. This affair cost me 50,000 francs. M. B—— escaped to Belgium. A caution to amateurs." On another appears the following note:—"Cork of Cyprus wine, of a bottle emptied on the 4th of December, 1850, with a dozen fast friends. Of these I have not found a single one to help me on the day of my ruin."—Once a Week.

6, 7. (6) **intreat,** lit, "will stroke the face." **prince,** R. V., "the liberal man." **giveth gifts,** the generous-handed. (7) **brethren .. hate,** bec. of his troublesome dependence on them. **friends,** contrasted with brothers, as in ch. xviii. 24. **with words,** of entreaty. **yet .. him,** R. V., "but they are gone;" "he who earnestly seeks for the former words of friendship and kindness will now find them no more."—Umbreit.

Inhumanity.—"In giving an account of the state of the Sandwich Islands, as they were half a century ago, the missionaries stated, that the helpless and dependent, whether from age or sickness, were often cast from the habitations of their relatives and friends, to languish and die—unattended and unpitied. An instance recently came to their knowledge, in which a poor wretch thus perished, after having lain uncovered for days and nights in the open air, most of the time pleading in vain to his family, still within the hearing of his voice, for a drink of water. And when he was dead, his body, instead of being buried, was merely drawn so far into the bushes, as to prevent the offence that would have arisen from the corpse, and left a prey to the dogs who prowl through the district in the night."—Old Test. Anec.

8, 9. (8) **wisdom,** Heb. heart; implying the higher faculties of reason and feeling. **loveth .. soul,** by striving to obtain wisdom a man shows that he has regard for the welfare of his soul and body. Hence St. Thomas Aquinas takes occasion to demonstrate that only good men are really lovers of themselves, while evil men are practically self-haters." **keepeth,** which is often quite as difficult as the getting. (9) **false witness,** comp. vs. 5.

The Best Proof of the Highest Self-love (vs. 8).—I. Here is a character described: the man who loves his soul. 1. He remembers that he has a soul; 2. He seeks its cultivation as a thinking principle; 3. He seeks its salvation. II. Such a man will seek wisdom—1. As the proper food of the soul; 2. He will seek it earnestly, and at the right source; 3. He will seek for the wisdom that will make him wise to salvation.

A Norwegian Farmer.—More than thirty years ago, a Norwegian farmer was, at the age of thirty-five, in the habit of making excursions from his father's dwelling for the purpose of distributing religious tracts, which he had caused to be printed at his own expense, and which he sold or gave away. The effects of his labors were perfectly astonishing, not less than 50,000 peasants dating the period of their conversion to sound and vital Christianity at the time when they first became known to that remarkable individual. To the sufferings which he had undergone it is most distressing to advert; he endured eleven several imprisonments, one of which lasted for a period of ten years. There is a passage towards the close of his journal, dated in the year 1814, from which it appears that a fine of a thousand rix-dollars was imposed upon him, and that all which he possessed on earth was sold for the liquidation of that debt: he might have escaped it, could he have prevailed on himself to petition the king, saying that he was unable to pay the amount.

10, 11. (10) **Delight,** a soft delicate life; high unrestrained enjoyment; luxury. **servant .. princes,** ch. xxx. 22. This has often happened at the courts of Oriental despots, where some slave is raised by favoritism to a position superior to that of the princes of the realm. (11) **discretion,** or prudence; self-restraint,[a] ch. xiv. 29, xvi. 32. **deferreth,** R. V., "maketh him slow." **pass over a transgression,** in a spirit of merciful forgiveness.

Anger Appeased.—When Lanfranc was prior of Bec he ventured to oppose Duke William's Flemish marriage. In a wild burst of wrath William bade his men burn a manor house of Bec and drive out Lan-

franc from Norman ground. He came to see the work done, and found Lanfranc hobbling on a lame horse towards the frontier. He angrily bade him hasten, and Lanfranc replied by a cool promise to go faster out of his land if he would give him a better steed. "You are the first criminal that ever asked gifts from his judge," retorted William, but a burst of laughter told that the wrath had gone, and William and Lanfranc drew together again.—Green.

12. king's wrath,[a] inspires terror in a subject as the lion's roar terrifieth his prey, ch. xvi. 15, xx. 2, xxviii. 15. **dew,** ch. xvi. 15; Ps. lxxii. 6.

Dew in Palestine.—The secret of the luxuriant fertility of many parts of Palestine lies in the rich supply of moisture afforded by the sea-winds which blow inland each night, and water the face of the whole land. From May till October rain is unknown, the sun shining with unclouded brightness day after day. The heat becomes intense, the ground hard; and vegetation would perish but for the moist west winds that come each night from the sea. The bright skies cause the heat of the day to radiate very quickly into space, so that the nights are as cold as the day is the reverse. To this coldness of the night air the indispensable watering of all plant-life is due. The winds, loaded with moisture, are robbed of it as they pass over the land, the cold air condensing it into drops of water, which fall in a gracious rain of mist on every thirsty blade. In the morning the fog thus created rests like a sea over the plains, and far up the sides of the hills, which raise their heads above it like so many islands. The amount of moisture thus poured on the thirsty vegetation during the night is very great. Dew seemed to the Israelites a mysterious gift of heaven, as indeed it is. That the skies should be stayed from yielding it was a special sign of Divine wrath, and there could be no more gracious conception of a loving farewell address to his people than where Moses tells them that his speech should distil as the dew. The favor of an Oriental monarch could not be more beneficially conceived than by saying that, while his wrath is like the roaring of a lion, his favor is as the dew upon the grass.—Geikie.

13, 14. (13) **foolish son,** comp. ch. x. 1, xv. 20, xvii. 21, 25. **calamity,**[a] a plural word, intimating the variety of troubles a foolish son may cause. **continual dropping,** the irritating altercations and bickering of a cross-grained wife are compared to the continuous drip of water through an imperfectly constructed roof. The Scotch say, "A leaky house and a scolding wife are two bad companions." (14) **House .. fathers,** such things as these men gather and leave to their children; but the better gift of the prudent wife comes directly from God.[b] The blessing is more directly and manifestly His bestowment.

The Husband's Troubles.—The contentions of a wife. I. They are often about small things. II. There is no escape from them. III. They produce one of the greatest miseries of home life. IV. They drive the husband to seek peace elsewhere.

Self-control of Socrates.—His wife, Xantippe, was a woman of a most fantastical and furious spirit. At one time, having vented all the reproaches upon Socrates her fury could suggest, he went out and sat before the door. His calm and unconcerned behavior but irritated her so much the more; and, in the excess of her rage, she ran upstairs and emptied a vessel upon his head, at which he only laughed, and said, "that so much thunder must needs produce a shower." Alcibiades, his friend, talking with him about his wife, told him he wondered how he could bear such an everlasting scold in the same house with him; he replied, "I have so accustomed myself to expect it, that it now offends me no more than the noise of carriages in the streets."—Cheever.

15, 16. (15) **Slothfulness,** comp. ch. vi. 9, 10. **deep sleep,** state of utter indifference. **idle soul,** comp. ch. x. 4, xii. 24, xx. 13; "idleness is the tomb of a living man." (16) **keepeth,** etc., ch. x. 17, xiii. 13. **despiseth his ways,** R. V., "is careless of," and so treats his moral conduct as of no importance.[c]

Ability to Labor.—Where ability to labor is, there Providence meets action and crowns it. He that forbids to cark for to-morrow, denies bread to the idleness of to-day. Consider, O my soul, thy own delin-

It is said of Julius Caesar that, when provoked, he used to repeat the whole Roman alphabet before he suffered himself to speak.

[a] "Anger is like ashes, wh. 'fly back in the face of him who throws them."—Old Proverb.

"The favor of my friend is as the refreshing dew." "The favors of that good man are continually dropping upon us." "He bathes me with his favors."—Roberts.

"Procure not friends in haste, and when thou hast a friend part not with him in haste."—Solon.

"Unlimited power is too much for proud human nature to bear, except with special grace from above."—Bridges.

[a] Stroke upon stroke.

[b] Pr. xviii. 22.

"Happy is that country whose best life has been drained into some ideal cause, and whose greatest names are the names of those who have lavished their strength on this object. The deeds and sayings of these heroes ought, next to the Bible, to be the chief spiritual nourishment of her children; and the young ambition of her choicest minds should be concentrated on watering the seeds which they sowed."—James Stalker.

[c] Ps. cxix. 9.

"Our character is the final result of everything that we have ever done,

both in mind and in the flesh. So that each gracious word we speak, each kindly service we render to any one in need, is one more stroke of the chisel which is carving a beautiful character, fair in the sight of God himself." —Pul. Com.

[a] Comp. Mat. xxv. 40.

"God is pleased with no music below so much as in the thanksgiving songs of relieved widows, of supported orphans, of rejoicing and comforted and thankful persons. This part of our communication does the work of God and our neighbors, and bears us to heaven in streams made by the overflowing of our brothers' comfort." —Jeremy Taylor.

"In all other human gifts and passions, though they advance nature, yet they are subject to excess. But charity alone admits no excess. For so we see, by aspiring to be like God in power, the angels transgressed and fell; by aspiring to be like God in knowledge man transgressed and fell; but by aspiring to be like God in goodness or love, neither man nor angel ever did, or shall transgress. For unto that imitation we are called." — Lord Bacon.

"For the soul that gives is the soul that lives;
And bearing another's load
Doth lighten your own and shorten the way,
And brighten the homeward road"
—Washington Gladden.

quency, and let employment make thee capable of thy God's protection. The bird that sits is a fair mark for the fowler; while they that use the wing escape the danger. Follow thy calling, and Heaven will follow thee with His blessing. What thou hast formerly omitted, present repentance may redeem; and what judgments God hath threatened, early petitions may avert.—Quarles.

17. **pity .. poor,** wh. may find expression in other ways than by giving moneys. **lendeth,** so that he may certainly look for return and payment:[a] though this must not be made the motive of his charity.

Lending to the Lord.—To the more imperfect this is what we may say, Give of what you have unto the needy. Increase your substance. For, saith he, "He that giveth unto the poor lendeth unto God." But if you are in a hurry, and wait not for the time of retribution, think of those who lend money to men; for not even these desire to get their interest immediately; but they are anxious that the principal should remain a good long while in the hands of the borrower, provided only the repayment be secure, and they have no mistrust of the borrower. Let this be done, then, in the present case also. Leave them with God, that He may pay thee thy wages manifold. Seek not to have the whole here; for if you recover it all here, how will you receive it back there? And it is on this account that God stores them up there, inasmuch as this present life is full of decay. But he gives even here also; for, "Seek ye," saith He, "the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you." Well, then, let us look towards that kingdom, and not be in a hurry for the repayment of the whole, lest we diminish our recompense. But let us wait for the fit season. For the interest in these cases is not of that kind, but is such as is meet to be given by God. This, then, having collected together in great abundance, so let us depart hence, that we may obtain both the present and the future blessings.—St. Chrysostom.——The Lord was Their Banker.—Mr. Philip Henry, one of the Nonconformist ministers, when silenced from preaching by the Act of Uniformity, took comfort himself, and administered comfort to others, from the passage, "Let Mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab." "God's people," he observed, "may be an outcast people—cast out of men's love, their synagogues, their country; but God will own his people when men cast them out; they are outcasts, but they are His, and some way or other He will provide a dwelling for them." Shortly before his death, the same pious man observed that, though many of the ejected ministers were brought very low, had many children, were greatly harassed by persecution, and their friends generally poor and unable to support them, yet, in all his acquaintance, he never knew nor could remember to have heard of any Nonconformist minister in prison for debt. —Arvine.——Charity Rewarded.—A poor man with an empty purse, came one day to Michael Feneberg, the godly pastor of Seeg, in Bavaria, and begged three crowns, that he might finish his journey. It was all the money Feneberg had, but as he besought him so earnestly in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus he gave it. Immediately after he found himself in great outward need, and seeing no way of relief, he prayed, saying: "Lord, I lent Thee three crowns; Thou hast not yet returned them, and Thou knowest how I need them. Lord, I pray Thee, give them back." The same day a messenger brought a money-letter, which Gossner, his assistant, reached over to Feneberg, saying: "Here, father, is what you expended." The letter contained two hundred thalers, or about one hundred and fifty dollars, which the poor traveler had begged from a rich man for the Vicar; and the childlike old man, in joyful amazement, cried out: "Ah, dear Lord, one dare ask nothing of Thee, for straightway Thou makest one feel so much ashamed."—Old. Test. Anec.

18, 19. (18) **Chasten,** etc., ch. xiii. 24, xxxiii. 13. **while,** R. V., "seeing." **spare .. crying,** R. V., "set not thy heart on his destruction." It is a caution to passionate parents against angry resentments, and undue chastisements; "indulge not thy desire to slay him."—Stuart. (19) **great wrath,** who by unrestrained temper is led to do foolish and violent things. **suffer punishment,** R. V., "bear the penalty." **do it again,** "you cannot save him from the consequences of his ungoverned temper; you may do so once and again, but while his disposition is unchanged, all your efforts

will be useless, and the help which you have given him will only make him think that he may continue to indulge his anger with impunity, or, it may be, he will vent his impatience on his deliverer."—Pul. Com.

Timely Chastisement.—"Prevention is better than cure." If we wait till the weeds run to seed it is in vain for us to pull them up—they will have sown another and larger crop. The lion's cub may be caught and caged; the full-grown beast is dangerous to approach, and out of our power. These truths: (1) Show us the importance of early home-training. The first seeds are sown at home. If an evil disposition reveals itself there, it should be checked before it develops into a fatal habit. Foolishly fond parents laugh at exhibitions of bad temper and other faults in very young children, amused at the quaintness and pitying the helplessness of these miniature sins. But surely a wiser course would be to nip the evil in the bud. (2) Enhance the value of Sunday School work. Five million children were under Sunday School teaching in England during the year 1888. The great mass of the population passes through this instruction. Surely more should be made of the golden opportunity thus afforded of giving a right course to the lives of the people. Most working men will not go to church. But they will permit their children to attend Sunday School. We have the working classes with us in their childhood. (3) Point to an enlargement of the agency of industrial schools. Already juvenile crime has been reduced by one-half—this is one of the most cheering signs of the times. But still there are multitudes of children who breathe an atmosphere of crime from their cradles. There is no more Christian work than the effort to save these victims of the vices of their parents. The juvenile offender should be an object of peculiar solicitude to one who has the well-being of society at heart.—Pul. Com.

20—22. (20) **Hear counsel**, such as a father gives, who wisely corrects and chastises. **latter end**, as addressed to youth this refers to the later and responsible time of life. (21) **many devices**, plans and schemes. The purposes of many are very various, and ever changing. **counsel . . stand**, it is well for us that a Divine overruling should arrange and modify our plans. (22) **desire**, or wish. **is his kindness**, R. V., "is the measure of his kindness." His desire may be taken into gracious account, though he may be unable to carry it into act. We say to-day: "One must take the will for the deed." **liar**, prob. the rich man who makes excuses for not giving. "A poor man who gives to one in distress his sympathy and good wishes, even if he can afford no substantial aid, is better than a rich man who promises much and does nothing, or who falsely professes that he is unable to help."

Devices (vs. 21).—I. The devices of men's hearts. The heart a world, full of schemes, always devising. What a scene if they could all be brought to light! II. The vanity of them. What a world if they could be all fulfilled! III. The counsel of the Lord frustrating, controlling, overruling these devices. Learn—1. How vain are the attempts to oppose the counsel of God; 2. How foolish the idea that as knowledge comes into the world religion will go out; 3. How easy for God to overturn all wicked devices; 4. What a revelation will there be, at the last day, of devices.—Penny Pulpit.

Man Proposes, but God Disposes.—This is a fact of national and individual history. In both inspired and uninspired records we meet with abundant confirmations of this truth. There is no more striking illustration of it than in the life of Joseph. He leaves his father's house, as he supposes, for a few days, little dreaming that he is traversing a path by which he will never return. He only purposes to find his brethren, and "see if it is well with them, and bring his father word again." But God is then directing his steps into a far-off land—into slavery, to a prison, and through both to a throne. So the shepherd boy of Bethlehem sets out with the unambitious intention of carrying supplies to his brethren, and of seeing how the battle is likely to go, and becomes himself the central figure in the camp, and the hero of his nation. And David's predecessor goes in search of his father's asses, and finds a crown and a kingdom at the end of his journey. Cromwell, despairing of enjoying liberty in England, planned to make a home in America, and, it

"Indulge not thy desire to slay him."—Stuart.

"When the rod is used, the end in view should be, purely and exclusively, the benefit of the child: not the gratification of any resentful passion on the part of the parent." — Wardlaw.

"Truth, the mother of Virtue, is painted in garments as white as snow. Her looks are serene, pleasant, courteous, cheerful, and yet modest; she is the light and joy of human society. She is commonly accounted the daughter of Time, because Truth is discovered in the course of time; but Democritus feigns that she lies hid in the bottom of a well." —Andrew Tooke.

"From the Bible first engrave on your hearts, then translate in your lives, and last emblazon aloft on the pediment of your trade temple this short and simple legend: 'A poor man is better than a liar.' "—Preacher's Com.

"Lying is a disgraceful vice, and one that Plutarch paints in most disgraceful colors, when he says that it is 'affording testimony that one first despises God, and then fears men.' It is not possible more happily to describe its horrible, disgusting, and abandoned nature; for can we imagine anything more vile than to be cowards with regard to men, and brave with regard to God?"—Montaigne.

is said, actually went on board a vessel which was about to sail. But God, using as an instrument the man to whose throne he was to succeed, directed his steps in another direction, and being forbidden to quit the country, he becomes not only England's deliverer, but a great and powerful ruler, whose influence was felt throughout Europe. Clive went out to India as a clerk, because he had no prospects of getting a living at home, and lays the foundation of our Indian empire. And there is hardly a man living who, if he reflects upon his past life, cannot remember passages in his own history which confirm the truth of the text. He makes certain plans, and purposes to accomplish certain designs, and the result of his doings is quite different from his intentions, or leads him to a place, or a position, or into relationships which were entirely out of his calculation when he "devised his way."—Hom. Com.

23, 24. (23) **fear,** etc., Jehovah gives life to those who reverence Him. **abide,** better read clause, "He that is filled with it (the fear of the Lord) shall pass the night, and not be visited with evil." (24) **hideth his hand,** R. V., "burieth his hand in the dish," reference is to the dish into wh. each person put his hand. The man is so lazy he will not raise his hand to feed himself.[a] Comp. ch. xxvi. 15.

Godly Fear.—The fear peculiar to a Christian is not of that nature which is servile and tends to despair. It is not that of a slave, but of a son. They who are influenced by too great a degree of fear, may at last become subject to such despondency as to give up all hope, and relax in their diligence in the use of all the means. When Dionysius, the tyrant, says Bp. Taylor, imposed intolerable tributes upon his Sicilian subjects, it amazed them and they petitioned and cried for help, and flattered him, and feared, and obeyed him carefully; but he imposed still new ones, and greater, and at last left them poor as the valley of Vesuvius, or the top of Aetna; but then all being gone, the people grew idle and careless, and walked in the markets and public places, cursing the tyrant, and bitterly scoffing his person and vices; which when Dionysius heard, he caused the publicans and committees to withdraw their impost; "for now," says he, "they are dangerous, because they are desperate." When men have nothing, says the same author, they will despise their rulers. So it is in religion. If our fears be unreasonable our diligence is none at all, and from whom we hope for nothing, neither benefit nor indemnity, we despise his command, and break his yoke, and trample it under our most miserable feet. Let our confidence be allayed with fear, and our fear be sharpened with the intertextures of a holy hope, and the active powers of our souls will be furnished with feet and wings, with eyes and hands, with consideration and diligence, with reason and encouragement. But despair is part of the punishment that is in hell, and the devils still do evil things, because they never hope to receive a good nor find a pardon.—Buck.

25. **Smite,** give corporal punishment to. **scorner,** ch. xiii. 1. Such a man is regarded as irreclaimable. "It is a character made up of pride, irreverence, and cruelty." **simple,** conceived as ready to learn. **will beware,** R. V., "will learn prudence." **reprove,** etc., if there be any right disposition reproof becomes valuable moral discipline.[b]

Infidelity.—"There is one thing," said Mr. S., a professed infidel, to one of his companions in sin, "which mars all the pleasures of my life." "Ah," replied his companion, "what is that?" "Why, I am afraid the Bible is true. If I could but certainly know that death is an eternal sleep, I should be happy: my joy would be complete. But here is the thorn that stings me! This is the sword that pierces my very soul. If the Bible be true, I am lost for ever. Every prospect is gone, and I am lost for ever!" This unhappy man soon afterwards undertook a voyage, was shipwrecked, and drowned.—R. T. S.

26, 27. (26) **wasteth,** wasting his property by riotous living; and his spirit by unfilial conduct.[c] **chaseth away,** "by his shameless and evil life makes it impossible for her to continue under the same roof with him; or, it may be, so dissipates his parents' means that they are driven from their home." (27) **Cease,** etc., good warning for Rehoboam, and all sons in like peril.

Examples of prodigality.—Lucullus, the Roman general, though just-

[a] "The scene brought before us is that of an Eastern feast. There are no knives, forks, or spoons. Every guest has to help himself or be helped by the host." — Spk. Com.

"A favorite illustration among the Arabs of extreme idleness is the man that would not turn his head over on his pillow, though the muddy water leaking through the roof fell plump into his eye."—Thomson.

"Whatever the love of God has induced Him graciously to promise, no power or combination of powers in existence can stay from being done." — Wardlaw.

[b] "Therefore God smites some that He may warn all."—Bp. Hall. "His brain is as dry as the remainder - biscuit after a voyage." —Shakespeare. "It is a sign that folly is deeply ingrained when an hundred rods leave men as great fools as they found them."—Lawson.

[c] De. xxi. 18, 21; Pr. xvii. 21 —25, xx. 20. "We never find the Scripture commending any prodigal but one, and him, too, only for his ceasing to be so. Whose courses,

ly admired for his bravery, justice, and clemency, yet is deservedly censured for his extravagance and prodigality. Cicero and Pompey, meeting him one day in the city, told him they intended doing themselves the pleasure of supping with him that night; "but it shall be upon this condition," added they, "that you have nothing extraordinary on our account." To this he seemingly agreed; but guess their surprise, when they sat down to an entertainment that cost no less than fifty thousand crowns! What astonished them more was the shortness of the time in which it was prepared; but this it seems was little more than his ordinary diet. This superfluous pomp and magnificence will not be thought incredible if we compare it with that of Peter du Ruere after he was made cardinal by the pope, his kinsman; for in the space of two years which he lived at Rome he expended in feasts and entertainments no less than four hundred thousand crowns. Muleasses, King of Thunes, was so complete an epicure that, being expelled from his kingdom for his infamous debaucheries, and hearing afterwards that Charles V. was inclined to reinstate him on the throne, he ordered a peacock to be dressed for his supper, and spent a hundred crowns on the sauce. The Emperor Vitellius was likewise so shamefully fond of superfluity and excess, that for one single meal he has ordered two thousand different kinds of fish, and seven thousand fowls. Without doubt these epicures agreed with the poet Philoxenus, who wished that he had a crane's neck, that he might the longer enjoy the pleasure of eating and drinking.—Stretch.

if we reflect upon, we shall see his prodigality bringing him from his revelling companions and his riotous meats, to the swine and to the trough; and from imitating their sensuality, by a natural consequence to take up with their diet too." — South.

"Cease to hear instruction, if you are going to err afterwards."

"Pursue knowledge that you may have both hands filled with instruments which will enable you to do a great and useful work in society."—Parker.

28, 29. (28) **ungodly witness,** Heb. a witness of Belial. One who is false by bad principles. **scorneth,**[a] R. V., "mocketh," by boldly uttering his lies. **iniquity,** better, mischief. It is a real enjoyment to him to produce calamity. He swallows it as if it were sweet fruit. As a dainty, he seizes it and lives on it. (29) **prepared,** and therefore sure to come eventually upon such. Their punishment is sure, fixed, and ready.

Voltaire.—Voltaire spent his whole life in malignant but vain attempts to ridicule and overturn Christianity. He was the idol of a large portion of the French nation; but just when they were decreeing new honors for him, and loading him with applause, the hour of his ignominy and shame arrived. In a moment, the approach of death dissipated his delusive dreams and filled his soul with inexpressible horror. Conscience started from her long slumbers, and unfolded before him the extended roll of his crimes. Whither could he flee for relief? Fury and despair succeeded each other by turns, and he had more the appearance of a demon than a man. To his physician he said, "Doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life." The doctor answered, "Sir, you cannot live six weeks." Voltaire replied, "Then I shall go to hell, and you shall go with me;" and soon after expired.—R. T. S.

a Scorners are fools. Those that ridicule things sacred and serious do but make themselves ridiculous.

"If the wicked flourish, and thou suffer be not discouraged; they are fatted for destruction, thou art dieted for health." — Fuller.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

1. Wine,[b] personified here, represented as a sort of evil demon, wh. excites to frivolous wantonness, or to wild and boisterous action. It is evident fr. this that some Scripture wine was intoxicating. **mocker,** or scorner. That is, it is apt to make men such. **strong drink,** poss. palm wine of Syria; spiced wine;[c] or spirit taken from mead. **raging,** R. V., "a brawler," makes the man boisterous.[d] **deceived,** R. V. marg., "reeleth." **not wise,** for "it injures the health, enfeebles the intellect, deadens the moral sensibilities, destroys reputation, impoverishes the exchequer, disturbs friendship, breeds quarrels, and brings misery." "More are drowned in the wine-cup than in the ocean."—Germ. prov.

Lying Devices of Strong Drink.—Strong drink deceives the nation, by the vast amount of revenue that it pours into the public treasury. Drink generates pauperism, and pauperism is costly. Drink generates crime, and crime is costly. . . . There is a huge living creature with as many limbs as a Hindoo idol, and these limbs intertwined with each other in equally admirable confusion. The creature having life must be fed, and being large, must have a good deal of food for its sustenance. One day, having got rather short allowance, it was rolling its heavy head among its many limbs, and found something warm and fleshy. Being

b "Alcoholic drink is the great false prophet of England, — a prophet, working busily in every district, under the inspiration of hell."—David Thomas.

c Is. v. 11, 22.

d "When the wine is in the wit is out, and then the man, according as his natural temper is, either mocks like a fool, or rages like a madman."—Mat. Henry.

Pr. xxiii. 29, 30; Ho. iv. 11; Lu. xxi. 34; Eph. v. 18.

hungry, it made an incision with its teeth, laid its lips to the spot, and sucked. Warm blood came freely; the creature sucked its fill, and, gorged, lay down to sleep. Next day, it supplemented its short rations in the same way. Every day the creature drank from that opening, and as this rich draught made up about one-third of its whole sustenance, the wonder grew, why it was becoming weaker under the process, day by day. Some one at last bethought him of turning over the animal's intermingled limbs, and found that all this time it had been sucking its own blood! The discoverer proposed to bandage the spot, and not permit the continuance of the unnatural operation. The financiers cried out, "A third of the animal's sustenance comes from that opening; if you stop it, he will die!" Behold the wise politicians who imagine that the body politic would die of inanition, if it were deprived of the revenue which it sucks from its own veins, in the shape of taxes on the consumption of intoxicating drinks!—Arnot.

The Two Workers.—

Two workers in one field
Toiled on from day to day;
Both had the same hard labor,
Both had the same small pay,
With the same blue sky above,
The same green grass below;
One soul was full of love,
The other full of woe.

One leaped up with the light,
With the soaring of the lark;
One felt it ever night,
For his soul was ever dark.
One heart was hard as stone,
One heart was ever gay;
One worked with many a groan,
One whistled all the day.

One had a flower-clad cot
Beside a merry mill;
Wife and children near the spot
Made it sweeter, fairer still.
One a wretched hovel had,
Full of discord, dirt, and din;
No wonder he seemed mad,
Wife and children starved within.

Still they worked in the same field,
Toiled on from day to day;
Both had the same hard labor,
Both had the same small pay.
But they worked not with one will;
The reason let me tell:
Lo! the one drank at the still,
And the other at the well.

2, 3. (2) **fear**, etc.,[a] R. V., "terror," ch. xix. 12. **sinneth .. soul,**[b] R. V., "life," by bringing down his wrath upon him; the Eastern king had full control over property and life. (3) **cease from strife**, R. V., "keep aloof from;" intimating a peaceful and peaceable habit of life. **meddling**, lit. rolls, or rushes forward (ch. xvii. 14); interfering in everybody's quarrel. "An officious interference with the business of others, a prying into their concerns, creates discord."

The Honor of Peace.—The old world looked for glory in war; the Christian ideal—anticipated in Old Testament teaching—is to recognize honor in peace. I. The honor of peace may be seen in self-repression. II. The honor of peace may be recognized in magnanimity. III. The honor of peace may be observed in charity. IV. The honor of peace may be recognized in humility.—Pul. Com.

"Drinking is after all only a pronounced symptom of a large vice—self-indulgence; and self-indulgence is always fatal in the long run to all the habits and activities which men properly honor."—R. F. Horton.

"There is no trouble about guidance, if only we want to be guided. The trouble lies here,—that we want to lead, not to be guided. Thus we fall into the ditch and possibly lead some one else there also. God has made abundant provision for our guidance in the smallest matters, if only we will avail ourselves of it."—A. F. Schauffler.

"Temperance keeps the senses clear and unembarrassed, and makes them seize the object with more keenness and satisfaction. It gives you the command of your head, and preserves you in a condition for business." —Jeremy Collier.

[a] "Sol.'s object in this counsel is to deter his son fr. incurring his royal displeasure by libertinism and intemperance." —Wordsworth.

[b] Ha. ii. 10.

"The busybody's estate is too narrow for his mind, and therefore he is fain to make himself room in others' affairs; yet ever in pretence of love..... His tongue, like the tail of Samson's foxes, carries firebrands, and is enough to set the whole field of the world on a flame." — Bp. Hall.

Longsuffering Abused.—In an age of despotism, an Italian prince became celebrated for his forbearance, also for his severe punishment when aroused to do vengeance. He had an offending servant, who was repeatedly admonished. With every pardon, he became more reckless and impudent, and thought he could do anything with impunity. One day he entered the presence of the prince with his hat on, and, when rebuked, said he had a cold. His much enduring master said, "I will take care that you never catch a cold again." He immediately ordered the man to prison, and that the executioner should nail his hat to his head. One of the prince's friends expressed surprise at this severe sentence, because the servant had been pardoned for more serious crimes. The prince took a goblet, and having half-filled it with water, requested his friend to put an apple into it. This made the water rise to the brim. The prince then told his friend to drop in a coin. This made the water run over. "How is it," the prince asked, "that the small coin caused the water to run over, whereas the large apple only filled it to the brim?" The overflowing of the cup of God's mercy is wrath and destruction to the impenitent. —Foster's Cycl. of Ill.

4. sluggard,[a] ch. x. 4, one utterly indisposed to work, ready to find any excuse. **cold,** R. V., "winter," ploughing in Palestine is in Nov. and Dec., when the wind blows commonly from the north. Such a time is too rough and disagreeable for him, so he lets the opportunity pass.[b] **beg,** or desire; look for his share in the harvest-time.

Laborious Idleness.—There is such a thing as laborious idleness. Busy? So was the shepherd on the Alps, mentioned by Dugald Stewart, who spent fifteen years of life learning to balance a pole on his chin; and the philosopher sagely remarks how much good, had they been directed to a noble object, this diligence and perseverance would have accomplished. Busy? So have I seen the miller's wheel, which went round and round; but idly, grinding no corn. Busy? So, in a way, was the Russian who, facing the winter's cold nor regarding the cost of massive slabs brought at great labor from frozen lake or river, built him an icy palace, within whose glittering translucent walls, wrapt in furs and shining in jewels, rank and beauty held their revelry, and the bowl and the laugh and the song went round. But with soft breath, and other music, and opening buds, spring returned; and then, before the eyes that had gazed with wonder on the crystal walls of that fairy palace as they gleamed by night with a thousand lights, or flashed with the radiance of gems in the bright sunshine, it dissolved, nor left "a wrack behind"—its pleasures, "vanity;" its expense, "vexation of spirit." With an eye that pities because it foresees our miserable doom, God calls us from such busy trifling, from a life of laborious idleness to a service which is as pleasant as it is profitable, as graceful as it is dutiful, saying, Work out your salvation—"Work while it is called to-day, seeing that the night cometh when no man can work."—Guthrie.

5, 6. (5) **Counsel,** i. e. a man's secret purposes. **in the heart,** a purpose cherished, but unuttered.[c] The fig. is of deep well. **draw it out,** by his skill in questioning and leading on; draws as one draws water with a bucket, laboriously, from a deep place. (6) **proclaim .. goodness,** being always ready to talk about themselves: to "blow their own trumpets." The goodness here is bounty, liberality. **faithful man,**[a] the faithfulness intended is fidelity to promises, the practical execution of the vaunted benevolence.

Egotism.—There was a young Grecian poet who was so much praised by the people, that he became exceedingly vain, and thought himself superior to Hesoid, and other masters of song. He visited Plato, and began to praise his own performances, when the philosopher addressed him: "Tamyris, the graceful poet of Thrace, came to King Eurytus, who rewarded him magnificently for his songs, and honored him as the favorite of the Muses. This spoiled him; and he boasted that he would gain the victory if the Muses themselves were his rivals. The Muses chastised his presumption, smote him with blindness, and took away his gift of song. He destroyed himself; his arrogance induced his blindness and punishment. The Muses made the soul of Tamyris enter into a nightingale. Her form is the simplest and least beautiful: she

"As we see one coal kindle another, and wood to be apt matter to make a fire; so those that are disposed to contention and brawling are apt to kindle strife." —Cawdray.

[a] Pr. vi. 6.

[b] "Our farmers do actually plough in the severest weather. I have often seen them shivering with cold, and contending with wind and rain, quite enough to discourage those who are not sluggards. This hard necessity of winter work is mainly owing to the wretched implements used, and to a strange deficiency in agricultural science and skill. These men, with their frail ploughs and tiny oxen, must wait until the ground is saturated and softened, however late in the season that may be."—Thomson.

[c] "Some are very able and fit to give counsel, have an excellent faculty of cleaving a hair, hitting the joint of a difficulty, and advising pertinently; but they are modest and reserved, and not communicative; they have a great deal in them, but it is loth to come out." — Mat. Henry.

Mat. vi. 2, 5, 16; Lu. xvi. 15.

[a] "Men boast of their liberality, and we look in vain for the fulfilment of actual obligations." — Spk. Com.

"After the remarkable campaign in which Xerxes was driven and frightened out of Greece by Themistocles, the Grecian officers undertook to de-

cide by vote who had done the best service. Every ballot bore first the name of the voter, and second the name of Themistocles."— Foster's Cycl.

hides herself in the dark grove, and loves best to pour forth her song in the silence of night. She knows not that the soul of a Tamyris dwells in her gentle bosom." The youth, filled with anger, left the philosopher, and his name is not now known among the bards of Hellas.—Foster's Cycl. of Ill.——Humility.—Wise men know their own ignorance, and are ever ready to learn. Humility is the child of knowledge. Michael Angelo was found by the Cardinal Farnese walking in solitude amid the ruins of the Coliseum, and when he expressed his surprise the great artist answered, "I go yet to school that I may continue to learn." Who among us can after this talk of finishing our education? We have need to learn of all around us. He must be very foolish who cannot tell us something; or more likely we must be more foolish not to be able to learn of him.—Spurgeon.

7, 8. (7) **just man,** one who is true before God, and upright in all dealings with his fellow-men. **walketh,** usual fig. for conducteth his life. **children are blessed,**[b] by his inspiring influence and example, and by the Divine favor. (8) **king,** etc., comp. ch. xiv. 35, xvi. 10, 15. **scattereth,** R. V. "winnoweth" it away as easily as chaff from the threshing-floor. **with his eyes,** the sinful man's conscience cannot stand before the penetrating gaze of the righteous judge.

Henry V. and the Judge.—One of the favorites of King Henry V., when Prince of Wales, having been indicted for some misdemeanor, was condemned, notwithstanding all the interest he could make in his favor; and the Prince was so incensed at the issue of the trial that he struck the judge on the bench. This magistrate, whose name was Sir William Gascoign, acted with a spirit becoming his character. He instantly ordered the Prince to be committed to prison; and young Henry, sensible by this time of the insult he had offered to the laws of his country, suffered himself to be quietly conducted to jail by the officers of justice. The king, Henry IV., who was an excellent judge of mankind, was no sooner informed of this transaction, than he cried out in a transport of joy, "Happy is the king who has a magistrate possessed of courage to execute the laws; and still more happy in having a son who will submit to such chastisement."—Cheever.

9, 10. (9) **I have made,** by my own endeavors. The question as asked here implies a negative answer. **heart clean,** attained to moral perfection.[c] **pure,** "perfectly free fr. sinful propensities," comp. Jer. ii. 22. (10) **Divers weights,** Heb. "an ephah and an ephah; a stone and a stone." "Deception in business is a peculiar and prominent form of that universal sinfulness which has just been spoken of as having no exceptions."—Zöckler. Comp. ch. xi. 1, xvi. 11.

No Absolute Perfection in this World (vs. 9).—I. The truth that is here intimated is clear—1. From express declarations of Holy Writ; 2. From such instances as are undeniable; 3. From the confessions of God's most eminent saints. II. The improvement we should make of it. It should call forth—1. Our humiliation; 2. Our watchfulness; 3. Our gratitude; 4. Our love to Christ.—Simeon.

Divers Weights.—Here we have a true view of the way in which nearly all traveling merchants deal with their customers. See that Mohammedan pedlar with his bags over his shoulder: the one contains his merchandise, the other his deceitful weights. He comes to your door, throws his bags on the ground, and is willing either to buy or to sell. Have you any old silver, gold, jewels, precious stones, iron, or lead, he is ready to be your customer; but he only buys with his own weights, which are much heavier than the standard. Should, you, however, require to purchase any articles, then he has other weights by which he sells; and you may often see him fumbling for a considerable time in the bag before he can find those which are less in weight than the regular standard.—Roberts.

11. by his doings, owing to the simplicity and straightforwardness of a child his actions reveal his char. **pure,** or clean.[a]

Honesty in a Child.—In a country school a large class were standing to spell. In the lesson there was a very hard word. I put the word to the scholar at the head, and he missed it; I passed it to the next, and the next, and so on through the whole class, till it came to the last scholar—the smallest of the class—and he spelled it right; at least, I understood

b Pr. xiv. 26.

"God gives manhood but one clue to success—utter and exact justice; that He guarantees shall be always expediency." —Wendell Phillips.

"Beware of falling into the performance of any religious duty simply to be well spoken of by men."

"When I have been most careful in doing God's work, God has been the most faithful in doing mine."—Philip Henry.

c "Dr. Livingstone once asked a Bechuana what he understood by the word 'holiness.' He answered, 'When copious showers have descended during the night, and all the earth, and leaves, and cattle are washed clean, and the sun rising shows a drop of dew on every blade of grass, and the air breathes fresh—that is holiness.'" —Dav. Thomas.

Job viii. 6, xi. 4, xvi. 17, xxxiii. 9.

"It is time men had done talking about goodness. One action is better than a thousand theories."

a "'The child is the father of the man,' and the earliest actions are prophecies of the future, whether it will be pure and right, or unclean and evil."—Spk. Com.

him so, and he went to the head, above seventeen boys and girls, all older than himself. I then turned round and wrote the word on the blackboard, so that they might all see how it was spelled, and learn it better. But no sooner had I written it than the little boy at the head cried out, "Oh, I didn't say it so, Miss W——; I said e instead of i;" and he went back to the foot, of his own accord, quicker than he had gone to the head.—Fam. Treasury.

12, 13. (12) **Lord hath made,** and so will surely take account of how both are used. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" Ps. xciv. 9. (13) **sleep,** that of the slothful. Comp. ch. xii. 11, xix. 15. **open thine eyes,** intimating that the resistance of slothfulness is a moral duty. Be wide awake, this is a secret of prosperity.

The Ear and the Eye (vs. 12).—Two practical conclusions. I. That God should be studied in these organs. 1. In them the Divine wisdom is manifest; 2. And also the Divine goodness; 3. The Divine wisdom is symbolized. II. That God should be served in these organs. 1. Translate the sensations they convey to us into Divine ideas; 2. Apply the Divine ideas to the formation of our characters.—Thomas.

14—16. (14) **naught,** etc., comp. Ge. xxiii. 15. It is the custom of Eastern traders to chaffer much over their prices. The buyer will complain in order to get goods cheaper. **boasteth,** of the article which, by undervaluing, he secured so cheap. The Scotch say: "He that disparages my mare would buy my mare."[a] (15) **precious jewel,** lit. a vessel of preciousness: or most precious of all: comp. ch. iii. 14—16. "We are reminded of our Lord's parable of the merchant seeking goodly pearls, and bartering all his wealth to gain possession of a worthy jewel (Matt. xiii. 45, etc.)." (16) **Take his garment,** this represents the order of the judge.[b] Ch. xxii. 27. **strange woman,**[c] better as R. V. "hold him in pledge that is surety for strangers." Sentiment, "Take the utmost precaution to secure a debt against a man, who becomes sponsor for everybody and anybody."—Stuart. Ch. xxvii. 13.

Bargaining.—This proverb refers—I. To a world-wide manifestation of human selfishness. A custom that was prevalent in the days of Solomon, many centuries ago, and amid circumstances which differed widely from those by which we are surrounded, has held its place among men until the present day, and will doubtless continue to do so until the teachings and the spirit of Christianity rule the world. It prevails in modern England quite as extensively as it did in ancient Judea; and whether the buyer be a millionaire bargaining for an estate, or a costermonger for the worth of a shilling, he is often found knowingly, and therefore criminally, depreciating the value of the commodity. It is a trait of fallen humanity which "makes the whole world kin." II. A pitiful ground of boasting. Although it does need some skill and experience to tell the real value of an article, it requires none to pronounce it good for nothing. Only a man with some knowledge and judgment can put a fair price upon it, but any fool can say, "It is naught, it is naught." And if by knowingly depreciating the purchase the buyer robs the seller, he has but a very poor transaction to boast of. He has wronged another, it is true, but he has far more grievously wronged himself, for if his neighbor is the poorer by a few pence or pounds, he is the poorer by so much injury done to his own conscience, and by so much loss of the confidence of his fellow men. He who makes a boast of such a matter must, indeed, have few grounds for boasting.—Hom. Com.

17—19. (17) **Bread of deceit,** secured by means of trickery. **mouth .. gravel,** Heb. and Arab. phrase for getting into trouble. Sand or gravel in the mouth is peculiarly unpleasant. (18) **by counsel,** ch. xv. 22, even the wisest of men needs friends' counsel. **good .. war,** Lu. xiv. 31, R. V., "by wise guidance make thou war." "War is a necessary evil, but must be undertaken prudently if at all." The word for advice is lit. pilotings; and is interesting as a maritime metaphor. (19) **talebearer,** ch. xi. 13. **flattereth,** R. V., "opens wide," talks too freely, so is pretty sure to do mischief.[a]

The dishonest man will find that, after all, his gains are not bread for his higher nature—that his soul is still unsatisfied, and crying out for

"Every look, every movement, every expression, does something towards forming the character of the little heir to immortal life." —Mrs. Child.

"He who made our faculties exercises them himself on an infinite scale."

"If we could once realise the idea that God hears every word we utter and every breath we draw, the whole spirit of our life would instantly change." —Parker.

a "The vs. censures the well-known craft, the deceitful misrepresentation, with which business men seek to buy their wares as cheap as possible, below their value if they can." —O. Zockler.

b "Distrain upon him, even to his garment, bec. he is surety for a stranger, and may soon be reduced to beggary, and then thou wilt not be able to recover anything of him." — Wordsworth.

c "Strange women have strange ways of impoverishing men to enrich themselves." — Mat. Henry.

"Among the Romans, though a man were never so strong, never so valiant, yet, if he wanted wisdom and counsel, he was said to be miles sine oculis, a soldier without his eyes."—Jermin.

a "Those who love to tell news will hardly keep secrets." —Fausset.

"To hear an open slander is a curse: but not to find an answer is a worse."—Ovid.

"Have nothing to do with wordy men, would seem to be the injunction of the text. Society could not live if it were not for the sacred principle of secrecy, which may be called honor or confidence or trustworthiness." — Exp. B.

sustenance—and, more than this, that his conscience demands satisfaction for the wrong-doing of the past—that even if he is permitted to keep possession of his ill-gotten wealth, it is not only what chaff without the grain, or the husk without the kernel, is to the starving man, but as the very sand of the desert or the dust of the highway in the mouth, tormenting as well as unsatisfying.—Hom. Com.——Talebearing.—The carrying of a tale, and reporting what such a one said or such a one did, is the way to sow such grudges, to kindle such heart-burnings between persons, as oftentimes break forth and flame to the consumption of families, courts, and perhaps at length of cities and kingdoms. The mischief such incendiaries do is incredible, as being indeed for the most part inevitable. And a vine or a rose tree may as well flourish when there is a secret worm lurking and gnawing at the root of them, as the peace of those societies thrive that have such concealed plagues wrapped up in their hearts and bowels.—South.

20, 21. (20) **curseth,** etc., Ex. xxi. 17; Le. xx. 9; Mat. xv. 4. **lamp,** or candle; fig. of life. Ch. xiii. 9. **obscure darkness,**[a] R. V., "blackest darkness." "He shall be wrapped in the darkness of poverty, disappointment, and remorse." (21) **may be,** these words are better left out. **gotten hastily,** greedily sought after by unjust means.[b] **not be blessed,** God only blesses that wh. is righteous and good.

[a] Pr. vii. 9.

[b] "He points to the man who, with a voracious greed for wealth, seizes every opportunity to attain it, regardless of truth, honor, and justice, and thus becomes rich in a short time. But he is not blessed. Discovery comes and clothes him with infamy, conscience is roused and torments him. The curses of the defrauded and the frowns of the Almighty are over him."—Dav. Thomas.

"God only looks to pure and not to full hands."—Labertius.

Smitten Sins.—I. Hatred to parents. 1. It is unnatural beyond most vices, like hating the hand that lifts food to the mouth. 2. It is disobedience to a primary Divine command. 3. It incurs the Divine curse and the darkest doom. II. The vice of grasping. It springs from excessive, irregular, disordered desire, and generally from an ill-led life. We must wait upon God's order; must distinguish the necessary from the superfluous and the luxurious, and seek no enterprises that lie out of our proper vocation, if we would arm ourselves against this unholy temptation, and avoid the curse which attends compliance with it. For ill-gotten wealth can never prosper. III. The revengeful spirit. It costs more to avenge injuries than to endure them. "He that studieth revenge keepeth his wounds open." Let us recall the lessons of the sermon on the mount, and if there is any one who has aroused our dislike, pray for him (not in public, but in the privacy of the heart). IV. Injustice, whether in commerce or in general relations. What is shameful when detected is no less hideous in the sight of God, though concealed from men.—Johnson.

22, 25. (22) **I will recompense,**[c] see Ro. xii. 17—19.[d] **save thee,** from the evil. (23) **Divers weights,** vs. 10. (24) **Man's goings,**[e] lit. stately steppings of a strong man. Prob. here, the issues, the places where a man goes to. **understand .. way,** Heb. "a weak man" as comp. with the "mighty man" of the first clause. How is he to fathom his course in life so as to take it into his own management. (25) **who devoureth,** etc., R. V., "rashly to say, It is holy," i. e. to use the formula, for consecrating something to holy purposes. **and after,** after he has made his vow to begin to consider whether he can fulfill it or not, as did Herod and Saul the king.

[c] "He that studieth revenge keepeth His wounds open."—Lord Bacon.

[d] De. xxxii. 35; Pr. xxiv. 29; 1 Pe. iii. 9.

[e] Jer. x. 23.

"This Book should be the business man's book: then he would sweat nobody, injure nobody; would help everybody; would say, The loaf of bread is mine to share with a man who has no loaf." —Harper.

He who opposes honesty never had any.

"It is not necessary for me to live, but it is necessary for me to maintain my character and to please God."—Harper.

Revenge and its Antidote.—I. The sin and folly of revenge. 1. It is culpable. 2. It is foolish. II. The antidote to revenge. 1. It springs from faith. 2. It is realized through prayer, patience, and hope.—Pul. Com.

Revenge.—We do not understand this proverb to forbid the bringing of men who have wronged us to the bar of human justice, for this may be a duty which we owe to society. It would be criminal in most cases not to apprehend one who had robbed us if it lay in our power to do so, for by letting him go free we should be exposing other innocent men to danger. But there are many cases in which men are greatly wronged in ways which do not come within the cognizance of human law, and when no benefit to anyone would arise from their punishment by any human instrumentality. In such cases, the sure remedy for any vindictive feelings in our own breasts is to lay the matter before Him whose judgment must be impartial, and who will render to every man according to his works. Waiting upon the Lord, too, will remind us so forcibly of our own shortcomings and wrongdoings that we shall be more ready to forget those of our brother.—Hom. Com.

26—28. (26) **scattereth,** R. V., "winnoweth," as vs. 8. **wheel,**[a] the threshing roller. This separates the chaff from the wheat. (27) **spirit,** or life; that wh. God breathed into us, wh. distinguishes us from the lower animals:[b] what Christians call "conscience." **inward,** etc., i. e. his most secret thoughts. (28) **Mercy and truth,** by calling forth the affection of the people; comp. ch. iii. 3, xvi. 6—12. **mercy,** i. e. reciprocal love. "The subject's love is the king's life-guard."

Power of Mercy.—The necessity of mingling mercy with justice is strikingly exemplified in the great success which attended the efforts of the late Captain Maconochie to benefit the convicts in our penal settlement in Norfolk Island. Having, in his capacity as Secretary to the Governor of Tasmania, seen most terrible and hardening effects from unmixed severity, he desired earnestly to try what could be done by combining mercy with discipline and punishment. For this purpose he was placed in command of Norfolk Island, and remained there four years, having under his care from 1500 to 2000 convicts. Previous to his arrival they worked in chains, and it was considered dangerous for even armed officers to approach within three yards of them. It was considered unsafe to trust them with knives, and they therefore tore their food with their hands and teeth. But under more humane treatment the entire colony became changed, and one of his colleagues testifies that he and another superintendent "resided at one of the settlements in a cottage without lock and key, with simply a latch to the door, and close to the convict barracks, where over 2000 were lodged every night, also without locks." "Not a single serious offence," says he, "was ever committed in that time by any of those men, and the only bodyguard was another free superintendent and myself, together with a few trustworthy men selected from among themselves." This gentleman (Mr. J. Simms, since Governor of Plymouth Prison) goes on to say, "I shall ever remember this year as the most remarkable of all my prison experience, because it was a fair result of what might be realized from any body of men generally, thus treated, not by force, iron force, but by moral means." One remarkable example is given: At Sydney there had been a most desperate and unmanageable convict named Anderson. He was sent for life to Port Macquarie Convict Station, where he was again and again flogged. He made his escape, and lived among the natives for some time, but, ultimately, being recaptured, he was sent to Norfolk Island for the crime of murder. Under Maconochie's humane treatment he became a changed man, and when the Governor of New South Wales visited the settlement he particularly noticed Anderson, and inquired, "What smart fellow may that be?"—Leisure Hour.

29, 30. (29) **their strength,** bodily vigor.[c] 1 Jno. ii. 14. **beauty,** i. e. glory; "the grey head gives an honorable look, wh. suggests wisdom and experience."—Pul. Com. (30) **blueness,** etc., R. V., "Stripes that wound cleanse away evil." **so do stripes,** etc., better, "and strokes that reach," etc. The stings of conscience, warning and reproofs which penetrate to the inmost recesses of the heart, chastisement which affects the whole spiritual being—these are needful to the correction and purification of inveterate evil. **inward,** etc., R. V., "and strokes reach the innermost parts," i. e. the sinner for his remedy needs strokes wh. go down deep into the flesh, as vs. 27.[d]

Pain in the Present may Prevent Greater Pain in the Future.—When the surgeon is called in to examine a wounded man, the examination of the wound may give him more pain than he would have suffered if he had been let alone; it may bring far more present suffering to extract the ball, or to insert the probe, than it would have done simply to bandage the wound. But the pain of to-day is to ensure days of healthful rest by and by; if the present suffering was not inflicted, months and years of pain in the future might be the result. The pain of mind or body inflicted upon a child of five or ten years old, is intended by its parent to prevent greater moral or physical pain when he is fifty or seventy. And the All-wise and Loving Father, God, subjects His children to pain in the present life to prevent a deeper and more lasting pain in the life to come. —Preachers' Com.

[a] Is. xxviii. 27, 28.

[b] "Such a life, with all its powers of insight, consciousness, reflection, is as a lamp wh God has lighted throwing its rays into the darkest recesses of the heart." — Spk. Com.

"Knowledge of any description is good and desirable, but there are two beings of whom it is moral death to remain in ignorance —ourself and God. The spirit of a man is the power by which he apprehends both."—Preacher's Com.

"God's vicegerent in the soul." —Buchan.

"Conscience, therefore, requires continual culture, watching, assistance; it must for ever draw its vitality from the God of rghteousness."

[c] Pr. xvi. 31, xvii. 6.

[d] "Trials bring man face to face with God—God and he touch."—F. W. Robertson.

"The chief glory of youthful strength is here —the power to resist temptation, to live a true life, to fight all lies and shameful thoughts and deeds, and stand up firmly for the right."— Pul. Com.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

1, 2. (1) **as the rivers,** etc., R. V., "the water courses," the irrigating channels,[e] or the rivers, wh. God fills as He pleases, and guides on their free course through the valleys. It is implied that God uses kings for the blessing of His people. And it is also implied that there is no independent sovereignty. (2) **Every way,** etc., see ch. xvi. 2.[f]

God and the Human Race (vss. 1—3).—In these verses we have God unfolded to us—I. As the Controller of human hearts. 1. This is an undoubted fact; 2. It interferes not with human responsibility. II. As the Judge of human character. God judges character—1. Not according to their own estimate; 2. Not according to the result of their conduct; 3. But by the heart. III. As the approver of human goodness.—Thomas.

In God's Hand.—The heart of the powerful is in the hand of God. "As rivers of water he turneth it," etc. In the formation of this globe, in the arrangement of land and water, in the upbuilding of the great mountains, in the cutting of the fruitful plains, in the tracing of the fertilizing streams, we recognize the hand of God. He has used a great variety of agencies to bring about all these and all such results; but everything on the surface of the globe bears the impress of his wise hand. The rivers do not run where they list—they flow along the water-courses which his wisdom has arranged. And so with the hearts of the great and the strong, of the king and the counsellor, of the warrior and the minister. God has access to them; he can as easily touch and affect them in their thoughts and judgments as he can determine the channels in which the springs shall run. He can arrest them in their purpose; he can change or even reverse their course. Our human minds, as well as all material objects, are subject to his sway, and own the touch of his controlling hand. Therefore we never need despair, but should always hope. For in the darkest hour we know that we have one resource. When we can touch no other human or earthly springs, we can make our appeal to God. We can seek to "move the hand which moves the universe," and which "turneth the hearts of kings whithersoever he will." We are sure that God is never regardless of, or indifferent to, the course which his strong sons are taking. He is ruling the world in the interest of righteousness. He is willing, and indeed wishful, to be sought by those who love and trust him. Let the people of God, therefore, cherish hope in the midst of dire trouble and impending evil; and let the enemies of God beware. One touch of the Divine finger, and their fine fabric of oppression falls instantly to the ground.—Clarkson.

3, 4. (3) **do justice,** etc., moral obedience is superior to ceremonial worship in view of the moral char. of God; the comparative unimportance of ceremonial comes into full view in the later Jewish literature.[a] (4) **high look,** haughtiness of eyes; the expression of pride. **proud heart,** in wh. conceited and boastful feelings are cherished. **plowing,** R. V., "even the lamp of the wicked is sin;" "light" is used tropically as the symbol for "joy." Sentiment: The haughtiness of sinners, altho' a matter of joy to them, is sin in the sight of God.—Stuart. **sin,** this it is, however attractive its aspect may be.

The Good Deed.—By "the plowing of the wicked" we are to understand the whole scope of their work; all that the wicked man does is sinful. Beware of the discrimination which seeks to distinguish between the doer and the deed. If a bad man could do good deeds, then the necessity for regeneration would be disproved. If a good tree could bring forth bad fruit, or a bad tree could bring forth good fruit, essential relations would be changed. The Bible teaches us everywhere that everything depends upon the state of the heart, and that though deeds may be relatively good and temporarily of great value, yet as water cannot rise above its level, so no deed can rise above the moral level of the doer.—Parker.

5—7. (5) **diligent, here,** "keeps steadily on,"[a] in opposition to "excited haste," the contrast is bet. steady industry and rashness.[b] Fortunes suddenly gained are often as suddenly lost; wealth earned by patient

[e] "Some suppose there is an allusion to a gardener directing the rills of water through the different parts of his ground, and that the comparison is between the ease with which the gardener does this, and the ease with wh. the Almighty controls the purposes and volitions of the human soul."—Thomas.

[f] Pr. xiv. 12, xvi. 25.

"God is a kind Father. He sets us all in the places where he wishes us to be employed; and that employment is truly 'our Father's business.' " — John Ruskin.

"Often men have more reason to apologize for being rich than for being poor."

"Only the Golden Rule of Christ can bring the golden age of man." — Frances E. Willard.

[a] 1 Sa. xv. 22; Ps. 1, 7—15; Is. i. 11; Ho. vi. 6; Mi. vi. 7, 8.

"This maxim of the Prov. was a bold saying then; it is a bold saying still."— Stanley.

Swelling of heart.

[a] "The man who labors in substantial and continuous methods, as opposed to the impatient, restless fortune-hunter, who is easily led to adopt base and deceitful modes of acquiring."—O. Zockler.

[b] "Undue hurry is as fatal to success as undue procrastination."—Spk. Com.

labor is usually well stored. (6) **by a lying tongue,** put generally for deceptive methods.[c] **vanity,** etc., R. V., "Is a vapour driven to and fro; they that seek them seek death." Evil methods of gaining wealth generally end in disaster. The word vanity suggests the fig. of chaff or stubble in the wind. **seek death,** comp. ch. viii. 36, xvii. 19. (7) **robbery,** R. V., violence." **destroy them,** R. V., "sweep them away," shall return to plague the violent robbers. **do judgment,** or that wh. is just and right.

Covetousness.—Tarpeia, the daughter of Tarpeius, keeper of the Roman capitol, agreed to betray it into the hands of the Sabines, on this condition: "that she should have for her reward that which they carried on their left arms," meaning the golden bracelets they wore upon them. The Sabines having been let in by Tarpeia, according to compact, Titulus, their king, though well pleased with carrying the place, yet detesting the manner in which it was done, commanded the Sabines to give the fair traitor her promised reward, by throwing to her all they wore on their left arms; on which, unclasping his bracelet from his left arm, he cast that, together with his shield, upon her. All the Sabines following the example of their chief, the traitress was speedily overwhelmed with the number of bracelets and bucklers heaped upon her, and thus perished miserably under the weight of the reward which she had earned, by the double treachery, to her father and to her country.—Whitecross.

8, 9. (8) **froward,** perverse, or crooked. **strange,** the Heb. word used here means, guilt-burdened; R. V., "The way of him that is laden with guilt is exceeding crooked." **right,** and therefore is sure to have right issues. "What is right is evermore expedient, binding, and performable." (9) **corner,**[d] a turret, or pinnacle on the roof. **brawling,** R. V., "contentious."[e] **wide house,** lit. "house of companionship."

The Unregenerate and the Regenerate (vss. 8, 9).—I. The way of the unregenerate—1. Is froward; 2. Strange; neither the original nor the authorized way. II. The way of the regenerate—1. Pure; 2. Right in action. A right work implies—(1) A right standard; (2) A right motive.—Thomas.

House-roofs in the East.—How pleasant soever the arbor, or wicker-closet upon the roof, may be during the burning heats of summer, it must be very disagreeable in the rainy season. They who lodge in either at that time, must be exposed continually to the storm beating in upon them from every quarter. In allusion, perhaps, to this uncomfortable situation, Solomon observes: "It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house:" in a corner formed with boughs or rushes into a little arbor, which, although cool and pleasant in the dry and sultry months of summer, is a cool and cheerless lodge when the earth is drenched with rain, or covered with snow. It appears that the booths were generally constructed in the corner, where two walls met, for greater safety; for, on the middle of the roof, they had been too much exposed to the storm. This is confirmed by Dr. Russel, who remarks, in a manuscript note, that these booths in Syria are often placed near the walls; so minutely correct are even the most incidental observations of the inspired writers.—Paxton.

10, 11. (10) **desireth,** loveth and seeketh. **neighbour .. eyes,** i. e. "on account of his violent wickedness and selfishness, even his friend experiences no sympathy from him."[a] (11) **When,** etc., comp. ch. xix. 25. The idea of the vs. is, that while the simple will only learn by the terrors of punishment,[b] the wise learn by teaching.

The Way of Evil.—The way of evil is not always agreeable at first. Evil brings its own immediate penalties. It is so with uncleanly practices, with undesirable habits that may afterwards grow into luxuries. Many a young man has had to fight his way into slavery. When he first tasted the thing, it was deadly; he said he revolted from it. The enemy said, Try it again. He tried it again; it was little better. A third time, and it was not so unmanageable; a fourth time, a twelfth time, and then he desired it. Think of a free young soul fighting its way determinedly into bondage! This is possible. Oh, mysterious human nature! "how abject, how august!" When does a man lose his soul? We speak of the loss of the soul sometimes as if it were a momentary and complete act. There is a sense in which the loss of the soul is both momentary and

Pr. xii. 11, xiii. 11, xix. 2, xx. 21, xxviii. 20.

c "Falsehood is a great fortune-maker here in England, and although it is a short and popular road, it is ultimately a ruinous one." — Dav. Thomas.

"Only that will bring forth a great harvest which is in harmony with the structure and the purpose of the universe. We must work by the ways of God, and by eternal ordinances." — Parker.

d "The corner of the flat roof of an Eastern house was exposed to all changes of weather, and the point of the Proverb lies in the thought that all winds and storms wh. a man might meet with there are more endurable than the tempest within. — Spk. Com.

e Socrates being asked, "Why he endured his wife?" replied, "By this means I have a schoolmaster at home, and an example how I should behave myself abroad. For I shall be the more quiet with others, being thus daily exercised and taught in the forbearing of her."

a "So strongly does he desire to do evil that he will not even spare his friend if in his way."— Fausset.

b "Let the law be executed upon a scorner, and even he that is simple will be awakened and alarmed by it, and will discern, more than he did, the evil of sin, and will take warning by it." — Mat. Henry.

Ps. lxiv. 7—9.

"And here lies the difference between the godly and the wicked; not that the one is pure from evil, and the other commits it, but that the one does it from constraint, the other from delight. The one testifies —'What I hate'—the other — What my soul desireth — 'that do I.' As the fruit of this native cherished principle, self to the wicked is both his god and his object." — Bridges.

[a] Comp. Pr. xxii. 12; Job xxxiv. 17.

"By this righteous one God is meant, the supreme judge and rewarder."— O. Zockler, etc.

"The just man thinks maturely concerning the house of the wicked, that he may draw away the wicked from evil."—Vulgate.

[b] Illus. in Matt. xviii. 23—34.

"Howard's rule was this, 'That our superfluities give way to other men's convenience; that our conveniences give way to other men's necessaries; and that even our necessaries give way sometimes to other men's extremities.'" — Dav. Thomas.

"Charity is the scope of all God's commands." — St. Chrysostom.

[a] "Covetousness is commonly a master sin, and has the command of other lusts."— Henry.

"I desire to reconcile me to his friendly peace: 'tis death to me, to be at enmity; I hate it, and desire all good men's love." — Shakespeare.

[b] Ex. xxiii. 8; De. xvi. 19; Ec. x. 19.

complete. There is another sense in which a man loses his soul little by little. That is the loss to fear. The soul goes down in volume: the will is more reluctant in good directions; the heart has lost its eagerness to pray. The church is not now the sweet necessity of the week.—People's B.

True Wisdom.—

Learn to be wise, and practice how to thrive:
That I would have thee do; and not to spend
Your coin on every bauble that you fancy
On every foolish brain that humors you.
I would not have you to invade each place,
Nor thrust yourself on all societies,
Till men's affections, or your own desert,
Should worthily invite you to your rank.
He that is so respectless in his courses,
Oft sells his reputation at cheap market.
Nor would I that you should melt away yourself
In flashing bravery, lest while you affect
To make a blaze of gentry to the world,
A little puff of scorn extinguish it,
And you be left like an unsavory snuff,
Whose property is only to offend.
I'd ha' you sober and contain yourself:
Not that your sail be bigger than your boat;
But mod'rate your expenses now (at first)
As you may keep the same proportion still.
Nor stand so much on your gentility,
Which is an airy and mere borrow'd thing
From dead men's dust and bones; and none of yours,
Except you make, or hold it.—Ben Jonson.

12. righteous, etc., the word man is not necessary. The reference is to God as the "righteous One."[a] **overthroweth,** or precipitates: "He will cast the wicked headlong into evil."—Stuart.

13. stoppeth .. poor, as determined to give no heed to his cry. Disregard of the poor and needy is sin against the brotherhood. **cry himself,** the law of retribution will surely reach him.[b] "If the cries of the poor be not heard by us, they will be heard against us."

The Cry of the Poor (vs. 10).—Let us consider three things. I. Social distress—the poor. 1. The deserving poor; 2. The undeserving. II. Social heartlessness. Who should regard this cry? 1. The wealthy; 2. The legislating. III. Social retribution.—Thomas.

The Cry of Poverty.—There are not wanting signs that the whole civilization of Europe may be endangered by a huge social upheaval. The scandalous inequality of lots is glaringly apparent to all, and the privileges of the few may be ruthlessly torn from them in the interest of the many. If the volcano overflows there will be little respect for vested interests, abstract rights, or personal claims. But if we dread a violent revolution which might shatter the whole fabric of civilization, we must attend to the cry of poverty. To disregard this is to sit on the safety-valve while we wait for the coming explosion.—Pul. Com.

14. gift, usually, as here, with the idea of a bribe. **in secret,** so delicately done that none may know it, and the honor of him who takes it may seem to be preserved. Zöckler prefers the idea that skillful liberality is meant here.[a] **pacifieth,** or bends, extinguishes. **a reward,** R. V., "present," this word suggests that the reference in both sentences is to bribes.[b] **in the bosom,** i. e. the lap or fold of the garment where it is secreted.

Fitz-James and His Sovereign.—It is said of Sir John Fitz-James, that the instant he was seated on the bench, he lost all recollection of his best friends, that would in the least degree have interfered with the administration of justice. A relation once solicited a favor from him. "Come to my house," said he, "and I will deny you nothing; but in the king's court I must do you justice." The attorney-general was weak and criminal enough to request his interest on the part of the king, in a cause to be tried before him. "I will do the king right," he

replied. A verdict was given against the crown, and the attorney-general expostulated with Fitz-James, who dismissed the subject by adding, "I could not do his majesty right, if I had not done justice."—Cheever.

15, 16. (15) **joy,** etc., virtue is its own reward. Righteous ways are pleasant ways. The idea here is that the righteous love right doing, and do not need the impulse of gift or reward. **destruction shall be,** the R. V. is better: "But it is a destruction to, etc." **workers of iniquity,** who act unrighteously, on consideration of bribes. (16) **wandereth,** at his own will. This word is contrasted with remain, or abide. The man may think he wanders, but really he remains.[c] **dead,** Heb. Rephaim, giants.[d] He shall meet with a sudden or speedy death.

The Wanderer's Gloomy State (vs. 16).—I. What is meant by wandering out of the way of understanding? 1. The book of nature and of Providence is the way of understanding; 2. So is the Book of Revelation; 3. The place of pure worship. II. Observe the wanderer's gloomy state. 1. The dead are those who are dead in sin; 2. Those who are doomed to eternal death.—Phillips.

Robbing the Widow.—Sir Thomas More's Judgment.—A gentleman of rank had wronged a poor widow of a sum of money, and was ordered by Sir T. More, when lord chancellor, forthwith to make restitution of the property, with the costs attending the suit. "I hope then your lordship will grant me a long day to pay." "I will grant your motion," instantly replied the chancellor. "Monday next is Barnabas day, which is the longest in the whole year; pay it then to the widow without fail, or I will commit you to the Fleet Prison."

17, 18. (17) **pleasure,** indulgence, costly luxury. Things opposed to business, and serious duty. **poor man,** bec. a pleasure-seeking life is expensive, and drains income, instead of adding to it. **wine and oil,** or perfume; the familiar symbols of social festivity.[e] (18) **a ransom,** an atonement, or propitiation. "The wicked and transgressor shall bring on themselves the evil wh. they intended to do to the righteous and thus their own destruction shall ransom the righteous fr. the doom to wh. they had assigned him."—Stuart.

Self-indulgence (vs. 17).—I. It involves an extravagance of expenditure. II. A fostering of laziness. Hence it leads to—1. Material poverty; 2. Intellectual poverty; 3. Spiritual poverty.—Thomas.

A Striking Incident.—"Mr. Gaule, a police-court missionary in Birmingham, relates a recent experience, one out of many in his fourteen years of labor. A young married woman, twenty-eight years of age, died a shocking death from drinking. Up to the age of twenty-six she had been a teetotaller, and did not know what the taste of drink was. She was a leading member of the Gospel Temperance Mission, and sang the solos at the meetings. Then she was taken ill, the doctor ordered brandy, and it proved like the first taste of blood to a tame tiger. She could never again be kept from it, and at last it killed her. The craving there must have been in the very blood."—Exp. Bib.

19. **better,** etc., comp vs. 9.[a] **wilderness,** Heb. "the land of the desert." **contentious,** or quarrelsome. **angry,** R. V., "fretful." "Even those that are one flesh, if they be not withal one spirit, have no joy of their union."

Matrimonial Misery (vs. 19).—I. The torturing power of a brawling wife. II. Even uncomfortable positions are preferable to her company. 1. The corner of a housetop; 2. The wilderness. III. The demoralizing power of sin. IV. The caution required in matrimonial alliances.—Thomas.

Fatal Bonds.—Everyone has known some pair chained together by human laws where the heart's union has either never existed or been rent asunder. Two ships at sea are bound together by strong, short chains. As long as the sea remains perfectly calm, all may be well with both; though they do each other no good, they may not inflict much evil. But the sea never rests long, and seldom rests at all. Woe to these two ships when the waves begin to roll. There are two conditions in which they might be safe. If they were either brought more closely together, or more widely separated, it might yet be well with them. If they were from stern to stern riveted into one, or if the chain were

"We learn that gifts should be quiet, unobtrusive, unobserved; and the same is true of all acts of kindness."

c "A slight tone of irony is perceptible in the word for 'abide.' 'He shall find a resting-place, but it shall be in Hades.' " —Spk. Com.

d "Here is a clear testimony to a state of retribution after death."—Wordsworth.

Jer. xlv. 10.

"Many delight more in giving of presents than in paying their debts." — Sir Philip Sidney.

"There is no joy in the world to be compared for depth and purity to that of the good conscience." —Pul. Com.

e Ps. civ. 15; Pr. xxvii. 9.

Economy is income.

"Profligate voluptuousness, with its expensive viands, its luxurious refinements, its costly establishments, and its foolish pastimes, makes light work with fortunes."—Dav. Thomas.

"More and more it appears that the power of wine is the power of the animal within us, which dies slowly."

a 1 Cor. vii. 15.

In the Scanda Purana it is said, "It is better for any one to fall into hell, than to perform the duties of a householder with a woman who will not respect her husband's word."

"Two things well considered would prevent many quarrels; first, to have it well ascertained whether we are

broken, and they were left to follow independently their several courses, there would be no further cause of anxiety on their account. If they are so united that they shall move as one body, they are safe; if they move far apart, they are safe. The worst possible position is to be chained together, and yet have separate and independent motion in the waves. They will rasp each other's sides off, and tear open each other's heart, and go down together.—Arnot.

20, 21. (20) **oil,** "the precious unguent wh. represents wealth." By care and diligence the wise preserve and increase wealth.[b] **spendeth it up,** R. V., "swalloweth it up:" wastes it. (21) **followeth after,** earnestly seeking, really endeavors to live righteously and charitably. **life .. honour,** in addition to the "righteousness" he seeks.[a] In the long run public respect, and places of honor, are sure to come to the good.

Evils of Profligacy.—To burn away, in mad waste, the Divine aromas and plainly celestial elements from our existence; to change our holy of holies into a place of riot; to make the soul itself hard, impious, barren! Surely a day is coming, when it will be known again what virtue is in purity and continence of life; how divine is the blush of young human cheeks; how high, beneficent, sternly inexorable if forgotten, is the duty laid, not on women only, but on every creature, in regard to these particulars. Well, if such a day never come again, then I perceive much else will never come. Magnanimity and depth of insight will never come; heroic purity of heart and of eye; noble, pious valor, to amend us and the age of bronze and lacquer, how can they ever come? The scandalous bronze-lacquer age of hungry animalisms, spiritual impotencies and mendacities will have to run its course, till the pit swallow it. —Carlyle.

22—24. (22) **scaleth,** etc., as illus. 2 Sam. v. 6—9; 1 Chr. xi. 6—9. In war counsel and good judgment are of more importance than brute strength.[b] **strength,** the tower or fortress on wh. they chiefly rely. (23) **Whoso,** etc., comp. ch. xiii. 3, xix. 6. **tongue,** the unruly member.[c] (24) **scorner,** or scoffer,[d] R. V., "The proud and haughty man, scorner is his name; he worketh in the arrogance of pride."

The Government of the Tongue (vs. 23).—I. Such a government is necessary. From an ungoverned tongue can come—1. Troubles on self; 2. Troubles of social distress; 3. Troubles on others. II. Such a government is practicable. 1. The tongue is not an involuntary organ; 2. Consider the silence of Christ when before His insulting judges.—Thomas.

The Tongue.—There is a quaint and pertinent passage in Lyly's Euphues:—"We may see the cunning and curious work of Nature, which hath barred and hedged nothing in so strongly as the tongue, with two rowes of teeth, and therewith two lips, besides she has placed it farre from the heart, that it should not utter that which the heart had conceived; this should also cause us to be silent, seeinge those that use much talke, though they speake truly, are never beleeved."—Exp. Bib.—— Conversation.—Tasso's conversation was neither gay nor brilliant. Dante was either taciturn or satirical. Gray seldom talked or smiled. Hogarth and Swift were very absent-minded in cmpany. Milton was unsociable, and even irritable, when pressed into conversation. Virgil was heavy in conversation. La Fontaine appeared heavy, coarse, and stupid; he could not speak and describe what he had just seen; but then he was the model of poetry. Chaucer's silence was more agreeable than his conversation. Dryden's conversation was slow and dull, his humor saturnine and reserved. Addison was good company with his intimate friends, but in mixed company he preserved his dignity by a stiff and reserved silence. Fox, in conversation, never flagged; his animation and variety were inexhaustible. Grotius was talkative. Goldsmith wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll. Burke was eminently entertaining, enthusiastic, and interesting in conversation. Curran was a convivial deity; he soared into every region, and was at home in all. Coleridge, in his conversation, was full of acuteness and originality. Leigh Hunt has been well termed the philosopher of hope, and likened to a pleasant stream in conversation. Fisher Ames was a powerful and effective orator, and not the less distinguished in the social circle; he possessed a fluent language, a vivid fancy, and a well-stored memory.—Chambers.

not disputing about terms rather than things; and, secondly, to examine whether that on which we differ is worth contending about." — C. Colton.

[b] "The wise man keeps a store in reserve. He gains uprightly, spends moderately, never exhausts himself." —Spk. Com.

[a] 1 Ki. iii. 11; Mat. vi. 33.

In one of England's great cathedrals rests one whose gravestone, according to his own directions, bears but the single word, Miserimus, "most miserable." He was a man of wealth and position, or his sepulchre could not have been there. This is not an infrequent confession of the rich.

[b] Ec. vii. 19, ix. 15.

"Strength, wanting judgment and policy to rule, overturneth itself."—Horace

[c] "Give not thy tongue too great a liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken is, like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desirest to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue." —Quarles.

[d] "Humility to superiors is duty, to equals courtesy, to inferiors nobleness, and to all it's safety." —Sir Thos. More.

Bishop Latimer, when examined before Bonner, at first answered without much thought but, hearing the noise of a pen behind the curtain, he concluded that his words were being taken down, and became more cautious.

25, 26. (25) **killeth him,** wasting away his life. His desire keeps him from health-bringing labor. Special diseases afflict the lazy and slothful. (26) **coveteth greedily,** lit. "every day he wisheth a wish."[a] R. V., "There is that coveteth greedily," etc. **giveth,** by diligent labor he gains enough and to spare.[b]

Sloth.—"Pray, sir, of what disease did your brother die?" said the Marquis Spinola one day to Sir Horace Vere. "He died, sir," was the answer, "of having nothing to do." "Alas!" said Spinola, "that is enough to kill any general of us all." Honor cannot come from idleness, but labor brings not only honor while living, but gives us a title to be regarded with respect after we have left the world. Of no man who has lived to any purpose can it ever be said that he died of having nothing to do.—Hom. Com.——Covetousness.—The countryman in the fable would needs stay till the river was run all away, and then go over dry-shod; but the river did run on still, and he was deceived in his expectation. Such are the worldling's inordinate desires: the deceitful heart promiseth to see them run over and gone, when they are attained to such a measure, and then they are stronger, wider, and more unruly than before; for a covetous heart grasps at no less than the whole world—would fain be master of all, and dwell alone, like a wen in the body, which draws all to itself. Let it have never so much, it will reach after more; add house to house, and field to field, till there be no more place to compass. Like a bladder, it swells wider and wider, the more of this empty world is put into it. So boundless, so endless, so inordinate are the corrupt desires of worldly-minded men!—Spencer.

27, 28. (27) **sacrifice,** etc., ch. xv. 8; Ps. l. 9. **abomination,** because a mere formality. **with a wicked mind,** hypocrisy being altogether worse than inconsistency; R. V. marg., "to atone for wickedness;" sacrifice may be used to sanction sin, then it must be most hateful. (28) **false witness,** ch. xix. 5, 9. **heareth,** attends carefully, so as to be able to report accurately, and give true testimony. **constantly,** R. V., "unchallenged;" R. V. marg., "so as to endure." His witness will never be put to shame.[a]

Moral Qualities and Their Results (vss. 28, 29).—I. Falsehood and ruin. There are witnesses of lies in various departments of life. 1. In courts of justice; 2. In literary paths; 3. In social circles; 4. In religious teaching. II. Veracity and safety. III. Wickedness and effrontery. IV. Uprightness and self-control.—Thomas.

God's Attitude Toward the Wicked.—Their whole life is grievous to Him. "The way of the wicked is an abomination," etc. And this, not because they hold some erroneous opinions, nor because they make many serious mistakes, nor because they are betrayed into occasional transgressions; but because they determinately withhold themselves from His service; because they claim and exercise the right to dispose of their own life according to their own will; because they deliberately disregard the will of God. They are thus in a state of fixed rebellion against His rule, of settled disavowal of His claims upon them, of consequent neglect of His holy Law. Therefore their entire course or "way" is one of disobedience and disloyalty; it must be painful, grievous, even "abominable" in the sight of the Holy One. Their worship is wholly unacceptable to Him. If we "regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not hear us." God "desireth truth in the inward parts;" he cannot and will not accept as of any value whatever the offering that comes from a heart in a state of determined disloyalty to Himself and hatred of His law. Their worship is positively offensive. It is "an abomination" unto Him. And it is so, because: (1) It is an act of conscious rejection of His claim; the worshiper is taking His Name and His Law upon his lips, and at the very time he is consciously keeping back from God what he knows is His due. (2) It is an act of positive insult, inasmuch as it supposes that God will be indifferent to the wrong things the worshipper is doing, that He will take a few words or offerings instead of purity, truthfulness, integrity, submission.—Pul. Com.

29. hardeneth his face, is obstinate, shameless, and obdurate in his self-will. **directeth,** R. V., "ordereth," or considereth. He is willing to receive counsel. He acts advisedly.[a]

[a] "He carries constantly the same intense longing for possession and enjoyment, but stops with this indolent wishing and dreaming, without passing over into energetic action." — O. Zockler.

[b] Eph. iv. 28. "It is probable that nothing undermines the bodily constitution more surely than unsatisfied desire." "If the rust eats into the sword which is in constant use, how much more certainly will it destroy that which is never drawn from the scabbard."— Preacher's Com.

[a] Jno. iii. 11; 2 Pe. i. 16—18. "Each man can take his position under one or other of the divisions of this verse: we have only a right hand and a left, we have only falsehood and truth: there is no middle place in which a man may lodge himself in security and honor. With such a fact before us we may realize the day of judgment now."— Parker. "I hate anything that occupies more space than it is worth. I hate to see a load of bandboxes go along the street, and I hate to see a parcel of big words without anything in them."—Hazlitt.

[a] "There is a contrast intended bet. hardening himself, and hardening his way."— Wordsworth. "Religion should be to every man: (1) not merely a creed, but an experience; (2) not a restraint, but an inspiration; (3) not an

insurance for the next world, but a program for the present world."— James Stalker.

"Hypocrites do the devil's drudgery in Christ's livery." — Mat. Henry.

[b] Ps. lxviii. 20: Ho. xiv. 3; Ac. v. 39.

Men would become weary of doing things that are merely superficial and mechanical; it is the ineffable motive, the profound conviction, that explains all the deepest religious action of life, and that sustains men in the maintenance and defence of their religious purposes.

"Man, know thyself! all wisdom centers there." —Young.

"The importation of horses was a direct breach of the law as laid down in 1 Ki. iv. 26."

"Only in proportion as a man is right is he safe, only in the degree of his true religion is he assured of prosperity and final peace." — Parker.

"This Proverb is inscribed in the cupola which lights the Manchester Exchange. It is a good skylight, but apparently too high up for the busy merchants on the floor of the Exchange to see without more effort than is to be expected of them." — Exp. Bib.

"Gentlemen, there has been no instance of a country successful in the noble arts, yet in which the youths were frivolous, the maidens falsely religious, the men slaves of money, and the

Hardening the Face.—The human countenance is intended to express the feelings of the mind, and when a man is not afraid for another to read his thoughts and intentions, his face is to a great extent the index of his heart. But a bad man is unwilling that his neighbor should know what is passing within him—his thoughts and purposes will not bear the light—they are so selfish or impure that he is ashamed of them, or they are occupied with some malicious plan which must be concealed if it is to be successful. He therefore hardens his face—puts on an appearance of innocence and frankness as a cloak of the evil underneath. But this method of life is not an easy or a pleasant one—the contrast in the second clause seems to imply that such a man walks in an uneven or a miry road—it is hard to be always acting a part and to be obliged at all times to look what we do not feel, and there may come unguarded moments and unlooked-for surprises when the mask will fall and the truth come to light.—Hom. Com.

30, 31. (30) **against the Lord,** no resisting Him, so all life plans should be made in dependence on His will. "Wisdom that would assert itself in opposition to the Divine, is not wisdom, but sheer folly."—Zöckler. (31) **horse,** type of war-like strength, Ps. xx. 7. **safety, or victory.**[b] This is an expansion of the previous verse designed to show how vain is the confidence reposed in human means and plans.

National Defence.—The Jews were repeatedly warned against keeping cavalry. Cavalry were for pitched battles, and could only be used on the plains. But the old successful Jewish warfare was among the hills. As a question of military tactics, the advice meant that it was better for the Jews to act on the defensive in their impregnable strongholds than to descend into the field for open warfare. A deeper thought was that, while defensive warfare might sometimes be required, the Jews were not to embroil themselves in the affairs of their neighbors. This was especially desirable for a little state wedged in between the two great empires of Egypt and Assyria, like Afghanistan between Russian and India. A still deeper and more momentous thought has yet to be reached. The Jews were to learn that their true defence was not in armies, not in military prowess, not in naturally strong fortresses. God was their Rock and Tower of strength. Now, we have no reason to consider that the idea which was brought out in the history of Israel with magnificent emphasis applies to that little ancient race alone. It is true of every nation that will recognize God, that "safety is of the Lord." We undergo periodical panics concerning our national dangers. It would be well if we could rise to the position urged upon Israel by the teachers of Old Testament days.—Pul. Com.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

1. good, this word is supplied from Ec. vii. 1, though it is implied here. The value of character cannot be overestimated. **than great riches,** these may be good, but the good name is better. Scripture does not speak against riches, but it puts them into their right and subordinate place. **loving favour,** "better than silver or gold is goodwill."

Riches or Reputation?—Both of these things are good in their way, but if only one of these two desirable things are open to us, we may be very well satisfied that this is not the wealth, but the worthiness, not the full treasury, but the good name and the kind regard. For—I. Wealth is very limited in its capacities. 1. It does not confer even happiness; 2. It does not supply knowledge, much less capacity, and still less wisdom; 3. It does not provide the friendship which is worthy of the name; 4. It does not include the possession of any estimable moral qualities, nor, therefore, the favor of God. Moreover—II. Wealth has its serious drawbacks. 1. It involves heavy burdens, great anxieties lest it should be lost; 2. It entails the most serious responsibility; 3. It tempts to a dishonorable and degrading self-indulgence; also to a cynical and guilty contempt of the poor and lowly. III. A good reputation includes or implies the best things. IV. A good reputation is a source of true and pure satisfaction. 1. It satisfies our self-respect; 2. It satis-

fies our affections. To have the "loving favor" of men is to have much true gladness of heart. V. A good reputation is a source of much power. While the bad rich man is steadily declining in his command, his humbler neighbor, who is esteemed for his wisdom and his worth, is gaining an influence for good with every passing year.—Clarkson.

A Good Name.—"Great riches can only be used in one world, whereas a good name can be carried throughout all spheres, and will abide through the lapse of all duration. We cannot have a really good name amongst men until we have a good name with God; we cannot have a good name with God until we accept His conditions and utterly repudiate our own. A name that is really good is more than a name, it is a character, it is the expression of a spiritual wealth, it is the exemplification of a deep and holy reality of conscience, rectitude, and beneficence." —Parker.——Importance of Character.—A Fable.—Be wondrous wary of your first comportments; get a good name, and be very tender of it afterwards; for it is like the Venice glass, quickly cracked, never to be mended, though patched it may be. To this purpose, take along with you this fable. It happened that Fire, Water, and Fame went to travel together. They consulted that if they lost one another how they might be retrieved, and meet again. Fire said, "Where you see smoke, there you shall find me." Water said, "Where you see marsh, and moorish low ground, there you shall find me." But Fame said, "Take heed how you lose me; for, if you do, you will run a great hazard never to meet me again: there is no retrieving of me."—Howell.

2. meet together,[a] everywhere in life we find both. Cottage homes for the poor lie close behind the squares and mansions of the rich. **maker .. all,**[b] humanity is one, the relation of all to God overrides distinctions of rank. "Before the common relationship, all circumstantial distinctions vanish."

The Equality of Men (vs. 2).—I. Clearly state the subject. II. Show that it is the will of God that there should be distinctions of rich and poor in the world. 1. Evident from Scripture; 2. It is not inconsistent with God's justice, and is an argument for His wisdom. III. Application. 1. The rich should acknowledge God in all their enjoyments; 2. The poor should be contented; 3. Apart from riches and poverty, all men are equal—they have the same nature, the same care of Providence, the same Christian privileges, the same judgment.—Grove.

3. foreseeth, comp. ch. xxvii. 12. Foresight is an important practical quality. True wisdom is always associated with forecast. **punished,** R. V., "suffer for it." "He who will not be ruled by the rudder must be ruled by the rock."

Judgment and Prudence.—A ship may be well equipped both as to sails and as to guns, but if she be destitute both of ballast and of rudder, she can neither fight with effect nor fly with adroitness, and she must strike to a vessel less strong, but more manageable; and so it is with men; they may have the gifts both of talent and of wit, but unless they have also prudence and judgment to dictate the when, the where, and the how those gifts are to be exerted, the possessors of them will be doomed to conquer only where nothing is to be gained, but to be defeated where everything is to be lost; they will be outdone by men of less brilliant but more convertible qualifications, and whose strength, in one point, is not counterbalanced by any disproportion in another.—Colton.——Prudence.—He that goes too near sin to-day, may fall into it to-morrow. God has been so indulgent as to give us a latitude and liberty to exercise a pious zeal over ourselves, that we may show how much we fear to offend Him, and a cautious Christian will say with St. Paul, "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient." Prudence will not always venture to the brink of innocence.—Boyle.

4. By humility, R. V., "The reward of humility;" humility comes only with the fear of Jehovah and results in riches, etc.

Two Graces and Their Reward.—I. Two graces. 1. The social grace: "Humility;" 2. The religious grace: "The fear of the Lord." II. A threefold reward. 1. Riches; 2. Honor; 3. Life.—Pul. Com.

Advantages of Humility.—The high mountains are barren, but the low valleys are covered over with corn; and accordingly the showers of God's grace fall into lowly hearts and humble souls. The more poor

matrons of vanity. Not from all the marble of the hills of Luni will such a people ever shape one statue that may stand nobly against the sky; not from all the treasures bequeathed to them by the great dead will they gather, for their own descendants, any inheritance but shame." — John Ruskin.

"Talents are nurtured best in solitude, but character on life's tempestuous sea." — Goethe.

[a] Strike against, encounter each other. Not here used in an antagonistic sense.

[b] Ac. xvii. 25, 26.

" 'Poor' signifies a person who is weak and uninfluential, but not necessarily destitute or even in want. The 'poor' are those who form the vast majority of every society, and are sometimes described by the word 'masses.' " — Harper.

"The rich and the poor have much in common. They have, in fact, everything in common which is independent of silver and gold."

"Destructive to all usefulness is that excessive prudence upon which some professors pride themselves; they are never able to strike a blow, much less fight a battle for the Lord Jesus."

"To be humble to our superiors is duty; to our equals, courtesy; to our inferiors, generosity." — Feltham.

"We should often have reason to be ashamed

of our most brilliant actions if the world could see the motives from which they spring." — La Rochefoucauld.

"The grace of humility is discovered in an earnest effort to press forward energetically, without a thought of self or a care for the admiration of the world."

in spirit, the more self-empty, the more earnestly we are desirous of spiritual things; and such shall be filled.—Worthington.——True Humility.—True humility calls no man master, and seems to worldly men to be pride, but it is only its deep deference to God that enables it to set man in his own lowly place. True humility prefers mercy to sacrifice; does good and is silent; bears suffering and is patient; looks to Christ, sits at His feet, and learns only from Him. True humility will bid the priest, the Church, the minister, and the schoolmen remain, as Abraham his servants, at the bottom of the mount, while it rises to the loftiest crag of that mount, and deals alone with God, and holds communion with Him only. True humility counts holiness far more splendid than robes and phylacteries, prefers beneficence to ceremony, lives a divine life. It wears not a hair-cloth shirt, nor whines when it speaks, nor puts on a sour and repulsive countenance, nor fancies that God can only be approached, and religion spoken of, in sepulchral tones. But it does not seem to men to fast. It fasts before God. There is nothing of display and parade that would indicate that it was of earth, everything to prove that it is implanted within from its Father in heaven.—Cumming.

5. Thorns and snares, fig. of the perils of life. **froward,** set in contrast with the man of humility who fears the Lord. "He is the man of unbridled will, stubborn and headstrong."[a] **keep his soul,** by due watchings and self-restraints.[b] **shall be,** i. e. he keeps himself fr. the traps and enticements of the headstrong.

Christian Watchfulness.—As the sentinel on duty watches for the coming foe; as the sailor on deck watches for the coming danger from storm or breakers; as the watchman watches for the thief who seeks to plunder; as Satan watches for opportunities to sow tares, and ruin souls; as the worldling watches for "chances" to make a bargain; as the pleasure taker watches for seasons, times, and companies for personal enjoyment; as the lover of knowledge watches all openings for the increasing of his knowledge: so should the Christian watch for the approach of his enemies, and be prepared for conflict and victory. He should watch for the dangers which beset his passage to the haven of rest, and, by the wisdom which cometh from above, avoid them: he should watch for all occasions of usefulness in all ways in his power; for all opportunities of laying up treasure in heaven; for all means of promoting his purity and happiness; for all sources whence may flow an increase in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch." "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—Bate.——The Snare of Evil Companions.—Cooke, who was executed for murder at Leicester, in his confession, alluded to being connected with a society, formed principally of deistical young men, who frequented a public house in that town, in which the writings of Paine, Carlile, and other infidel authors were taken in and encouraged. He emphatically added, "I considered myself a moral young man, attending as I did some place of Christian worship three times a day; till, unhappily, I got connected with the above and other infidel associations."—R. T. S.

6. Train, Heb. "initiate a child in accordance with his way;" i. e. consider the child's nature, faculties and temperament, in the education which is given to him. If, from his early years, a child is thus trained, "when he is old, he will not depart from it." This way, this education in accordance with his idiosyncrasy, will bear fruit all his life long; it will become a second nature, and will never be obliterated.—Pul. Com. **a child,** training must begin then. Childhood is the period in wh. life impressions are received.[c] **way . . go,** "according to the standard of his way;" the path marked out for him. The way he should go, not the way he would go.[d] **not depart,** bec. early habits gain fixedness for life.

Education.—I. The philosophy of education. 1. The susceptibility of childhood; 2. The durability of impressions. II. The art of education. 1. The discipline of the will; 2. Of the conscience. III. The religion of education. 1. Right views of God; 2. Obedience to His will; 3. Love of His character.—Whythe.

Sabbath-school Instruction.—Sabbath-school instruction, although good as far as it goes, does not supply adequate moral education for the juvenile hordes which infest the streets of our large cities. The

a "Self-willed stubbornness has always led men into perplexities." — Dav. Thomas.

b "Let him that would be little in temptation be much in prayer. True prayer strikes at the root of all sin, and by it our souls are preserved safe in God's keeping." — Quoted by Nicholls.

"The man who is most perversely bent on his purposes is most likely to be thwarted in them." — Bridges.

"There is small chance of truth at the goal where there is not a childlike humility at the starting post." —Coleridge.

c "Comp. German proverbs, 'Young accustomed is done old.' 'What little Johnnie does not learn, Johnnie learns never.' And the familiar Eng. prov., 'Just as the twig is bent the tree is inclined.' " — O. Zockler.

d "The Prov. enjoins the closest possible study of each child's temperament, and the adaptation of his 'way of life' to that."—Spk. Com.

"A man must live near to God if he is to make God real to his children. A mo-

interval between Sabbath and Sabbath is too wide. It is like spreading a net with meshes seven inches wide instead of one, before a shoal of herrings. By the great gap of the week the little Arabs easily slip through, in spite of the stout string which you extend across their path on the Sabbath evening. Ply the work by all means, and ply it hopefully. Labor for the Lord in that department will not be lost. Saving truth is thereby deposited in many minds, which the Spirit of God will make fruitful in a future day. Ply the work of Sabbath-schools, but let not the existence and abundance of these efforts deceive us into the belief that the work is adequately done. The Sabbath-school cannot train up a child. The six days' training at home, if it be evil, will, in the battle of life, carry it over the one day's teaching in the school, however good it may be."——Advice to Parents.—A successful parent will be one who makes the training of the children a constant and religious study. It is the last subject in the world to be left to haphazard. From the first a clear aim must be kept in view. "Is my great object that this boy shall be a true, a noble, a God-fearing man, serving his day and generation in the way God shall appoint? Is this object purged of all meaner thought? Can I renounce the idea of worldly success for him, and be indifferent to wealth and reputation, to comfort and ease for him?" When this question is satisfactorily settled, then comes a second, How is the aim to be realized? Is not the parent at once driven to God with the cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" A mistake may be so fatal, and it is so hard to clearly see, to rightly judge, to firmly act, that nothing can avail but the direct teaching, inspiration, and power of the Spirit of God. Happy are the father and the mother who have been found in their helplessness to seek that Divine help from the very first!——The Mind Sinful.—Thelwall thought it very unfair to influence a child's mind by inculcating any opinions before it should have come to years of discretion and be able to choose for itself. I showed him my garden, and told him it was my botanical garden. "How so?" said he, "it is covered with weeds." "Oh," I replied, "that is only because it has not yet come to its age of discretion and choice. The weeds, you see, have taken the liberty to grow, and I thought it unfair in me to prejudice the soil towards roses and strawberries."—Coleridge.

7, 8. (7) **ruleth over,** actually gives him who possesses it an authority over others. **servant,** is under obligation to him, and so must beg and serve.[a] (8) **soweth,** etc., comp. Job vi. 1—8; Ga. vi. 7, 8. **vanity,** R. V., "calamity."[b] **fail, trans.** "the staff of his haughtiness vanisheth away." "Abused power will not last."

The Social Rule of Wealth (vs. 7).—I. This rule should always be a generous one. II. It is frequently tyrannic. III. It is ever temporary. Apply:—We are reminded—1. Of the responsibility of the rich; 2. Of the temptation of the poor; 3. Of the wisdom of the diligent.—Thomas.

Advantages of Wealth.—Wealth is an application of mind to nature; and the art of getting rich consists not in industry, much less in saving, but in a better order, in timeliness, in being at the right spot. One man has stronger arms or longer legs; another sees by the course of streams the growth of markets, where land will be wanted, makes a clearing to the river, goes to sleep, and wakes up rich. Steam is no stronger now than it was a hundred years ago; but it is put to better use. A clever fellow was acquainted with the expansive force of steam; he also saw the wealth of wheat and grass rotting in Michigan. Then he cunningly screws on the steam-pipe to the wheat crop. Puff now, O steam! The steam puffs and expands as before, but this time it is dragging all Michigan at its back to hungry New York and hungry England. Coal lay in ledges under the ground since the Flood, until a laborer, with pick and windlass, brings it to the surface. We may well call it black diamonds. Every basket is power and civilization. For coal is a portable climate. It carries the heat of the tropics to Labrador and the polar circle; and it is the means of transporting itself whithersoever it is wanted. Watt and Stephenson whispered in the ear of mankind their secret, that a half ounce of coal will draw two tons a mile; and coal carries coal, by rail and by boat, to make Canada as warm

ther must hold very real converse with her Lord if His reality is to become obvious to her little ones. 'As a child,' says one, 'I always had a feeling that God and Jesus were such particular friends of mother's, and were honored more than words could tell.' If such an impression is to be created, depend upon it God and Jesus must be particular friends of yours." — Harper.

[a] "Some sell their liberty to gratify their luxury." — Mat. Henry.

[b] Ill-gotten gains will not prosper.

"The true Christian line is to shun that proud independence, which scorns the kindly offer of needful help; but at the same time to avoid all needless obligations. 'Sell not your liberty to gratify your luxury.' If possible, 'owe no man anything but love.' (Rom. xiii. 8.) 'Guard against that poverty, which is the result of carelessness or extravagance. Pray earnestly, labor diligently. Should you come to poverty by the misfortune of the times, submit to your lot humbly; bear it patiently; cast yourself in childlike dependence upon your God." —Bridges.

"Charity gives itself rich, covetousnes hoards itself poor," says the German proverb. "Give alms, that thy children may not ask them," says a Danish

proverb. "Drawn wells are never dry." So give to-day, that thou mayest have to give to-morrow. Above all, if our case is that "silver and gold we have none, let us freely substitute the kindly looks and the healing words, which are worth much and cost little." — Pul. Com.

"It would seem as if God could never give back enough to him who regards the poor as his children."

"Only weak men are boisterous; only men who are uncertain of their intellectual or moral position seek to make up by noise what is wanting in truth and equity." — Parker.

Ps. ci. 6; Mat. v. 8.

"Whatever mitigates the woes or increases the happiness of others is a just criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, is a criterion of iniquity. One should not quarrel with a dog without a reason sufficient to vindicate one through all the courts of morality." — Goldsmith.

2 Chr. xvi. 9; Ps. xxxiv. 15.

[b] "He defeats all the counsels and designs of false and treacherous men, and turns them to their own confusion." — Mat. Henry.

"Cities shall fall, kingdoms shall come to nothing, empires shall fade away as the smoke, but the truth of the Lord shall continue for ever. Burn it, it will rise again; as Calcutta, and with its comforts bring its industrial power.—Emerson.

9. bountiful eye, Heb. "good of eye;" see "evil eye," ch. xxviii. 22: who looks round in kindness and friendliness; is of a beneficient disposition. **be blessed,** "charity being twice blessed, blessing him who gives and him who takes."

Genuine Philanthropy (vs. 9).—I. The kindliness of its disposition, "a bountiful eye." II. The beneficence of its activity. III. The reward of its service. 1. He shall be blessed with the commendation of his own conscience; 2. With the grateful affection of the poor; 3. With the approbation of God.—Thomas.

Safety of Beneficence.—Two men I knew very well, some years ago, on the streets of New York, were talking about the matter of benevolence. One said to the other, "You give too much. I will wait till I get a large pile of money, and then I will give." "No," said the other, "I will give as God prospers me." Hear the sequel. The former lives in New York city to-day, dollarless; the other gathered two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I believe that the reason why so many people are kept poor is because they do not give enough. If a man gives in the right spirit to the Lord Jesus, and to the Church, he is ensured for time and for eternity. The Bank of England is a weak institution compared with the bank that any Christian man can draw upon. The man who stands by Christ, Christ will stand by him.—Talmage.

10, 11. (10) **scorner,** or scoffer, as ch. xxi. 24. Such a man excites others to contention, therefore he should be chased away.[a] **reproach,** R. V., "ignominy." (11) **pureness of heart,** he who seeks to be pure in heart, and is winsome in his speech. **king .. friend,** i. e. such a man is sure to win favor and acceptance. Such a man "stands fair for preferment."

Rebuking a King.—The timidity which hesitates to rebuke profanity was once shamed by a king who had been himself rebuked for profanity. Riding along the highway in disguise, and seeing a soldier at an inn, he stopped and asked him to drink ale with him. On an oath which the king uttered while they were drinking, the soldier remarked, "I am sorry to hear young gentlemen swear." His majesty took no notice of it, but swore again. The soldier immediately said, "I'll pay part of the ale, if you please, and go; for I so hate swearing that, if you were the king himself, I should tell you of it." "Should you indeed?" asked the king. "I should," was the emphatic reply of his subject. Not long after, the king gave him an opportunity to be "as good as his word." Having invited some lords to dine with him, he sent for the soldier, and bade him to stand near him, in order to serve him if he was needed. Presently the king, not now in disguise, uttered an oath; and deferentially the soldier immediately said, "Should not my lord and king fear an oath?" Looking at the heroic soldier, and then at his company of obsequious noblemen, the king severely remarked: "There, my lords, is an honest man. He can respectfully remind me of the great sin of swearing; but you can sit here and let me stain my soul by swearing, and not so much as tell me of it!"—Old. Test. Anecdotes.

12. preserve knowledge, or "exercise a protecting superintendence over those who possess His knowledge."—Thomas. **overthroweth,** ch. xxi. 12. **words,** i. e. proposals or plans.[b] **transgressor,** R. V., "the treacherous man."

God Preserves Knowledge.—God has preserved knowledge by causing special care to be taken of His written Word. All knowledge is preserved to us from age to age by its being communicated from one human being to another, as one generation succeeds the other, and the hand of God is to be recognized in its preservation. But this is especially true of the knowledge of God. In the days of old, God long preserved a knowledge of Himself in the world by preserving the life of Noah, of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. They stood almost alone in the world in this respect, and were like lighthouses on a dark and stormy ocean, sheltering and preserving a moral light in the moral darkness.—Preachers' Com.——When knowledge seemed on the eve of perishing, a single copy of the Scriptures, found as it were accidentally,

preserved it from utter extinction. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 14—18.) For successive generations the Book was in the custody of faithful librarians, handed down in substantial integrity. (Rom. iii. 2.) When the church herself was on the side of the Arian heresy, the same watchful eyes raised up a champion (Athanasius) to preserve the testimony. Often has the infidel transgressor labored with all the might of man for its destruction. Often has Rome partially suppressed it, or committed it to the flames, or circulated perverted copies and false interpretations. Yet all these words and deeds of the transgressors have been overthrown.—Bridges.

13. **slothful man,** comp. ch. xii. 24, etc.[a] **lion without,** i.e. with a lion in the open country he professes to be in danger in the midst of the city: a type of the unreasonable and frivolous excuses he gives for his laziness. **in the streets,** "in a city full of men, so timid is he."—Wordsworth.

The Characteristics of Laziness (vs. 13).—Indolence—I. Creates false excuses—1. In the secular sphere; 2. In the spiritual sphere. II. It creates unmanly excuses. Apply:—To true souls difficulties are a challenge, not a check to action.—Thomas. Note on vs. 13.—The sluggard is fond of sleep; and, to excuse his slothfulness, he makes use of the pretence, when he is to go out of his house in the morning dawn, and to follow his business, that he might fall a prey to one of the wild beasts which prowl about during the night. When it becomes dark, the people of the East shut themselves up in their houses for fear of the wild beasts. Thus Alvarez, in his account of Ethiopia, says, that "in Abyssinia, as soon as night sets in, nobody is to be seen abroad for fear of wild beasts, of which the country is full."—Rosenmüller.

Sloth.—It is full of ridiculous excuses here satirized. While a noble energy refuses to own the word "impossible," it is ever on the lips of the indolent. As in the Arabic fable of the ostrich, or "camel-bird," they said to it, "Carry!" It answered, "I cannot, for I am a bird." They said, "Fly!" It answered, "I cannot, for I am a camel." Always, "I cannot!" He who in false regard to his own soul refuses to go out into the world and do God's work, will end by corrupting and losing his soul itself.—Pulpit Com.

14, 15. (14) **mouth,** their wanton, seductive words, which entice a man to destruction of body and soul. **strange women,** Pr. ii. 16. **pit,**[b] such as was prepared for ensnaring wild animals. **fall therein,** in the wrath and judgment of the Lord.[c] (15) **Foolishness,** the wilfulness of ignorance and inexperience. **bound,** i.e. firmly fixed, so as to need chastisement for its removal. In all children there is the liability, the tendency, the habit of going wrong: in this fact lies the truth of the proverb. **rod,** etc., not necessarily corporal punishment. The word is used as a fig. for all the redemptive influence of wise parental chastisement.

An Evil and its Cure (vs. 15).—I. Here we have a terrible evil. 1. In its deprivation of goodness in its first stages; 2. The abnormal condition of parents; 3. The corrupt social influence under which the child is trained. II. A severe cure. These words suggest—1. The infliction of pain; 2. But from a benevolent disposition.—Thomas.

Bringing Up Children.—The late Dr. Henry Ware, when once asked by a parent to draw up some set of rules for government of children, replied by an anecdote. "Dr. Hitchcock," he said, "was settled in Sandwich; and, when he made his first exchange with the Plymouth minister, he must needs pass through the Plymouth Woods, a nine miles' wilderness, where travelers almost always got lost, and frequently came out at the point they started from. Dr. Hitchcock, on entering this much-dreaded labyrinth, met an old woman, and asked her to give him some directions for getting through the woods so as to fetch up at Plymouth, rather than Sandwich. 'Certainly,' she said, 'I will tell you all about it with the greatest pleasure. You keep right on till you get some ways into the woods, and you will come to a place where several roads branch off. Then you must stop and consider, and take the one that seems to you most likely to bring you out right.' He did so, and came out right. I have always followed the worthy and sensible old lady's advice in bringing up my children. I do not think anybody can do better; at

kill it, it will live again; cut it down by the root, it will spring up again. No force shall be able to decay it. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." — Bp. Jewell.

[a] Pr. xii. 27, xv. 19, xviii. 9, xix. 24, xxi. 25, etc. Mat. xxv. 26; Ro. xii. 11; Heb. vi. 12.

"We are safe from the lions in the way of duty, and never safe when we avoid it. Lions, when they met David feeding his sheep, were torn in pieces by him like kids." — Lawson.

"He has recourse to the most senseless and ludicrous excuses, if in any way he may not be obliged to go out to labor."—O. Zockler.

"Though heart preparation is from God, it is not given as a premium to sloth, but in proportion to the earnestness with which we seek the grace."

"The sluggard rightly apprehends danger, but mistakes the source whence it will come. There is a devouring enemy which will slay him if he do not take care, but it is not without him, but within him." —Preacher's Com.

[b] Ch. xxiii. 27.

[c] Comp. provs., "Whom the gods would destroy they first dement." "Men's pleasant vices are made whips to scourge them."

Ec. vii. 26.

Replying to scurrility is like the dandy keeping himself clean by pushing away the chimney sweeper.

"So much of the Bible as I learned at my mother's knee and at Sunday school seems to me as a Bible within a Bible."—Prof A. A. Lipscomb.

a "The ill-gotten gains do not prosper, and only expose the oppressor to extortion and violence in his turn fr. some equally unscrupulous rich man." — Spk. Com.

Lu. vi. 33—35.

"I take him to be the truly rich man that lives upon what he has, owes nothing, and is contented; for there is no determinate sum of money that can make a man rich, since no man is truly rich that has not so much as perfectly satiates his desire of having more." —Howe.

"Of riches lawfully gained the devil takes half, of riches unlawfully gained he takes the whole and the owner too." — Turkish Proverb.

It is related of Grotius, the great scholar, that on his deathbed he exclaimed, "Ah, I have consumed my life in a laborious doing of nothing! I would give all my learning and honor for the plain integrity of John Urick!" This John Urick was a religious poor man, who spent eight hours of the day in reading and prayer, eight in labor, and only eight in sleep and meals.

" Evermore it must be remembered, that the least part of knowledge passed to man by this so large a charter from

any rate, I cannot." Good common sense, doubtless, is often better than all set rules; but the thing is to have it.—Foster. Government of Children.—As for ourselves, we tried the rod on our own children, but are now trying the sugar plum on our grandchildren. Thus far, our success is remarkable. Family government has risen in popularity. Children cry for it. Our children used to look with aversion on the spot where we locked up the switch; but now there is not in the whole house a place so favorite as the drawer where is stored the sweet moral suasion. Good conduct thrives; obedience is at a premium; the will is broken; the children are governed, without knowing it. Blessings on sugar-plums!—Beecher.

16. **increase,** etc., better, "whoso oppresseth the poor it is for his gain; whoso giveth to the rich it is for his loss." "The riches extorted from the poor man will in the end redound to his benefit; by God's providential control the oppression and injustice from which he has suffered shall work to his good."—Pul. Com. **to want,** the man gives only to increase the riches which the man is squandering, so in giving him opportunity for his vices really hurries on his ruin.[a]

Abuse of Wealth.—I am no advocate for meanness of private habitation. I would fain introduce into it all magnificence, care, and beauty, where they are possible; but I would not have that useless expense in unnoticed fineries or formalities,—cornicing of ceilings, and graining of doors, and fringing of curtains, and thousands of such things,—which have become foolishly and apathetically habitual; things on which by common appliance hang whole trades, to which there never belonged the blessing of giving one ray of real pleasure, or becoming of the remotest or most contemptible use; things which cause half the expense of life, and destroy more than half its comfort, manliness, respectability, freshness, and facility. I speak from experience; I know what it is to live in a cottage with a deal floor and roof, and a hearth of mica-slate; and I know it to be in many respects healthier and happier than living between a Turkey carpet and a gilded ceiling, beside a steel grate and polished fender. I do not say that such things have not their place and propriety; but I say this emphatically, that a tenth part of the expense which is sacrificed in domestic vanities, if not absolutely and meaninglessly lost in domestic comforts and incumbrances, would, if collectively afforded and wisely employed, build a marble church for every town in England.—Ruskin.

17—19. (17) **wise,** a plural word indicating a collection of miscellaneous proverbs: vss. 17—21 are an introduction to the "words of the wise." (18) **within thee,** in thine heart, or inward parts. **lips,** R. V., "if they be established together upon thy lips." God asks belief with the heart and confession with the lip and the life. (19) **made known,** R. V., "made them known." **even to thee,** so the application is personal and individual.

Spiritual Verities (vss. 17—21).—The subject of these verses is spiritual verities, called excellent things. I. The experimental knowledge of them is a transcendent blessing. 1. It affords pleasure; 2. Enriches speech; 3. Inspires trust in God; 4. Establishes the faith of the soul; 5. Qualifies for usefulness. II. This knowledge is attainable. The method involves—1. Communication; 2. Attention; 3. Application; 4. Retention. —Thomas.

The Knowledge of Christ.—Here is the privilege of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, that as it is of eminence and height, so it is of use and convenience, and that in the highest measure; as it is a pearl for beauty, so it is for value. This knowledge is of universal use and convenience. It is so in reference to this life. Am I in want, in contempt, in prison, in banishment, in sickness, in death? This knowledge gives me contentedness, patience, cheerfulness, resignation of myself to His will, who hath sealed my peace with Him, and favor from Him, in the great covenant of His Son; and I can live upon this though I were ready to starve. I am assured that if it be for my good and the glory of His name, I shall be delivered; if not, I can be contented, so that my jewel, the peace of God, and my own conscience by the blood of Christ, be safe. Am I in wealth, honor, power, greatness, esteem in the world? This knowledge teacheth me humility, as knowing from whom I received it; fidelity, as

knowing to whom I must account for it; watchfulness, as knowing that the honor of my Lord is concerned in some measure in my conduct; and that the higher the employment is the more obnoxious I am to temptation from without, from them that watch for my halting, and from within by a deceitful heart. Thus, in reference to the temporal condition of my life, this knowledge of Christ is of singular use; it makes a man a better philosopher than the best system of morals; it guides him in the management of all relations. This knowledge is also useful for that life which is to come, and that in the highest degree, which all other knowledge comes short of, and attains not to any one of the least of these ends.—Hale.

20, 21. (20) **excellent things,** Ewald suggests the trans. found in the R. V., marg. "heretofore" ("Have I not written to thee heretofore concerning counsel and knowledge.") contrasting some previous work with the expression "this day" in vs. 20. Stuart also adopts this reading. (21) **answer, etc.,** R. V., "mayest carry back words." **them that send unto thee,** R. V., "send thee," we must conceive of these as being parents or tutors who send a youth to a school or wise man to be educated. The moralist expresses his desire that the disciple will carry home such wholesome, truthful doctrines as will prove that the pains expended upon him have not been useless.—Pul. Com.

"The Certainty of the Words of Truth."—We call upon all to examine for themselves. The Bible courts examination. It is the unwillingness and refusal to examine, that is most to be deplored. The genuineness of its writings, the authenticity of its histories, the reality of its recorded miracles, the fulfilment of its prophecies, the sublimity and consistent harmony of its doctrines, the purity of its precepts, the origin of its commemorative ordinances, and its tendency to personal and social virtue and happiness,—all court examination. The testimony of the celebrated Earl of Rochester, when converted from infidelity and profligacy to Christianity and virtue, will be found the truth. Laying his hand on the Bible, he would say—"This is true philosophy. This is the wisdom that speaks to the heart. A bad life is the only grand objection to this book."—Hom. Com.

22—25. Here begin the "words of wise," vss. 17—21 being introductory. (22) **because .. poor,** his poverty not permitting him to defend himself at law. Or, let pity for his poverty keep thee from injuring him. **in the gate,** where was usually the place of judgment.[a] (23) **Lord,** etc., i.e. God is their Advocate. **spoil the soul,** R. V., "despoil of life those that despoil them." (24) **angry,** or passionate man. Lit. an owner of rage. (25) **get a snare,** by copying the evil example. We usually catch the temper of those with whom we mostly associate.

Rob Not the Poor.—It requires quite an effort for us to see and realize what the Scriptures mean by the poor. We have to slip away from all the wretched associations of the Poor House, the Poor Law, and the Guardians. We have to bring before our minds a class which in a wholesome state of society would be a small, numerable minority, but in our own unwholesome state of society are a large and well-nigh innumerable majority,—not only the destitute and the actually needy, but all the people who have no land on which to live, no house which they can call their own, no reserve fund, no possibility of a reserve fund, against the unavoidable calamities and chances of life, the people who are trodden down—who tread each other down—in the race of competition. It is a too common thing for one or two greedy and selfish capitalists to form a "corner"—as the commercial slang of the day denominates it—in some article of industry, i.e., to secure all the raw material in the market, and to hold it until a famine price can be demanded. Meanwhile, the mills are idle, the looms are silent, the workpeople are unemployed, and their families suffer. Our moral sense is not yet sufficiently cultivated to condemn this hideous selfishness as severely as it deserves, and to regard the perpetrators of it as enemies of the human race. "The people curse them," that is all. But we may rest confident that He to whom vengeance belongs enters every action of the kind in His unerasable accounts, and reserves the inevitable punishment for these "oppressors of the poor." There is another evil of

God, must be subject to that use for which God hath granted it, which is the benefit and relief of the state and society of man; for otherwise all manner of knowledge becometh malign and serpentine, and therefore, as carrying the quality of the serpent's sting and malice, it maketh the mind of man to swell."—Bacon.

"Wherever Gospel truth has found its way and has been embraced, there, in the marvellous changes that have been effected,—in the contrast between previous stupidity and pollution, and heartless and murderous ferocity, to intelligence, and purity and virtue, and peace, and harmony, and happiness, we have the triumphs of the Cross, and the manifestation of the 'certainty'—the divine certainty—'of the words of truth.'" —Hom. Com.

[a] Job v. 4, xxxi. 21; Ps. lxix. 12, cxxvii. 5.

"A religion which takes no knowledge of the masses is a false religion; a church and a ministry which 'understand not to know' the condition of the people and the needs of the poor are not Christ's Church and Christ's Ministry, but flagrantly apostate." — Exp. Bib.

"'He that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse!' Yes, nothing is more striking than this truth, that not only positive oppression of the poor, but

mere indifference to their state, mere neglect of their sufferings, involves us in sin. Nay, when we buy and use the cheap goods, which are cheap because they have been made at the cost of health and happiness and life to our brothers and our sisters their blood is upon our heads, though we choose to forget it."—Harper.

"Run not into debt, either for wares sold or money borrowed; be content to want things that are not of absolute necessity, rather than to run up the score. —Hale.

"An honest soul is like a ship at sea, that sleeps at anchor on the ocean's calm; but when it rages, and the wind blows high, she cuts her way with skill and majesty." — Beaumont and Fletcher.

modern industrial life which is alluded to in the Proverbs before us. No oppression of the poor is more terrible than that which is exercised by those who themselves are needy. The system which results from necessity of this kind is termed "sweating." The hungry contractor undertakes the job at the lowest possible price, and secures his profit by getting hungrier and weaker creatures than himself to do the work at a price lower than possible, literally at starvation wages. What force, then, to modern ears is there in the saying, "A needy man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain which leaveth no food"! The Divine oversight of these industrial abuses is not, as we sometimes suppose, pretermitted. Wisdom and Justice and Love hold the reins, and though the rapacity and cupidity of men seem to have a wide range, they are inevitably pulled up in the end, if not in this partial and transient life, yet in that long Eternity through which the Eternal will work out His purposes.—Exp. B.

26, 27. (26) **strike hands,** ch. vi. 1, xvii. 18. (27) **should he take,** i.e. the creditor. **thy bed,** practice had come to override the merciful law of Ex. xxii. 27.

The Miseries of Debt.—Debt haunts the mind: a conversation about justice troubles it; the sight of a creditor fills it with confusion; even the sanctuary is not a place of refuge. The borrower is servant to the lender. A life at another man's table is not to be accounted for a life. It is mean to flatter the rich; it is humiliating to be the object of pity. To be the slave of unattainable desires is to be despicable and wretched. Independence, so essential to the virtues and pleasures of a man, can only be maintained by setting bounds to our desires, and owing no man anything. A habit of boundless expense undermines and destroys the virtues even in a mind where they seem to dwell. It becomes difficult, and at last impossible, to pay punctually. When a man of sensibility thinks of the low rate at which his word must henceforth pass, he is little in his own eyes; but difficulties prompt him to study deceiving as an art, and at last he lies to his creditors without a blush. How desolate and how woful does his mind appear, now that the fence of truth is broken down!—Chartery.

28. landmarks, wh. were often merely stones laid in the furrows of the open field. These could easily be shifted by little and little.[a]

Importance of Honesty in Little Things.—The Just King.—One of the kings of Persia, who is famous in history for his exact justice, was once out hunting, when, finding himself hungry, he ordered the people to dress a deer that they had just taken. When all was nearly ready, they found that they had forgotten to bring any salt with them; so they sent a lad off to fetch some from a village at a little distance. The king overheard them, and calling to the boy, said, "And mind you take money to pay for it." The attendants expressed their surprise at his thinking of such trifles, and asked what harm there could be in taking a handful of salt. The king replied, "All the evil that now troubles the earth first began in such trifles, till by degrees it grew to its present height; and if I take the salt, my officers will perhaps seize the cow." There are many people who do not think it worth while to attend to what they are doing except upon great and important occasions; forgetting that happiness and virtue consist in those trifling occurrences of which human life is made up.

29. diligent, R. V., marg. "skilful." Stuart, "dexterous." ch. x. 4, xxi. 5. **before kings,** being found worthy of high and responsible office. His talents shall be at the service of kings.[b] **mean,** or obscure. The diligent and faithful are sure to come to the front.

Advantage of Industry.—Industry need not wish; and he that lives upon hopes will die fasting. There are no gains without pains; then help hands, for I have no lands; or, if I have, they are smartly taxed. He that hath a trade hath an estate; and he that hath a calling hath an office of profit and honor; but then the trade must be worked at, and the calling followed, or neither the estate nor the office will enable us to pay our taxes. If we are industrious, we shall never starve; for, at the working man's house, hunger looks in, but dares not enter. Nor will the bailiff or the constable enter; for industry pays debts while despair

[a] For law of boundaries, etc., see De. xix. 14, xxvii. 17; Job xxiv. 2; Ho. v. 10; Pr. xxiii. 10, 11.

"Many practices of antiquity may be abandoned. We may improve upon old customs; but we cannot cast away the ten commandments." — Pul. Com.

[b] "Of all the qualities which kings especially look to and require in the choice of their servants, that of despatch and energy in the transactions of business is the most acceptable."—Lord Bacon.

"Caxton was a diligent man, and by his dili-

increaseth them.—Franklin. Pleasures of Industry.—Industry is not only the instrument of improvement, but the foundation of pleasure; for nothing is so opposite to the true enjoyment of life as the relaxed and feeble state of an indolent mind. He who is a stranger to industry may possess, but he cannot enjoy. It is labor only that gives a relish to pleasure. It is the indispensable condition of our possessing a sound mind in a sound body. Idleness is so inconsistent with both, that it is hard to determine whether it be a greater foe to virtue, or to health and happiness. Inactive as it is in itself, its effects are fatally powerful. Though it appears a slowly-flowing stream, yet it undermines all that is stable and flourishing. It is like water, which first putrefies by stagnation, and then sends up noxious vapors, filling the atmosphere with death.—Blair.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

1—3. (1) **with a ruler,** who is sure to provide dainties and great abundance. **consider,** etc., R. V. "him that is before thee," some take the reference to be to the dainties; others to be to the character of the ruler in whose presence you are placed. (2) **knife .. throat,** Eastern fig. for putting restraint on the appetite. **given to appetite,**[a] accustomed to look for delicacies, and disposed to self-indulgence. One who cherishes and maintains strong desires. (3) **dainties,** comp. Ge. xxvii. 4. "Be not too greedy of the bounties of the royal table, so as to forget discretion and be led to say and do things which are inexpedient or unseemly." **deceitful meat,** i.e. having other purpose than you suspect. Oftentimes such entertainment is not offered for friendship's sake, but for some sinister purpose—to make a man expose himself, to get at a man's real character or secrets. Far from being a sign of favor and good will, the seeming honor is deceptive and dangerous.—Pul. Com.

Sycophancy and Independence.—I. He who depends on a great man puts himself in his power. II. Such a dependence on the great is sure to be disappointing. The sycophant succeeds in obtaining a place at the banquet. But he cannot enjoy the feast like those guests who meet the host on terms of equality. III. The only safe dependence is that of man on God. This is not degrading, but ennobling; for God is worthy of all trust, honor, and adoration. IV. Among men the safest condition is one of manly independence. We want to learn to be friendly with all men, and, at the same time, self-reliant through inward dependence on God alone.—Pul. Com.

Dean Swift and the Lady.—A lady invited Dean Swift to a most sumptuous dinner. She said, "Dear Dean, this fish is not as good as I could wish, though I sent for it half across the kingdom, and it cost me so much," naming an incredible price. "And this thing is not such as I ought to have for such a guest, though it came from such a place, and cost me such a sum." Thus she went on, decrying and underrating every article of her expensive and ostentatious dinner, and teasing her distinguished guest with apologies, only to find a chance to display her vanity, in bringing her trouble and expense into view, until she exhausted his patience. He is reported to have risen in a passion, and to have said, "True, madam, it is a miserable dinner; and I will not eat it, but go home and dine upon sixpence worth of herring."—R. T. S.

4, 5. (4) **Labor .. rich,** i.e. do not weary thyself in making riches the great end of thy labor.[a] **cease .. wisdom,** if that sets riches in so high a place. (5) **set thine eyes,** lit. "shall thine eyes fly." **they fly away,** the transitory character of earthly riches makes them unsuitable as the chief object of our regard and pursuit.

Laboring to be Rich Leads to the Neglect of the Nobler Pursuits of Life.—1. Mind-culture. It might be better to be more poor and to have time for reading, music, meditation. 2. Social intercourse. Buried in business, the fierce toiler after money has no leisure or heart for cultivating the friendship of his neighbors. 3. The service of God. "Life is more than meat;" "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

gence came literally to stand before the King of England. But he has, by his invention of the printing press, stood before kings and princes from that hour to this, for they have all learned to honor his name, and to acknowledge their obligations to him." — Hom. Com.

[a] Lit. owner of appetite.

The Latins call luxury gula, the throat.

"The Arab proverb says, 'He who sups with the sultan burns his lips.' Horace says that kings are said to press dainties and wine upon those whom they desire to scrutinize and test, as to whether they be worthy of friendship. The caution is therefore one dictated by prudence. And in general it may be thus understood: Beware of going to places and frequenting society where watchfulness and prudence are likely to be overborne." — Pul. Com.

"Dr. Kitto tells us that, in the East, men eat an almost incredible amount of food when a rare opportunity offers itself." — Pul. Com.

[a] 1 Ti. vi. 9, 10. "Only those who do not trust in riches can really enjoy their possession, or escape bitter sorrow in their loss."

"Wealth is like a bird; it hops all day from man to man, as that doth from tree to tree; and none can say where it will roost or rest at night."—Adams.

"It were a most strange folly to fall passionately in love with a bird upon the wing. . . How much better were it, since riches will fly, for thyself to direct their flight towards heaven, by relieving the necessitous servants and members of Jesus Christ." — Bp. Hopkins.

Laboring to be rich too often means working for self and toiling for earth.—Pul. Com.

Bearing the Loss of Wealth.—We have a remarkable instance of equanimity, in a French nobleman, who was reduced from splendid affluence to poverty by the Revolution which desolated that fine country. The Duke de Laincourt was constrained, like many others, to emigrate on account of the horrors of the French Revolution, and leave his paternal abode and inheritance. When in New York, he was reduced to the necessity of living without a servant, though formerly possessed of an income of more than £100,000 sterling annually. This great reverse he bore with great equanimity, and when brushing his own clothes, or doing other services which had formerly been the work of others, he would observe with a cheerful countenance, "Had it not been for the Revolution in France, I should never have known how easy it is to wait on oneself." How truly relieving to the Christian mind, to meet with a speck so brilliant as the above is in a scene so dark and appalling as was that of the French Revolution!—Whitecross.

6—8. (6) **evil eye,** simply in the sense of being "hard, grudging, envious,"[b] comp. ch. xxii. 9. (7) **thinketh in his heart,** R. V. marg. "as one that reckoneth;" i.e. you cannot really judge by his kind speeches, for in his heart he grudges you what you eat. (8) **morsel,** etc., disgusted when you find out his true character, you will be sorry to have eaten his food. **sweet words,** with wh. thou didst thank the man for his supposed good will to you: or those with wh. the host invited and pleased the guest.

The Evil Eye.—Whether the same ideas are to be attached to the expression "evil eye," as used by Solomon, and as understood by the Egyptians, may not be easily ascertained, though perhaps worthy of consideration. Pococke says of the Egyptians, that "they have a great notion of the magic art, have books about it, and think there is much virtue in talismans and charms; but particularly are strongly possessed with an opinion of the evil eye. When a child is commended, except you give it some blessing, if they are not very well assured of your good will, they use charms against the evil eye; and particularly when they think any ill success attends them on account of an evil eye, they throw salt into the fire."—Burder.—Many references are made in the Scriptures to an evil eye. Sometimes they mean anger or envy; but in the passage cited an allusion appears to be made to the malignant influence of an evil eye: "The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up." The kan-nuru, evil-eye, of some people is believed to have a most baneful effect upon whatsoever it shall be fixed. Those who are reputed to have such eyes are always avoided, and none but near relations will invite them to a feast. "Your cattle, your wives, your children, your orchards, your fields, are all in danger from that fellow's eyes. The other day he passed my garden, cast his eye upon my lime-tree, and the fruit has since fallen to the ground. Ay, and worse than that, he caught a look at my child's face, and a large abscess has since appeared." To prevent such eyes from doing any injury to their children, many parents (both Mohammedan and Hindoo) adorn themselves with numerous jewels and jackets of varied colors, to attract the eye from the person to the ornaments.—Roberts.

[b] De. xv.9; Mat. xx. 15.

"Greed is sometimes the acting motive of the feast-maker. These men make feasts for clients and customers. They often do fine strokes of business at their dinner table, in the presence of steaming viands and sparkling glasses." —Dav. Thomas.

"No man who has any self respect whatever will wish to take a crust from the man who counts what he gives his friends. Better to go entirely without than to have abundance at the cost of our own self respect."

"A member of the Grammont family one day found Cardinal Richelieu employed in jumping, and, with all the cunning flattery of a Frenchman and a courtier, offered to jump against him. He suffered the man of political power to jump higher, and soon after found himself rewarded with a lucrative office."—E. L. Magoon.

9—11. (9) **fool,** always with the idea of being wilfully negligent toward good things, unwilling to receive instruction. On such a one good advice is wasted. (10) **landmark,** ch. xxii. 28. **fatherless,** taking undue advantage of their unprotected state. (11) **redeemer,** or avenger. The family avenger of the fatherless is Jehovah Himself.[a] **with,** R. V., "against."

[a] Ex. xxii. 22—24; Job xxii. 9, 10.

The family goel, or avenger, was the next of kin.

Their Redeemer is Mighty.—From the tenth verse we have cautions which cannot be too earnestly repeated. The Bible is never afraid to repeat its own wisdom. We need repetition, for our memories are treacherous; repetition may not be a mere rehearsal of words, it may be an accumulation of strength, an increased fervor of expression, a growing passion; when words are mechanically or literally repeated the repetition becomes a weariness to the flesh, but when with repeated words we are assured of accumulated earnestness and passion we should take heed to the new pathos and not be wearied by the old words. "Remove not the

"The longer anything has been received as a truth, the im-

old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: for their redeemer is mighty." They may not have a near kinsman, a goel, one who in the name of the family will redress their wrongs; but they have a Father in heaven, a mighty deliverer, who in due time will avenge them of their adversaries.—Parker.——At present we witness cruel injustice. The poor are oppressed by the strong. Hard-toiling men, women, and children in manufacturing centers are ground into penury by the fierce mill of competition, while ruthless "middle-men" fatten on their ill-paid labor. The few in prosperity revel in luxury that they wring out of the many in penury. God will not permit such cruel wrongs to last for ever. The Redeemer is an Avenger.—Pul. Com.——The word for redeemer signifies the man who was "next of kin," the kinsman on whom, by the law of Moses, it was incumbent as a matter of duty, and with whom too it was a matter of interest, to look after the concerns of his poor relations; with whom lay indeed the avenging of their blood, if in any case their life should, in cruel selfishness, be taken away. Adored be the unsearchable pity, grace, and condescension of Emmanuel! When He could not redeem as God, He became our kinsman, that He might be our Redeemer!—Hom. Com.

12—14. (12) **Apply,** etc., the usual introduction to a new series of Proverbs. **instruction**, correction. (13) **Withhold,** etc., comp. ch. xiii. 24, xix. 18, xxii. 15. **not die,** he will not be seriously injured physically, and he will be greatly benefited morally. (14) **hell,** Sheol, the world of the dead; "premature death was regarded as a punishment of sin, as long life was the reward of righteousness."—Pul. Com.

Discipline of Children.—There is a discipline which expresses the utmost kindness. Probably kindness to children is as little understood as any practical duty can be. He is not kind to his child who allows that child to have its own way, to do as it pleases, under the impression that correction would amount to the breaking of the spirit or the wrecking of the will of the child. In every life there must come a point of obedience, surrender, of acknowledgment of the superior: the sooner that conviction is wrought into the mind the better, and when it can be brought to effect by the parent it is better than to have it forced upon the reluctant soul by an outward and overwhelming tyranny. To be taught obedience is to be taught the beginning of the way of life.—Parker.

15—18. (15) **my heart**, that of an anxious father. **even mine,** comp. repetition of ch. xxii. 19 (16) **reins,** fig, for inward feelings,[a] Ps. vii. 9. (17) **envy sinners,** whose seeming liberty and ephemeral prosperity are attractive to thoughtless young people. **fear of the Lord,** wh. is a bondage that proves to be the true liberty. (18) **an end,** R. V., reward;[b] marg., "sequel." **expectation,** R. V., "hope."

The Constant Fear of God (vs. 17).—I. The duty inculcated. 1. A sense of love to God as our Father; 2. Of duty to Him as our Master; 3. Of responsibility to Him as our Judge. II. The encouragement given us to the performance of it. 1. Peace of conscience; 2. Strength for duty; 3. Glory in eternity.—Simeon.

Religion.—The wheel of a chariot, though it be in motion all the day, and turning about the ground, yet it is but a small part of it that touches the earth at one time; the greatest part is always above it. So the true Christian; though he be all the day busy about earthly affairs, yet it is but his body, his lesser part, that is employed about them; his soul, his affections, which are his greater part, are always above them.—Swinnock.

19—22. (19) **guide .. way,** the right way, the way of holiness wh. he is marking out. (20) **winebibblers,** those fond of wine, and freely indulging in it. Not necessarily "drunkards." **riotous, etc.,** R. V., "gluttonous." (21) **drowsiness,** wh. always follows on much eating and drinking. Men cannot work after heavy feeding. (22) **father,** who has some claim upon thine attention; ch. i. 8. **when .. old,** the young are always in danger of scorning the old, as old-fashioned.[a]

Perils of Dissipation.—Gluttony and wine-bibbing. As the stomach is the center of health, so it is also of disease. A wise man said that if one did not care for one's stomach, one was not likely to care for anything. It is equally true that he who cares only or chiefly for the flesh

probability of its being found an error becomes ever the greater."

"Never must we forget, that the most ancient landmarks of truth and duty are those which have been fixed here—in the Bible — by the hands of prophets, apostles and evangelists, under the immediate direction of the 'Spirit of the Lord.' " — Hom. Com.

"What man so wise, what earthly wit so rare, as to descry the crafty, cunning train by which Deceit doth mask in visor fair, and seem like Truth, whose shape she well can feign?" —Spenser.

[a] "The pleasure afforded the teacher by a pupil's progress is a motive to diligence."— Fausset.

"Work for something that will pay, for . . . there is something that shall never be 'cut off.' "—Miller.

[b] Ps. xxxvii. 1—9, 35, 36.

"True dignity abides with him alone who, in the silent hour of inward thought, can still suspect and still revere himself in lowliness of heart." — Wordsworth.

[a] "Adults should revere the parents whom, as children, they obeyed."— Fausset.

"A man grows old by the common use of his faculties; but if he pleases he can travel faster. He can make drafts upon his flesh with wine, and burn faster."

will make a wreck of everything else. Gluttony has been pointed to as "the source of all our infirmities, the fountain of all our diseases. As a lamp is choked by superabundance of oil, a fire extinguished by excess of fuel, so is the natural heat of the body destroyed by intemperate diet." By slow degrees, and more and more, the habits of self-indulgence undermine the strength of body, still more certainly the vigor of mind, until poverty comes like an armed man.—Johnson.

23. Buy, lit. get. **truth,** on every subject; but especially the truth of God.[b] "No price is too great to give for its purchase."[c] **wisdom,** practical knowledge; **instruction,** moral discipline; **understanding,** discernment.—Pul. Com.

Truth's Purchase (vs. 23).—I. Every purchaser must have an earnest desire after the heavenly commodity. II. He must diligently frequent the place of sale. III. He must have skill to discover that which is offered to him. IV. He must give the price according to the commodity. V. He must store it up for necessary use. VI. With the knowledge of the truth must be joined obedience to the truth.—Hieron.

Fidelity to the Truth.—When Kossuth, escaping the pursuit of the Cossacks, sought the protection of the Sultan, that monarch offered him safety, wealth, and high military command if he would renounce Christianity and embrace the religion of Mahomet. A refusal of these conditions, for anything he knew to the contrary, would be equivalent to throwing himself upon the sword of Russia, which was whetted for his destruction; and this was his answer:—"Welcome, if need be, the axe or the gibbet, but evil befall the tongue that dares to make me so infamous a proposal." Deliberately to prefer death to the sacrifice of conscience is that kind of Christian integrity enjoined in the command, "Fear not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear Him who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear Him."—Zwingle.——When Ulric Zwingle, the Swiss Reformer, was revolving certain doubts which had arisen in his mind, and had nearly arrived at the conclusion that he should soon be called upon to attack the Papacy, he proposed to resign a small pension which the Pope had given him. The legate of the pontiff, however, prevailed upon him to retain it, and Zwingle, as he announced his intention of doing so, added, "Do not think that for any money I will suppress a single syllable of the truth." Zwingle's after life was worthy of these words. To be incorruptible by any form of bribe is an essential part of integrity.—Quiver. ——What Shall We Buy?—When the pilgrims were in Vanity Fair, one chanced mockingly to say to them, "What will ye buy?" But they, looking gravely on him, said, "We buy the truth." At that there was occasion taken to despite them the more; some mocking, some taunting, and some calling upon others to smite them. Nevertheless, in spite of all the abuse, these good pilgrims would only buy the truth; and when they bought it, not for any price would they sell it again. Usually, in ordinary merchandise, what we buy we are at liberty to sell; but it is not so here, for the command is express, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." And a most merciful provision it is; for, as one says, "Those who sell the truth sell their own souls with it."—Macdonald.

24—28. (24) **wise,** wh. may be shown in his seeking after the truth. (25) **bare thee,** special joy comes to the mother from wise and virtuous children. (26) **give me,** wisdom pleads as a loving anxious parent; but her pleading represents God's pleading with us all. She is specially anxious to have attention to the advice and warning that immediately succeeds. (27) **whore,** an abandoned woman, who tempts to sins of sensuality. **narrow pit,** into wh. if one fall it is almost impossible to get out. (28) **as for a prey,** R. V., "as a robber," her prey being innocence and virtue. **transgressors,** treacherous.

Our Father's Claim.—I. God claims nothing less than the heart. 1. Some offer belief of the intellect. It is well to understand truth and to believe in that which is revealed about God. We may give many thoughts to God; but these, without the heart, will not satisfy him. 2. Some offer external service. This is claimed by God, but only as the fruit of a loving heart. Given in hard, mechanical work, without love or devotion,

"Wine is like anger; for it makes us strong, blind and impatient, and it leads us wrong; the strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long."—Crabbe.

[b] Is. lv. 1; Mat. xiii. 45, 46.

[c] Lat. prov. "Heaven concedes everything to the laborious."

"Our knowledge of the book of God is very varied; it may be very slight or it may be very deep and full. How deep or how full depends on whether or not we will pay the price of this excellent wisdom; the price is that of patient, reverent study."—Pul. Com.

"Truth is not only a man's ornament, but his instrument; it is the great man's glory and the poor man's stock; a man's truth is his livelihood, his recommendation, his letters of credit."—Whichcote.

"Truth is the ground of science, the centre wherein all things repose, and is the type of eternity."—Sir Philip Sydney.

"He that cometh to seek after knowledge, with a mind to scorn and censure, shall be sure to find matter for his humor, but no matter for his instruction."—Bacon.

"Calvin's seal had engraven on it a hand holding a burning heart with the motto, 'I give Thee all; I keep back nothing for myself.'"

"It is reported of Redwald, king of the East Saxons, the first prince of this

it is worthless in the sight of God. 3. Some offer money, sacrifices, worship. All such things are acceptable only as growing out of the heart. In heartless worshipers these are but mockery, and are rejected by God. 4. God's true children must give their hearts. They must give themselves, their inmost being, their very lives, thoughts, affections, desires.—Pul. Com.

The Heart.—It is said that during the persecution of the Papists by Queen Elizabeth, certain of the wealthy Catholics desired to save their lives by an open compliance with her intolerant laws, though they remained Romanists at heart. To their inquiry for direction it is reported that the Pope of that day replied, "Only let them give me their hearts, and they may for this time do as they are compelled to do." Whether the story is true or not, we may be sure that if the evil one can but keep the heart, he cares little what outward religion is practiced.—Spurgeon.

29—32. (29) **Who hath woe,**[a] etc., Heb. "Who hath, Oh! who hath, alas!" **babbling,** R. V., "complaining." **wounds,** caused by quarrelings of the drunken. **redness of eyes,** a frequent effect of drinking. It may, however, be the dimness, or confusion of the eye. (30) **mixed wine,** ch. ix. 2; Is. v. 11. Flavored with spices. They seek highly-flavored wine in the spirit of revelers. (31) **red,** wh. prob. indicated the presence of spices that increased its stimulating qualities. **colour,** "sparkleth." **moveth,** etc.,[b] or goeth down sweetly, with "mellowness." (32) **adder,** or cockatrice. After consequences to the self-indulgent become terrible and fatal.

Abstinence and Promotion.—When General Grant was in command of the army before Vicksburg, a number of officers were gathered at his headquarters. One of them invited the party to join in a social glass; all but one accepted. He asked to be excused, saying that he "never drank." The hour passed, and each went his way to his respective command. A few days after this the officer who declined to drink received a note from General Grant to report at headquarters. He obeyed the order, and Grant said to him, "You are the officer, I believe, who remarked the other day that you never drank?" The officer modestly answered that he was. "Then," continued the General, "you are the man I have been looking for to take charge of the Commissary Department, and I order that you be detailed to that duty." He served all through the war in that responsible department, and afterwards, when General Grant became President, the officer who never drank was again in request. The President, needing a man on whom he could rely for some important business, gave him the appointment.—Christian Chronicle.——A Drunkard's Child.—A Sunday-school teacher handed to her scholars little slips of paper on which was printed the question, "What have I to be thankful for?" Among the replies that were given on the following Sunday was the following pathetic sentence, written by a little girl who had learned by bitter processes the painful truths it told: "I am thankful there are no public-houses in heaven."—Bib. Anec.

33—35. (33) **eyes .. women,** drink excites lust; and the tempters take advantage of the lost self-control of those in drink. **perverse things,** the talk of the drunken is often very foul. (34) **lieth .. sea,** a suggestive picture of the inability of the drunken to stand steady. **lieth .. mast,** in drunken drowsiness knowing no danger wherever he may be put. (35) **stricken,** etc., an imitation of the maunderings of the drunken man. **yet again,** drinking habits becoming a constant enticement and slavery.

The Quaker's Advice.—An elderly gentleman, accustomed to "indulge," entered the travelers' room of a tavern where sat a grave Friend by the fire. Lifting a pair of green spectacles upon his forehead, rubbing his inflamed eyes, and calling for brandy and water, he complained to the Friend that "his eyes were getting weaker, and that even spectacles didn't seem to do them any good. "I'll tell thee, friend," replied the Quaker, "what I think. If thou wouldst wear thy spectacles over thy mouth for a few months thine eyes would get well again."——Warning to the Intemperate.—Charles Lamb tells his sad experience, as a warning to young men, in the following language:—"The waters have gone over me. But out of the black depths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have set a foot in the perilous flood. Could the youth to

[a] "The sharp touch of the satirist reproduces the actual inarticulate utterances of drunkenness." — Spk. Com.

[b] Possibly 'ts foaming, or sparkling, may be meant.

"The sight of a drunkard is a better sermon against that vice than the best that was ever preached upon that subject."—Saville.

"A drunken man is like a drowned man, a fool, and a madman; one draught above heat makes him a fool; the second mads him; and the third drowns him."—Shakespeare.

"He that would avoid the commission of sin must avoid the occasion of sin. If we would not fall down the hill we must beware of coming near the brow of it. Keep thee far from an evil matter. When the wine laughs in thy face then shut thine eyes lest it steal into thine heart. A guest may easily be kept out of the house at first, but if once entertained it is hard to turn him out of doors."—Swinnock.

"Wisdom urges temperance in drinking only as a part of a nation that was baptised, that in the same church he had one altar for the Christian religion, another for the heathenish sacrifices. The true believer doth otherwise; he that makes religion his work gives God the whole of his heart, without halting and without halving." — George Swinnock.

much larger principle. If temperance in drinking stands alone and unconnected with this larger principle, it is a blessing of a very doubtful kind, so doubtful indeed that the pharisaism, the intolerance, the dogmatism, which are able to subsist with 'Temperance' in the limited sense, have often been the most serious hindrance to temperance in its larger and nobler meaning." —Exp. B.

"As a shadow accompanies those that walk in the sun, so envy is a constant companion of those that excel others. As there is no shadow where there is no sun, so there is no envy where there is no prosperity. As a ship tossed with continual waves, so the envious is always in trouble of mind, repining at the success of others." —Cawdray.

Athanasius once said, "If the world goes against truth, then Athanasius goes against the world, for Jehovah and Athanasius are always a majority."

"The more we know, the greater our thirst for knowledge. The water lily, in the midst of waters, opens its leaves, and expands its petals at the first pattering of showers, and rejoices in the raindrops with a quicker sympathy than the parched shrub in the sandy desert."—Coleridge.

"It is he who has even a little capital to begin with, and who makes good use of it, who whom the flavor of the first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering upon some newly-discovered paradise, look into my desolation and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when he shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and passive will; to see his destruction, and have no power to stop it, and yet feel it all the way emanating from himself; to see all godliness emptied out of him, and yet not able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own ruin; could he see my fevered eye, feverish with the last night's drinking, and feverish looking for to-night's repetition of the folly; could he but feel the body of the death out of which I cry hourly with feebler outcry to be delivered, it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation."

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

1, 2. (1) **envious,** etc., Ps. xxxvii. 1, lxxiii. 3. **desire .. them,** association leads to copartnership. (2) **studieth,** plotteth, planneth. **destruction,** R. V., "oppression."

The Villainy and Absurdity of Sin (vs. 1).—I. The villainy of sin. Here is a description of sinners. 1. Their study is destruction; 2. Their speech is mischief. II. The absurdity of sin. 1. Sin envies the most unenviable things; 2. Sin desires the most undesirable things.—Thomas.

Envy of the Wicked Rebuked.—When Socrates was asked what was most troublesome to good men, he replied, "The prosperity of the wicked." Here, then, is a great temptation. It needs an antidote in reason. There is no reason for this envy. They are not truly happy. We look at them from the outside; the dark discontent of the heart is concealed from us. To live in the communion of God, on the other hand, is a secret, a certain, a profound, and all-compensating joy. The enjoyment of the wicked, such as it is, must have its end; while the child of God ends only to begin anew—sinks below the horizon to rise in the power of an endless life.—Pul. Com.

3, 4. (3) **an house,** put here as a fig. of the family. What applies to the house applies much more to the rearing of a family. **established,** on sound and good foundations. (4) **chambers,** material blessings follow on wisdom.

Intelligent Goodness (vss. 3—7).—We shall take wisdom here not only as representing piety, but piety in association with intelligence and skill. I. It is conducive to wealth. II. It is conducive to power. 1. Intelligence apart from piety is power; 2. Piety apart from intelligence is a higher kind of power; 3. Piety associated with intelligence is the highest creature power. III. It is conducive to safety. 1. It takes counsel of the wise; 2. It has power at the gate.—Thomas.

Knowledge is Power.—It is not the force of brute strength, but that of spiritual energy, which in the long run rules the world. The illustration of the text is aptly selected from war, where, if anywhere, brute force might be supposed to prevail. Experience shows that it is not so. The complete failures of men like Hannibal and Napoleon show it in one way. Recent wars have illustrated the truth that it is the deliberate and matured designs of the strategist and far-seeing stateman which command success, rather than the "great battalions" on the side of which Providence was said to be. And in another application, sheer force of intellect is often surpassed and outdone by the steady and constant employment of humbler powers. Strength in any form without prudence is like a giant without eyes. Violence and craft may seem the readiest way to wealth; yet experience shows that prudence and piety lead most surely to desirable prosperity.—Johnson.

5, 6. (5) **is strong,** lit. is in strength, i. e. rooted and established in it. (6) **counsel,** etc., R. V., "guidance," comp. ch. xi. 14, xx. 18. **safety,** R. V. marg., "victory."

Application of Knowledge.—In a dark night, I once saw a feeble lamp struggling to pierce the dense darkness; but the mighty genius of night defied its impotent rays. Near by, I saw another lamp, of the

same general pattern, whose light streamed out dazzlingly into the distant darkness. I asked, "Why does this lamp give more light than the other? Is the oil better?" "No." "Does it burn more oil?" "No." "Is the burner better?" "No." "But, surely, it generates more light?" Unexpectedly, the answer was "No." "Why, then, does it emit a light so much more dazzling than the other?" This was the answer: "Do you see behind that bright lamp the polished reflector, which the other has not? That reflector gathers all the divergent rays, and converges and flings them out in one glittering flood of light." Professor Jaques thus illustrates two men equally learned; one having the power of reducing his knowledge to practice, and the other destitute of it.

7—9. (7) **Wisdom .. fool,**[a] "Wisdom seems to the fool to be an ornamental commodity."—Delitzsch; i. e. a costly and unnecessary appendage, which is not worth the sacrifices entailed by its pursuit. **in the gate,** when men gather in the usual place of assembly to take counsel in public matters he has nothing to say. (8) **mischievous,** because he is set upon doing the wrong, which is always injurious and mischievous. (9) **thought .. sin,** better, "the device of the foolish is sin;" the plans wh. the fool forms are sinful. **scorner,** or scoffer.

Aspects of Depravity (vss. 8, 9).—Depravity is represented to us in the text as—I. Mischievous in purpose. 1. This is the work of the devil; 2. It is the work to which he inspires all his followers. II. As sinful in thought. 1. Voluntary; 2. Involuntary. III. As abhorrent in character. —Thomas.

A Silent Reproof.—The Rev. Mr. W——, missionary at the Sandwich Islands, a short time before leaving America, took a passage from New York to New Haven. In the evening, a company of fellow-passengers, who were quite profane, gathered round a table on which was the only light burning in the cabin, and soon became deeply engaged in gambling. Mr. W——, after reflecting some time on the best means of reproving them, drew a Bible from his trunk, and politely requested that he might have a seat at the same table, for the purpose of reading. The sight of the Bible at once stopped their swearing; and after gambling in total silence about ten minutes, they all left the table and went upon deck.—Whitecross.

10—12. (10) **faint,** under trial or temptation: the day of straits. **small,** or strait; a play on the word. (11) **If thou forbear,**[b] etc., R. V., "Deliver them that are carried away unto death, and those are ready to be slain see that thou hold back." "Some victims of a miscarriage of justice are about to be dragged away to execution, and the disciple of wisdom is exhorted to use his endeavors to deliver them."—Cheyne. (12) **we knew it not,** the excuse of neglect, wh. cannot be accepted bec. due inquiry may not have been made. **render .. works,** "God's retributive justice cannot be avoided by professed ignorance."

The Folly of Vain Excuses (vss. 11, 12).—I. The excuses by which men deceive their own souls, as pleas for the neglect—1. Of religious duties; 2. Of moral duties. II. The folly of resting in them, for God—1. Will judge with truth; 2. Will reward with equity. Let the subject teach us—(1) To be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy; (2) To live in the daily expectation of the future judgment.—Simeon.

True Scales.—In the reign of King Charles I., the goldsmiths of London had a custom of weighing several sorts of their precious metals before the Privy Council. On this occasion they made use of scales, poised with such exquisite nicety, that the beam would turn, the master of the company affirmed, at the two-hundredth part of a grain. Noy, the famous attorney-general, replied, "I shall be loth, then, to have all my actions weighed in these scales." "With whom I heartily concur," says the pious Hervey, "in relation to myself; and since the balances of the sanctuary, the balances in God's hand, are infinitely exact, O! what need have we of the merit and righteousness of Christ, to make us acceptable in his sight, and passable in his esteem."

13, 14. (13) **honey .. honeycomb,** the figs. for food that is specially pleasant and agreeable.[a] Honey was one of the choice productions of Canaan, and it was as healthful and strengthening as it was pleasant. This commonplace serves simply to intro. vs. 14. (14) **knowledge of**

soon leaves far behind the man who has none, or who neglects to invest what he has. And the more this capital grows, the more rapidly and the more easily is it increased. It is this same law which regulates our attainment in the service of Christ." —Phillips Brooks.

[a] "Wisdom is in high places, whose lofty altitudes cannot be scaled by fools." —Wordsworth.

"All thoughts of ill, all evil deeds,
That have their root in thoughts of ill;
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will,
All these must first be trampled down
Beneath our feet, if we would gain,
In the bright fields of fair renown,
The right of eminent domain."
—Longfellow.

[b] "Instead of fainting (and falling short of duty) in the day of adversity, the man is to help others to the uttermost of his power."—Spk. Com.

"The only way to make mankind see the beauty of justice is by showing them the consequence of injustice."—Sydney Smith.

"If, in the days of sunshine and prosperity, we are daily nourishing our faith, our love, our hope, our prayerfulness, by cherishing our union with Jesus Christ our Lord, we shall be strong and we shall not faint." —Clarkson.

[a] Comp. Ps. xix. 10.

"Honey entered largely into the diet of Heb. children (Is. vii. 15), so that it was a natural emblem for the purest and simplest wisdom."—Spk. Com.

[b] Pr. xxiii. 18.

"Honey is found by man ready prepared for his use; no human skill is needed to make it fit for food — nothing that man can do can render it more palatable than it is as it flows from the comb. So the revealed wisdom of God as it is found in the Scriptures needs no intervention of man to make it suitable to human needs."—Hom. Com.

[c] "From the Fall to this hour there has been in the mind of the wicked an aversion to the truly righteous. In every chapter of human history this enmity is revealed."—Dav. Thomas.

[d] Ps. xxxiv. 19.

[e] Job v. 19.

"Think, when you are enraged at any one, what your sentiments would probably become should he die during the dispute."—Shenstone.

[a] Job xxxi. 29; Ps. xxxv. 15; Pr xvii. 5.

Be more glad to see a man's amendment than his punishment.

"There is no subject on which the teaching of the Proverbs more strikingly anticipates the morality of the New Testament than that of forgiveness to our enemies."—Harper.

"He who rejoices in the trouble of another, his own trouble stands behind the door."—Pul. Com.

wisdom, let it be to thy soul as honey to thy palate. **reward,** lit. "future." **expectation,** of blessing.[b]

The Sweetness of Divine Wisdom (vss. 13, 14).—As honey is to the bodily appetite, so is wisdom to the soul. I. Under peculiar circumstances. Thus to the traveler honey is a refreshment; so to heaven-bound travelers is wisdom. II. In its associations. Thus Samson's honey would remind him of his previous encounter with the lion; and Divine wisdom sometimes reminds us of the victories of grace. III. In its accumulations. Honey is extracted from a thousand flowers, and carefully stored; so wisdom is drawn from many texts, and lodged in the memory. IV. In its assimilation. Honey must be taken into the body, etc.; wisdom must be mentally digested. V. In its fitness to the palate. Honey is not liked by all, nor is wisdom.

Honey an Emblem of Pleasure.—In this country persons do not "find" honey under circumstances which constitute them its lawful possessors, though they may obtain it by purchase or by bee-nurture. But the caution touches those who do not live in a "land flowing with milk and honey." The honey is unmistakably the representative of pleasure, attainable, we may say, by things lawful in themselves, and only evil when abused. Just as bread sets forth, in figure, the daily comforts of life viewed en masse, so does honey stand for those pleasures an excess of which causes a moral surfeit. The same idea occurs in the writings of some of the pagans of olden time, for we find an ancient philosopher advising his pupils that honey should be eaten with the tip of the finger.

15, 16. (15) **against the dwelling,**[c] thinking to charge some iniquity upon it, or compass some design against it. (16) falleth, into such calamities as men by wicked devices, or God in His disciplinary providence, may bring upon him. There is no reference here to the good man's falling into sin. The point of the teaching is God's providential care.[d] **seven times,** a definite put for an indefinite number.[e] Comp. our term, "again and again." There is a marvelous buoyancy in goodness. **shall fall,** etc.. R. V., "are overthrown by calamity," i. e. the trial wh. disciplines the righteous, utterly overthrows the wicked.

A Word to the Wicked Concerning the Good (vs. 15).—I. What is implied in this text? 1. That the wicked can discern goodness; 2. That he is maliciously disposed to destroy the good man; 3. That he is envious of him. II. What is taught in it? 1. That a good man may fall before the machinations of the wicked; 2. That if he recover from the fall, he will still pursue the right way; 3. That the fall of the wicked adds to his disgrace.

17, 18. (17) **Rejoice not,** "delight in injury is the twin sister to a plotting intrigue and violence."[a] **stumbleth,** R. V., "when he is overthrown." (18) **displease him,** Heb. "it be evil in His eyes." **turn .. him,** the point is not so much the removal of God's displeasure from the enemy as the punishment of the malignant man, either mentally or materially. The moralist warns the disciple against giving way to this unfit rejoicing, lest he prepare for himself bitter mortification by having to witness the restoration of the hated one, or by being himself made to suffer that evil which he had rejoiced to see his neighbor experience.—Pul. Com.

Billy Bray's Parable.—A celebrated local preacher, generally known as Billy Bray, was once preaching with great effect to a large congregation, principally miners. In that neighborhood there were two mines. one very prosperous, the other quite the reverse, for the work was hard and the wages low. He represented himself as working at that mine, but on the "pay-day" going to the prosperous one for his wages. But had he not been at work at the other mine? the manager inquired. He had, but he liked the wages at the good mine the best. He pleaded very earnestly, but in vain. He was dismissed at last with the remark, from which there was no appeal, that he must come there to work if he came there for his wages. And then he turned upon the congregation, and the effect was almost irresistible, that they must serve Christ here if they would share His glory hereafter; but if they would serve the devil now, to him they must go for their wages by-and-by.—The King's Son.

I Forgave.—

My heart was heavy, for its trust had been
Abused, its kindness answered with foul wrong;
So turning gloomily from my fellow-men,
One summer Sabbath day I strolled among
The green mounds of the village burying-place;
Where pondering how all human love and hate
Find one sad level; and how, soon or late,
Wronged and wrongdoer, each with meekened face,
And cold hands folded over a still heart,
Pass the green threshold of a common grave,
Whither all footsteps tend, whence none depart,
Awed for myself, and pitying my race,
Our common sorrow, like a mighty wave,
Swept all my pride away, and, trembling, I forgave.

—Whittier.

19, 20. (19) **Fret not,** etc., as Ps. xxxvii. 1. **envious,** the undeserved prosperity of wicked men might excite to imitation of their wicked conduct.[a] (20) **no reward,**[b] Stewart, "no hereafter" of reward such as is described in vs. 14 and xxiii. 18. **candle,** or lamp, i. e. the family of the wicked shall die out; ch. xiii. 9.[c]

A Common Fault Corrected (vss. 19, 20).—I. The fault defined,—"fret," etc. Men are fretful sometimes when they see the prosperity of the wicked, as compared with the sorrows of the good; they sometimes wish they had some of the good things that fall to others, and excuse their envy by thinking of what in such a case they would do. II. The fault corrected. The wicked shall have no reward for any good he may have done: "they have their reward." "their candle," etc., i. e. the light of their fame, office, power, wealth, life.

Phocion's Dying Charge to his Son.—Phocion was an Athenian, born some four hundred years B. C., and one of the most upright and benevolent heathen that ever lived. Yet he was condemned to die as a criminal, and denied even a grave in the country to which he had devoted his life. What could be more unjust in the Athenians, than putting their public benefactor to death in such a way as this? They sadly repented their madness afterwards, put the accuser to death, and erected a statue to Phocion's memory. But when Phocion had taken the poison which he was condemned to drink, and was about to die, "he charged his son, with his last breath, that he should show no resentment against his persecutors."—Cheever.——Prosperity is Infinitely Inferior to Character.—The great question is not as to what a man has, but as to what he is. It is far more important to be upright and holy in life than to be rich, successful, and happy in one's circumstances. Surely he who values true goodness will feel that it is a pearl of great price—the cost of which would not be compensated for by all the wealth of the Indies. Therefore to envy the prosperity of the wicked is to turn aside from the higher possession which may be enjoyed in poverty and adversity.—Pul. Com.

21, 22. (21) **fear .. king,** "the verse has been largely used [in England] as a text by preachers who desired to recommend loyalty and to censure disaffection and rebellion. It has been a favorite motto for discourses on the Gunpowder Treason and the execution of Charles I."—Pul. Com. Comp. Ec. viii. 2, x. 20; Pe. ii. 17. **given to change,**[a] those who oppose the present order, who are revolutionary. (22) **suddenly,**[b] bec. agitators are dealt with vigorously. To discovered rebels little mercy is shown. **of them both,** i. e. the punishment which both Jehovah and the king will bring on the rebellious.

Fear God and the King (vs. 21).—I. According to their several relations: God supremely, the king subordinately. II. According to the departments of their rule: "render to Cæsar," etc. III. According to the justness of their administrations. IV. According to the end of life, when God will be everything, and the king a man like thyself.

Change.—Intellectual variety or contention should within proper limits be encouraged, because out of intellectual conflict there may come intellectual light; but men must not have moral variety—that is to say, different definitions of moral obligation; there must not be any inter-

"Burke said of Pitt after his fall, that the manner in which he made his own justification, without impeaching the conduct of his colleagues or taking any measure that might seem to arise from disgust or opposition, set a seal upon his character."—Lecky.

"Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long back on itself recoils."

[a] Ps. lxxiii. 2, 3; Pr. i. 11.

[b] Lit. "no future."

[c] Job xxi. 17; Ps. xxxvii. 2.

The way of every man is declarative of the end of that man. Men reap as they sow.

"Whosoever thou be that enviest evil men, I cannot tell who should envy thee, except the devil, because thou strivest to be more wicked than he is. For they are only the godly that he is envious against." —Jermin.

"Genius may coexist not long with selfishness, and the indulgence of an envious disposition."—Coleridge

[a] "Lit. alterers; men of fickleness, who cannot be relied on." — Wordsworth.

[b] "Those that are of restless, factious, turbulent spirits, commonly pull mischief upon their own heads ere they are aware." — Mat. Henry.

"Religion and loyalty go together; and the best way to make good subjects to the queen is to make men good servants of God.

fusion of right and wrong, as if there were some things partly morally right and partly morally wrong; the distinction must be vital, deep, unchangeable, otherwise we shall be led into such confusion as shall be used for the purpose of excusing selfishness and delinquency. It would be unworthy of the Bible to exhort its readers to have nothing to do with men who are given to intellectual change, because intellectual change may be indicative of progress; but it is worthy of the Bible to point out that moral distinctions must not be trifled with, and that where a moral course has been vividly indicated in holy writ it should never be regarded as open to the criticism and revision of dissenting minds. Sometimes we may vainly imagine that there is an intellectual force superior to that which is discovered in Biblical literature; but we must never delude ourselves with the idea that there is a morality loftier than the ethics of revelation. We cannot go beyond the purity of the commandments, we cannot transcend the moral lines indicated by the beatitudes; beyond the boundaries of the Sermon on the Mount there is nothing worthy of the name of morality. Intellectual difference may be a sign of vitality, but moral confusion is a sign of moral obliquity.—J. Parker.

They will not make conscience of civil duties who make none of Divine." —Johnson.

23—26. Vss. 23—24 form a second supplement to the great Solomonic collection. (23) **These things,** etc., R. V., "These also are sayings of the wise." **not good,** is equivalent to saying "it is very sinful." **respect of persons,** i. e. so as to allow such respect to pervert judgment. Lit. "to discern faces," so showing partialty.[a] (24) **wicked .. righteous,** this represents a false judicial decision, wh. justifies the wicked. **people curse,** R. V., "peoples;" nothing so quickly embitters a people as corruption in the fountains of justice. (25) **rebuke,** the wicked: judging righteous judgment. **good blessing,** that of a people who feel secure because justice rules. (26) **kiss,** etc., R. V., "He kisseth the lips that giveth a right answer:" i. e. He shall gain the hearts of men by answering righteously. An answer that is fair and suitable to the circumstances is as pleasant to the hearers as a kiss on the lips. **right answer,** lit. plain words; not deceptive, or obscure.

[a] "If they who employ their labor and travail about the public administration of justice, follow it only as a trade, with unquenchable thirst of gain, being not in heart persuaded that justice is God's own work, and themselves His agents in this business, the sentence of right God's own verdict, and themselves His priests to deliver it, formalities of justice do but serve to smother right, and that which was necessarily ordained for the common good is, through shameful abuse, made the cause of common misery."—Hooker.

Easy Way to Confer Happiness.—"If a civil word or two will render a man happy," said a French king, "he must be wretched indeed who will not give them to him." Were superiors to keep this in view, yea, were all mankind to observe it, how much happier would the world be than what it is! We may say of this disposition, "that it is like lighting another man's candle by one's own, which loses none of its light by what the other gains."—Cheever.

27. without, in the field, etc. The business of life, by wh. the means of subsistence is gained, is conceived of as away from the dwelling-house.[a] "Let those things wh. are obviously most important and necessary be done first." **build .. house,** either "raise a dwelling," as distinct from a tent in the field; or "found a family," "set up a domestic establishment."[b]

[a] "Take care, by the profitable and diligent prosecution of your labors in the field, first of all for the needful and reliable support of your existence; then you may go on to the building up of your establishment." — O. Zockler.

The Chief Things First (vs. 27).—I. Apply the advice here given to the common things of life. The principal thing is to secure the means of living: the sphere of the spending will follow in due course. A word to young married people who are apt to begin life with too large establishments. II. Apply it to the higher concerns of the soul. "Seek first the kingdom of God," etc.

Value of Plan.—In all undertakings it is necessary to consider what is the most important and indispensable element of success, and to make sure of that first. In the building of a house in the literal sense, the first thing to be done is to have a well-considered plan, and to gather and prepare suitable and sufficient materials. If, when the building is half finished, it is found that some great difficulty has been overlooked, or that the materials and the means to procure them are inadequate, failure and disgrace are the result, and all the time and money hitherto spent upon the work is thrown away. So in any other undertaking. If a man desires a certain position in life for which special qualifications are needed, he must first endeavor to know exactly what the requirements are, and then make sure that he is able to fulfill them. If he makes a start without well considering these things he may waste much precious time and energy, and ruin his prospects for life. The same principle may

[b] Ex. i. 21; De. xxv. 9; Ru. iv. 11.

"It was once said by Solon, 'No man ought to be called a happy man till he dies,' because he does not know what his life is to be: but Christians may always call themselves happy men here. They cannot dwell where God is not householder, warder, and bulwark of salvation." —Spurgeon.

be applied to any philanthropic enterprise. These often fail, because they are entered upon without any just conception of the difficulties to be encountered, or of the resources which will be required to carry them on to a successful issue.—Hom. Com.

28, 29. (28) **without cause**, gratuitously, without pressing necessity.[a] One of the weaknesses of Eastern people is their readiness to testify, and to testify to anything that may be desired. **deceive,** better read as interrogative, "Wilt thou deceive with thy lips?"[b] "The deceit is not so much intentional falsehood as misrepresentation arising from haste and inconsiderateness consequent on this unnecessary eagerness to push forward testimony unsought." (29) **as .. to me,** the expression of the spirit of revenge, or retaliation,[c] ch. xx. 22.

Retaliation (vs. 29).—I. The real spirit of it is one of revenge. II. The pretence is justice. III. The golden rule is, do as you would be done by. IV. Suppose God were to deal with you as you do with one another. V. Forgive, as you hope to be forgiven. See the Lord's parable of the wicked servant, who, being forgiven, forgave not his fellow-servant.

A Murder Prevented.—A minister, traveling by coach to a neighboring village, engaged in conversation with his fellow-travelers. After conversing on a variety of subjects, more or less serious, the subject of revenge was introduced. Every one was anxious to give his opinion. "Not to be avenged is cowardice," said one. "The best revenge," said another, "is to despise one's enemy, and hate him, without doing him any harm." The minister said, "Let us consult, before all, the Word of God;" and opening his Testament, he read the words, "Avenge not yourselves;" "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;" "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," Rom. xii. 19—21. From these verses he pointed out how odious and criminal a thing it was to take vengeance. He spoke also of Jesus Christ, and His compassion for sinners. His voice rose by degrees; his words found their way to the heart. Suddenly a young lady, who during the whole of the journey had appeared to be deeply absorbed in thought, rose, drew out a poniard, which was concealed under her gown, and, approaching the minister, said, with much emotion, "Monsieur, you see this blade; it was about to pierce the heart of my husband; I was going to find that faithless one; I was desirous of avenging myself; I have heard you, God be thanked! You have saved two victims;" and, throwing away the dagger, she added, "There is the effect of your words."

30, 31. (30) **slothful,** Pr. xii. 24. **vineyard,** more specific description of the field. Vineyards depend for their fruitfulness upon constant care and attention. **void of understanding**, a fitting description of the slothful man, for he has no wise, sober, thoughtful estimate of the responsibilities of life. (31) **thorns,** not weeds, as with us.[d] **nettles,** or brambles. Lit. "what one may not touch." **stone wall,**[e] wh. defends vineyards from the beasts.

The Fool's Vineyard (vss. 30—32).—I. The scene shows us that if we will not have flowers and fruit we shall certainly have thorns and nettles. We simply cannot do nothing. 1. A man may resolve not to cultivate his mind; 2. A man may resolve not to cultivate his moral nature. II. The scene shows that the sluggard and the fool cannot hide the results of their neglect. 1. We cannot confine the results of a wasted life within our own bounds; 2. This being the case, we have not a right to do with what we call our own as we please. Look around and you will see—1. That the finest possessions may be wasted; 2. That wickedness always moves in the direction of destruction.—Parker.

No Man Liveth to Himself.—The legal right of the slothful man to the possession of the field might be undisputed. The vineyard might have fallen into the hands of the fool by strictly lawful descent. So far, so good. The case is on this side perfectly sound. Yet possession was not followed by cultivation, and possession without cultivation is of necessity diminution. It is not enough to possess; we must increase. Society holds us all as trustees and stewards, and demands an account of our procedure. Is that dog yours? Surely a man may call a dog his own. Nothing of the kind. Society will protest against its starvation or other cruel treatment. Only let society know that even a dog which

[a] "Do not speak even truth needlessly against any, and never falsehood." —Fausset.

[b] Comp. Ps. lxxviii. 36.

[c] "The teacher enters his protest against vindictiveness in every form, and thus foreshadows the higher lessons of the Sermon on the Mount." — Spk. Com.

Mat. v. 43—45; Ro. xii. 17.

"If we will needs be our own carvers, and judges in our own cause, we forfeit the benefit of an appeal to God's tribunal." — Mat. Henry.

"In taking revenge a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over he is superior. It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence. The man who studies revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well."—Bacon.

[d] "Travelers call attention to the minute accuracy of the description, as illustrated by the fact that, in the richer soils of Palestine, it is thorny shrubs, of which twenty-two kinds are enumerated, that are specially quick to spring up, and overspread a neglected field." — See Hackett, etc.

[e] Is. v. 5.

"All indolence must go down—down in moral fibre, down in moral dignity; all wickedness not only goes down, as if a step at a time, but rolls and plunges down with an infinite and irresistible velocity. All sin

forces itself in the direction of perdition." — Parker.

a "Even the sluggard's garden brought forth fruit — but not for the sluggard's benefit. The diligent man reaped and carried off the only harvest that it bore—a warning." — Arnot.

"Idleness is very dangerous to those that are rich, and feel no want in this life; for, while they give themselves to it, voluptuousness overcomes reason, and they are snared in the deadly traps and deceits of the world, and are poisoned with carnal pleasures and fleshly delights, which are enjoyable for a little while, but at length leave them to shame and confusion." —Cawdray.

"We have all of us a garden, an estate of our own, which God has given us to cultivate — that which is of more value than many thousands of acres of fertile soil, that which no riches can buy— our own true self, our own human spirit. There are all too many who treat this garden, this estate, with careless negligence." —Pul. Com.

a "Prob. both the written and the oral tradition were alike sifted for the objects of the collection."—O. Zockler.

"A man of maxims only is like a Cyclops with one eye, and that eye placed in the back of his head."—Coleridge.

you call your own is cruelly treated, and you will find that society will assert its rights and bring you to punishment. You have not a right to be unclean, to be ignorant, to be careless of life; on that line no rights have ever been established. We have only the right to hold property for the good of others, to hold it for cultivation, to hold it for multiplication, in order that social life may be benefited and strengthened by its appropriation. Coming to examine these things in a practical light, apart altogether from theories and exhortations, we see that we are living in an economy that is self-watchful, self-guarded, and self-avenging. It is a solemn and awful thing to live.—Preacher's Com.

32—34. (32) **little sleep,** the sluggard's words, comp. ch. vi. 10, 11. (34) **one that travelleth,** R. V., "robber;" Stuart, "highwayman," whose coming is sudden and unexpected. **want,** "pressing want," Stuart. **armed man,** it will seize you as with the grasp of an indignant warrior. From its iron clutch there will be no deliverance."[a]

Nature and Spirit.—1. The analogy of Nature and the human spirit. Both are of God. Both contain principles of life, beauty, and use. Both need cultivation in order to their perfection. In both sloth and neglect are punished by loss and ruin. 2. The personal moral duty. To "awake from sleep," to "stir up the gift within us," to "work out our salvation," to be good husbandmen, good and faithful servants in this garden of the Lord—the soul. If not faithful here, how can it be expected that we shall be faithful in spheres more remote?—Johnson.

Life a Trust.—"The scene clearly shows that the sluggard and the fool cannot hide the results of their neglect. Every man is a living witness to the life which he lives, how secretly soever he may conduct that life. In this case the results were observed and reported. We must see more or less of each other's work. We are in the same world—a small and crowded world it is, too—we belong to one another—we hold mutual rights of inquiry—in short, we cannot hide ourselves from our fellow-men. We cannot confine the results of a wasted life within our own bounds. The drunkard says he injures nobody but himself, than which there is no greater fallacy in all human misthinking. The man deludes himself with the notion that he only is suffering pain of body, wreck of mind, loss of understanding, and forfeiture of property: he little thinks that every child he has will suffer from the outrage of appetite of which he stands convicted. His children will be tainted in health, and will be clouded or dwarfed in mind, in consequence of their father's excesses. The spendthrift says he is only spending his own money; but in this sense of the term no man has any money of his own to spend. Every penny we hold we should hold in a spirit of trusteeship, and our object should be to discover how much good we may do with it; for if we waste it, not only is the money itself gone, but our mental economy is injured, our moral integrity is impaired, our sense of honor has undergone modification or collapse. It is impossible to tell a lie without injuring other people. It is impossible to disobey the laws of cleanliness without affecting the health of society. In the deepest, largest, truest sense, no man liveth unto himself; every breath we draw would seem to affect the atmosphere in which we live."—People's Com.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

1. These, etc., the formula indicating a new section; chapters xxv.—xxix; a later selection seems to have been made for definitely moral and religious purposes. **copied out,**[a] they may have been kept as oral tradition, or in known documents; the expression here means that they gained practical and permanent form. The men of Hezekiah were prob. a learned commission entrusted by the king with the work of recovering, and editing, the ancient national literature.

A Revival of Learning.—The Renaissance preceded the Reformation, and, because it had no deep spiritual basis, it threatened to degenerate into dilletantism and pedantry. But after the second movement had taken hold of Europe, real, solid learning received a powerful impulse, because men were then in earnest in the search for truth. It

would seem that a similar result was produced in the days of Hezekiah. Then there was a religious reformation, and that was followed by a newly-awakened interest in the national literature. Of course, this was the more natural among the Jews, because their national genius was religious, and their literature was the vehicle of their religious ideas. The danger of a time of religious excitement is that it shall be accompanied by attenuated knowledge. But the more the religious feelings are roused, the more reason is there that they should be directed by truth. Revival preachers should be studious men if they wish their work not to be perverted into wrong and false courses through ignorance.—Pul. Com.

2, 3. (2) **to conceal,** or that He must conceal. God does not hide in order to show His glory; but His glory is so great that it must be incomprehensible.[b] "After the fullest revelation there are secrets unrevealed. **honour of kings,** as occupying positions of authority and influence; to do all by inquiry and counsel. **search out,** so that the materials of sound judgment may be before them.[c] (3) **heaven,** etc., "as you can never rise to the illimitable height of the heavens, as you can never penetrate to the immeasurable depth of the earth, so you can never fathom the heart of a king, can never find out what he really thinks and intends (comp. Job xi. 8)."

Divine Concealments (vs. 2).—I. The Divine Being is accustomed to conceal much—1. In relation to His own nature and the manner of His existence; 2. In relation to the structure and constitution of His works; 3. In relation to the dispensations of His providence; 4. In relation to the economy of grace and redemption. II. In this He acts in a manner worthy of Himself, and suited to display His Glory. 1. Because it is in part the necessary consequence of His infinite superiority to all finite beings in wisdom and understanding—the inevitable result of His being God; 2. Because it evinces His entire independence of the wisdom, counsel, or co-operation of any or all of His creatures; 3. Because such a degree of obscurity as attends the partial manifestation of the Divine will, and the progressive development of the Divine purposes, is eminently adapted to the state, exigency, and condition of man.—G. Brooks.

Concealed Things.—It is the glory of man that he can discover and reveal what his fellow-men are unable to make out. It is the glory of God that he cannot make known to us all that is present to His eye, or such revelation of present good and future blessedness would injure us; that He must hide from us a part of His infinite wisdom, some of His inexhaustible stores, and leave us to search and ascertain, that by our searching we may be "lifted up and strengthened."—Clarkson.

4, 5. (4) **dross,** or impurities wh. would spoil the consistency and the beauty of the silversmith's workmanship. Fire is the agent used in this process. **a vessel,** or the proper materials of a vessel.[a] **finer,** silversmith. (5) **wicked,** as dross is taken away fr. the silver ore. **from before the king,** the expression intimates, from his place beside the king, as a king's counsellor. **established,** made stable, permanent.[b] **righteousness,** esp. of judicial decisions.

Evil Surroundings (vss. 4, 5).—I. Of the silver, it is the dross with which it is naturally associated; of the king, the mean souls that bask in the royal favor. II. The separation is a fiery process. In the case of kings, private assassination, intrigue, revolution, or legitimate party contests. III. The separation from the dross is beneficial both to the silver and to the king. IV. Men, looking at the silver mixed with the dross, and at the king in the midst of a vile court, are apt to misjudge both the metal and the man: separation is needful to rectify opinion.

Negative Work.—We are here taught not to begin what may be called our final processes until initial processes have been thoroughly accomplished. Always there is a negative work to be done before the positive or constructive work can be wisely and successfully attempted. Take up the weeds from the garden before you plant your flowers; remove the dross before you shape a vessel out of the silver; remove the old building before you lay the new foundations: do all manner of introductory work before you set yourselves with all zeal and determination to build the house or the temple. So with regard to the social vessel: "Take away the wicked from before the king,"—in other words, take

"Old Howell has admirably described the ingredients of an exquisite proverb to be sense, shortness, and salt." —Disraeli.

[b] De. xxix. 29; Ps. xviii. 11; Job xxvi. 14.

[c] "In God's government we are not to wish to know why, but believe everything; but in the secular kingdom a ruler should know, and ask why, and trust no man in anything!"—Luther.

"When we suppose ourselves to have reached the end, we discover to our surprise and delight that we have but realized the beginning. In God's work there is no end; it is all beginning, all new suggestion, all new and brilliant opportunity." —Parker.

[a] "As, in order to the production of a beautiful vessel, such as the finer would approve and command, the material of wh. the vessel is to be made must be purged of its alloy, so, in order to the general government of a prince being of a nature to prove conducive to the benefit of his people, and the stability of his throne, the wicked must be removed from his presence, and fr. all intimacy with his life and counsels."—Quoted by Dav. Thomas.

[b] "God will bless his government, the people will become pliable to it, and so it will prove durable."—Matt. Henry.

away the dross, take away everything that is of the nature of alloy, destroy all evil counsels; and then the throne of the king shall be established in righteousness, and being established in righteousness it shall be permanently established. Only righteousness is eternal in its duration. That which is wicked has in it the principle of decay, and only time is required to bring that principle to its final issue. Righteousness feeds, as it were, upon eternal resources; it draws its supplies from every attribute of God; it lives to do good; it is more than mere uprightness, rectitude, or stern virtue; it is pureness, kindness, holiness, charity; it belongs to the very throne of heaven.—Parker.

6, 7. (6) **Put .. thyself,** Heb. set not out thy glory.[c] Reproof of over-forwardness, self-assertion, and boastful ambition. **stand .. great,** i. e. assuming that you are as great as they.[d] Be humble. (7) **Come up hither,** comp. Lu. xiv. 8—11.[e] **eyes have seen,** into whose presence thou hast officiously gained admittance.[f]

Obtrusiveness (vss. 6, 7).—I. To force oneself upon the notice of great men betrays a want of self-respect. II. It is the true mark of a sycophant. III. The man of worth will be recognized in due time, and elevated according to his merits; if not, the loss will be that of others. IV. Those who have not the eyes to perceive worth have not the will or the heart to reward it.

Self-respect.—As the Arabic proverb finely says, "Sit in thy place, and no man can make thee rise." "All that good manners demand," says a great writer, "is composure and self-content." We may add to this "an equal willingness to allow the social claims of others as to rely upon our own." Self-respect is complemented by deference. We need a ready perception of worth, and beauty in our companions. If it is folly to refuse respect to admitted external rank, much more to the native rank of the soul.—Johnson.——Modesty.—Men who consult their happiness and reputation are not so anxious to rise in the world as they are to qualify themselves for rising. A wise man knows well that it is not merely the position he occupies which raises him in the estimation of others, but the ability which he shows to fill the post, and the fitness which men recognize as existing between him and his high place. He has no desire to step into a position which he could not fill with some credit to himself and advantage to others, knowing well that he would then be like the jackdaw in the peacock's borrowed plumes, an object of derision to all beholders. He would rather occupy a low place with abilities to fill a higher, than be in one which was above his abilities, and he therefore gladly leaves the question of his social advancement in the hands of others.—Hom. Com.

8—10. (8) **hastily,** i. e. without due consideration and forethought. **strive,** reference is mainly intended to cases in the law courts, or before the magistrates.[a] **what to do,** i. e. what humiliating or what terrible thing thou mayest be inspired to do under the stinging anger of defeat. (9) **Debate,** etc., settle the matter of dispute in private and friendly conference. Try to end the matter amicably. **to another,** R. V., "the secret of another." This unfortunate ref. to a third party being often the occasion of dispute and difficulty.[b] (10) **he that heareth,** i. e. any one who hears how treacherous you have been. **put thee to shame,** R. V., "revile thee." **infamy .. away,** the stigma of treachery will ever cling to thee.

Quarrelsomeness (vss. 8—10).—I. The quarrelsome man rushes into strife without thinking of the consequences, being borne along by a tempest of passion. II. His passion prevents him from seeing the merits of his neighbor's case or the injustice of his own. III. His passion leads to hastiness of speech, and the revealing of private matters. IV. The result is that the natural justice of even imperfect men declaims against the passionate man.

11, 12. (11) **fitly spoken,** better trans., in due season: spoken in its appropriate time; one translation is "spoken upon its wheels." **apples of gold,**[c] allusion is plainly to some familiar and admired kind of ornamentation, whether of sculpture or of table decoration does not appear. **pictures,** R. V., "baskets;" marg., "filagree work." (12) **as an earring,** etc., the point of this verse may be thus expressed, "An ear that listens obediently to instruction and reproof[d] is more valuably adorned than that wh. is ornamented with the most costly jewels." "The listening ear is

c "Bring not thy glory to view; make not thyself glorious."—Stier.

d "Do not vie with them in apparel, furniture, gardens, housekeeping, or retinue, for that is an affront to them, and will waste thine own estate." — Mat. Henry.

e "Sit not in a place fr. wh. one may bid thee rise up." — Arabic Proverb. "Ambition is to the mind what the cap is to the falcon, it first blinds us, and then compels us to lower by reason of our blindness."—E. Cook.

f 2 Sa. xiv. 24, 28. "Pride has a fall, and it is wiser as well as nobler to take the lower place at first in humility, than to take it afterwards with shame."—Spk. Com.

a "Rush not forth soon to quarrel," — Luther.

b "The point may, however, be, Do not talk to others about any secret evils you may hear of. Let the man who first listens to the offence be the man who has given it; drop it into no other ear." — Dav. Thomas. Mat. xviii. 15.

c "Either real apples of golden color, in a silver net-work basket, or imitations in silver embroidery."— Fausset.

d "If you be reproved for your faults, do not be angry with him who does it, but turn your anger against the

better than one hung with gold." **an obedient ear,** receives the precepts of the wise reprover, and wears them as a valued ornament.

Well-chosen Words (vs. 11).—I. They raise our estimation of the speaker. II. They do good to the hearer. III. They are the utterance of wisdom, tact, sympathy, practical knowledge. IV. For the speaking of them we need a heart under the teaching of the spirit of wisdom, and then "out of the fulness of the heart the mouth will speak."

The Power of a Word; or, Unconscious Influence.—One day a boy was tormenting a kitten, when his little sister said to him with tearful eyes, "Oh, Philip, don't do that; it's God's kitten." The words of the little one were not lost; they were set upon wheels. Many serious thoughts were awakened in his mind regarding the creature he had before considered his own property. "God's kitten—God's creature—for He made it." It was a new idea. The next day, on his way to school, he met one of his companions, beating unmercifully a poor, starved-looking dog. "Don't do that," said Philip, using almost unconsciously his sister's words; "it is God's creature." The boy looked ashamed, and explained that the dog had stolen his breakfast. "Never mind," said Philip, "I will give you mine, which I have in my basket;" and sitting down together, the little boy's anger was soon forgotten. Again had a word unconsciously been set upon wheels. Two passers-by had heard Philip's words,—one a young man in prosperous business in the neighboring town; the other a dirty, ragged being, who, in consequence of his intemperate habits, had been dismissed by his employer, and was now going home, sullen and despairing. "God's creature," said the poor forlorn man, and it was a new idea to him also; "if I, too, belong to God, He will take care of me, though no one else will." Just then he came to a public-house, where he had been in the habit of drowning his miseries, and then staggering home to inflict new ones on his wife and children. He stopped; the temptation was strong, but the new idea was stronger—"I am God's creature;" and he passed on. His wife was astonished to see him sober, and still more when he burst into tears, declared that he was a ruined man, but that he was determined to give up drinking, and trust in God. At that moment a knock was heard at the door, and the gentleman came in to whom we have before alluded. He, too, had been rebuked by the boy's words for the scorn and loathing which he had felt to the miserable object before him. "'God's creature,' therefore entitled to help and pity." He had gone to help the poor man; and all this the result of a little girl's words to her brother.—Miss Brewster.

13, 14. (13) **cold .. harvest,** not snow-storm in harvest-time, wh. would be anything but pleasant. Reference is to snow brought from the mountains, and used as we use ice, to cool wine, and other drinks.[a] **faithful messenger,** one whom his master can fully trust.[b] (14) **false gift,** R. V., "of his gifts falsely." Reference is to one who is ever boasting how much he will do, yet never fulfilling his boast.[c] **without rain,** wh. the clouds and the wind seemed so plainly to promise.

A Boy's Fidelity.—A lady who had interested herself much on the behalf of some navvies embarking for the seat of war in the Crimea, had purchased four warm knitted vests for them, but had no means of getting them conveyed to the vessel. Says she:—"Beneath a lamp in the street stood a group of boys. Its light fell on a face which seemed to introduce the sort of messenger I desired. The story was told him. 'Now, my boy, we are strangers, and I do not want to know your name, or where you live, nor any clue to either. You might dispose of these vests if you chose. I should never send the police after you. But my confidence in the honor of English boys, which stands so high now, would be broken down.' The boy's eyes flashed under the lamp-light, and, snatching the parcel, he said, 'Trust me, I'm the boy for it,' and off he ran. A note had been enclosed in the parcel to one of the officers with whom I had had some conversation, requesting him to send me one line by post that night, or next morning, to say that the parcel had reached its destined owners. By the last post on Saturday evening came a note from the officer alluded to, to say that about seven o'clock on Wednesday evening a boy had taken a parcel on board, and had requested

things for which he has reproved you." — Quoted by Nicholls.

"Sometimes we best give advice to others by giving it to ourselves." —Parker.

"You may tame the wild beast; the conflagration of the American forest will cease when all the timber and the dry wood is consumed; but you cannot arrest the progress of that cruel word which you uttered carelessly yesterday or this morning." — F. W. Robertson.

[a] "The king's summer-palace on Lebanon would make him and his courtiers familiar with a luxury wh. could hardly have been accessible at Jerusalem." — Spk. Com.

[b] Pr. x. 26, xiii. 17, xxii. 21.

[c] "A more contemptible character know I not than the man of a mean and dastardly selfish nature wearing the livery and speaking the language of love, with one hand dropping a farthing into the 'urn of poverty,' and with the other taking a shilling out." — Dav. Thomas.

Be what thou wouldest seem to be.

"Pretension may sit still, but cannot act. Pretension never feign-

permission to deliver it to the two men in the presence of the captain of the ship, the chief officer of the corps, and the medical officer. Having discharged his duty, the last sound heard amidst the splashing of his oars, as he left the ship's side, was the shout, 'Tell that 'ere lady that I kept my word, and the jackets was in time.'"

15—17. (15) **long forbearing**, a "prince" or judge "is led to take a favorable view of an accused person's case when he sees him calm and composed, ready to explain the matter without any undue heat or irritation. Such a bearing presupposes innocence and weighs favorably with the judge." **soft tongue,** winning, gentle speech.[a] **breaketh the bone,** fig. for "subdues even the most obstinate resistance." (16) **vomit,** an over-quantity even of that wh. is sweet and good becomes an offence.[a] (17) **withdraw,** etc., i. e. do not give even your friend and neighbor so much of your company as may weary him of you.[b] **weary**, satiated with.

Forbearance and Persuasiveness.—I. Patience without speech is an overcoming power. II. Patience seconded by gentle speech is doubly powerful. III. Those who conquer by forbearance in deed and gentleness in word walk in the Divine footsteps.—Hom. Com.

The Physician and the Drayman.—Dr. P——, a Quaker of Philadelphia, was very kind to the poor. In times of sickness, produced by whatever cause, he was always ready to assist them. His benevolence in such cases extended farther than his gratuitous services as a physician. Of course he was beloved. The streets were frequently somewhat crowded with building materials, so much so as often, at particular places, to prevent two vehicles from passing each other, if the driver of either was disposed to be obstinate. As the doctor was one day proceeding to visit a patient, his progress was impeded by a dray—the driver of which had stopped his horses in one of those narrow passages. After waiting several minutes the doctor requested the drayman to allow him to pass. The latter, who had heard of the former, but did not know him, poured forth a volley of the vilest abuse upon the "straight-coat," and swore that he would not move till he thought proper. "Well, friend," said the doctor, "all I have to observe is this: if thee should get sick, or if thy family should ever be in distress, send for Dr. P——, and he will do all he can to assist thee." The heart of the drayman was subdued by the kindness of the man he had abused; he was ashamed of his conduct, stammered an apology, and then removed the obstruction as speedily as possible.

Satisfaction.—The richest man in Europe was asked, "How does it feel to be a millionaire?" He replied, "It just feels as though you could pay twenty shillings in the pound." That was a man who retained his sanity; who kept his head upon his shoulders and his eyes in his head. But there have been men whose wealth has become their poverty, and whose riches have crushed them into the dust, in which they have spent their whole life. "Now," says God by his providence, "you see what you are, by seeing that sweetness cannot satisfy you, wine cannot inspire you, money cannot enrich you." Why? Because you are born in the image and likeness of God. It is the divinity that stirs within you; you cannot satisfy the divinity within you with honey, or wine, or gaiety. Who can satisfy the hunger of the soul with the grass of the earth? What is the argument? We are more than mortal; we know it though we cannot explain it. What we can explain is, of necessity, finite, and, in all probability, superficial. There is no other answer to the uprising of the soul in its noblest moods.—Parker.——A True Friend.—There is only one house which we cannot too frequently attend; there is only one Friend from whom we need never withdraw; there is only one exercise that never palls upon the man who enjoys it: let us come boldly to the throne of grace, let us pray without ceasing, let us walk with God, let us never withdraw from the light of his countenance.—Parker.

18—20. (18) **false witness,** comp. Pr. vi. 19, xii. 17, xix. 5, 9, xxi. 28. **maul,** etc.,[c] a crushing instrument; a club shod with iron. "An instrument used in the rough and bloody warfare of fighting men in old times." **sword,** etc., comp. Ps. lii. 4, lvii. 5, lxiv. 4, cxx. 4. "There is a kind of climax in the three offensive weapons named—the club bruises, the sword inflicts wounds, the arrow pierces to the heart; and the three may

ed an act of real greatness. Pretension never wrote an 'Iliad,' nor drove back Xerxes, nor Christianized the world, nor abolished slavery."—Pul. Com.

[a] Pr. xv. 1; Ec. x. 4; Ja. i. 19.

[a] Over-indulgence in any worldly pleasure issues in a moral sickness and disgust. There is what the French call the ennui that comes out of it, "that awful yawn," says Byron, "which sleep cannot abate."

"Visit seldom and they love thee the more."—Arabic Prov.

"Moderation is enjoyment: temperance is the true delight: self-control is real power. Nothing is done by violence, overreaching, exaggeration: everything that is worth accomplishing can be accomplished by moderation of desire and by moderation of action."—Parker.

[b] After the third day fish and company become distasteful. Be not too intimate with any."—Lat. Prov.

"He that sponges upon a friend loses him."—Eng. Prov.

"Patience is the ballast of the soul, that will keep it from rolling and tumbling in the greatest storm."—Bp. Hopkins.

"Temperance is reason's girdle and passion's bridle, the strength of the soul and the foundation of virtue."—Jeremy Taylor.

[c] Diminutive, mallet.

represent the various baneful effects of false testimony, how it bruises reputation, spoils possessions, deprives of life."—Pul. Com. (19) **broken tooth,** wh. gives a terrible twinge of pain when used in biting. **foot .. joint,** sprained, so that every step is an agony. "Treachery annoys as well as deceives." (20) **taketh away,** better, "layeth aside." **nitre,**[d] or potash. Some take the Heb. word to mean, "a wound." "To expose incongruities of action is the object here."—Stuart.

The Miseries of False Friendship (vs. 19).—I. Describe the unfaithful man. He is often ready to promise more than you desire, or than he can perform. II. Confidence in him attended with doubt. III. And attended with pain. Like trying to masticate with broken tooth, or walking with a sprained ankle.

Unfaithfulness.—The greatest disaster, in proportion to the number of men engaged, that befell the British arms in the Eastern insurrection, was the direct result of confidence in an unfaithful man. At Arrah-on-the-Ganges three or four hundred soldiers were sent to attack a body of the rebels, and relieve some British residents who were in danger there. A native was employed to ascertain the position of the enemy. In consequence of his report, the men left the river and made a night march into the interior. The messenger was false. The little army fell into an ambush prepared for them in the jungle. Two-thirds of their number were shot down in the dark by unseen foes. The remnant escaped to their ship when the day dawned. As they lay in that fatal valley getting their wounds in the dark, and helplessly wishing for the day, how exquisitely bitter must have been the reflection that a too ready trust in a faithless man had wrought them all this woe.—Arnot.

21, 22. (21) **be hungry,** Ro. xii. 20.[a] (22) **heap coals,** etc.,[b] i. e. "As metals are melted by heaping coals upon them, so is the heart softened by kindness." "'Coals of fire' may be a metaphor for the penetrating pain of remorse and repentance. The unmerited kindness which he receives forces upon him the consciousness of his ill-doing, which is accompanied by the sharp pain of regret."

Returning Good for Evil (vss. 21, 22).—I. The duty inculcated. 1. By nature we are inclined to render evil for evil; 2. But religion requires us to render good for evil. II. The encouragement given us to perform it. 1. That we shall overcome the hatred of our enemy; 2. That we shall be rewarded of our God. Apply:—(1) Guard against those reasonings which favor the indulgence of a vindictive spirit; (2) Set the Lord Jesus before you as an example.—C. Simeon.

Treatment of Enemies.—A little girl one day went to her mother to show some fruit that had been given her. "Your friend," said the mother, "has been very kind." "Yes," said the child, "she gave me more than these; but I have given some away." The mother inquired to whom she had given them, when she answered, "I gave them to a girl who pushes me off the path and makes faces at me." On being asked why she gave them to her, she replied, "Because I thought it would make her know that I wish to be kind to her, and she will not, perhaps, be rude and unkind to me again."—Foster.

23, 24. (23) **driveth away,** R. V., "bringeth forth rain." **backbiting,**[a] or slandering; R. V., "So doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance." "When a man discovers that a secret slanderer is working against him, he shows it by his gloomy and angry look, as the sky is dark with clouds when a storm is threatened." (24) **better,** etc., comp. ch. xxi. 9, 19.

Effect of Slander.—Here is a striking picture. Cunning and slanderous habits beget a dark and gloomy expression on the brow; as a homely German proverb says, "He makes a face like three days' rainy weather." The countenance, rightly read, is the mirror of the soul. Without the candid soul the brow cannot be clear and open. If we look into the mirror, we may see the condemnation which nature (that is, God) stamps upon our evil and unholy moods.—Johnson.——Injury of Backbiting.—Most of you have heard of the Freischutz, and a very instructive opera it is, if you will only keep an eye to the allegory, instead of thinking of the story. A huntsman, to forward his own purposes, seeks the devil and together they cast seven bullets; six of these are to strike wherever the caster wills, but the seventh is to be the devil's, and is to recoil and

[d] "Nitre does not mean the salt so called by us saltpetre; but rather an alkaline substance, wh. was used in Judaea for soap."

"If the cable breaks in a calm sea the vessel and the crew may escape serious injury; but if it gives way amid storm and tempest, the consequences are most disastrous. It is hard to find a professed friend failing us when we are sailing in calm waters, but it may then be borne without entirely crushing the spirit. But when such a discovery is first made in the day of trouble, it is enough to break the stoutest heart." — Hom. Com.

[a] Mat. v. 44.

[b] "The fig. is designed to describe rather the deep pangs of repentance wh. one produces within his enemy by rewarding his hatred with benefits, and in the production of wh. the revenge to be taken on him may consist, simply and solely."—O. Zockler.

"Diogenes, to one that asked him how he might be revenged on his enemy, said, 'The only way to gall and fret him effectually is for yourself to appear a good and honest man.'"

[a] A backbiter is a clandestine traducer of character. His speech goes to damage another's reputation behind his back.

"The man's desire is for the woman; but the woman's desire is rarely other than for the desire of the man."—Coleridge.

"A woman's friendship borders more closely on love than man's. Men affect each other in the reflection of noble or friendly acts; while women ask fewer proofs, and more signs and expressions of attachment." — Coleridge.

Slander is a coward's revenge, dissimulation his defence.

"Beware of backsliding. None sink so far into hell as those that come nearest heaven. No plants, if they rot, become more offensive and pernicious than those which once appeared in richest foliage and choicest flowers." — Dav. Thomas.

"Eastern fountains and springs (where the rains are only periodical, and at long intervals) are of no common price. The injury of corrupting them is proportionate."—Bridges.

"Newspapers are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. To show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." —Shakespeare.

[a] "Searching out honor brings difficulty."—Bertheau.

"The devil never tempts us with more success than when he tempts us with a sight of our good actions."—Bp. Wilson.

[b] "Is it not evident weakness to be able to suffer nothing, to think it strength and greatness of spirit to bear nothing, to be sensible of every touch?" — Abp. Leighton.

strike the caster, who throughout the whole piece is never certain which of them all he is putting into his rifle, and at last is struck down by his own shot. These seven bullets are evil speaking; and when we use the devil's weapons, we get the devil's wages; sooner or later we hurt ourselves by our own efforts, and, what is more, injure our own cause, however good and righteous in itself that cause may be.—Newland.

25, 26. (25) **good news,** of those so far away that we cannot have personal intercourse with them, and only at long intervals communications fr. them. "The words remind us of the scanty intercourse in the whole world between wanderers and the home they had left."—Spk. Com. (26) **falling down,** etc., by yielding to the bad influence and persuasions of the wicked, failing where we expected to have steadfastness. **troubled,** disturbed, so that clearness of the water is lost. **corrupt,** by admission to it of something foul.

Good News (vs. 25).—Cold water to a thirsty traveler, to a wounded soldier, to a sick child. Good news concerning the prosperity of a friend; concerning the safe arrival of a merchant ship; concerning a victory. Apply the Proverb to the Gospel. I. The far country—heaven. Far on account of—1. Its distance from this world; as a place it is separated from us by a local distance untraversed and unmeasured, but vast; 2. Its remoteness from our apprehensions; it differs so widely from all we have hitherto experienced, that we can conceive of it but dimly, even with the aid of revelation; 3. Our legal and moral disqualifications for inhabiting it. II. The good news—1. Of an answer to man's deepest questionings. There are certain inquiries of a religious import which naturally occur to us as soon as we arrive at the age of reflection; 2. Of a remedy for man's greatest ills—guilt, sin, sorrow; 3. Of a realization of man's highest hopes, the perfection of his being. III. The resemblance. 1. It satisfies a want; 2. It imparts a pleasure; 3. It communicates strength.—G. Brooks.

The Symbolical Suggestion of this Proverb.—Such a proverb as that before us cannot but suggest a reference to the good news which the angels sang at the birth of Christ. 1. This comes from a far country. (1) It comes from heaven. Christ came down from heaven, sent to us by His Father. The highest truth is a revelation. Christianity is a God-given religion. Its great importance rests on its truth as a message from God. (2) Heaven is a far country, while we are in our sin. Though God is locally near, spiritually He is far away. The prodigal has strayed into a far country. Yet even there he is not forgotten. 2. It is good news. (1) It tells of God's love and mercy. (2) It declares Christ's mission to save—His incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection. (3) It brings to us the offer of free deliverance from all evil and of a heavenly inheritance. (4) It is of universal application. The good news is for all. 3. It is most refreshing. It is "as cold waters to a thirsty soul." (1) It is much needed. The soul of man naturally thirsts for knowledge of the unseen. A deeper need is that of blessedness in union with God. (2) It refreshes. We have not enough truth to clear up all mysteries, but we have enough to invigorate us and cheer us on our way. Not yet the full feast, but refreshing waters on the journey.—Pul. Com.

27, 28. (27) **much honey,** comp. vs. 16. **is not glory,**[a] better, "is burdensome." (28) **rule .. spirit,** ch. xvi. 32.[b] **city .. walls,** so freely exposed to all enemies.

Too Much of a Good Thing.—A desire for the good opinon of others is right and salutary. As honey is not only a pleasant but a wholesome article of food, so the wish to stand well with our fellow-men is a God-implanted feeling which is very beneficial both to the individual man and to society as a whole. He is a churlish being who does not care what other people think about him, who sets at nought their esteem or their blame, while a right regard to their judgment of us insensibly produces a beneficial influence upon our conduct and temper. But it is a desire which must not rule our life. Just as honey must not be substituted for plainer food, or made the staple article of diet, so a desire for the good opinion of others must not be put before higher motives—must not be made the ruling principle of life. This proverb may be linked with the preceding one to some extent, for the lack of firmness which good men sometimes display in the society and under the influence of worse men

than themselves is often due to a desire not to lose their good opinion —not to be thought obstinate, or morose, or conceited. But when any question of right or wrong is at stake the approval or disapproval even of those whose goodwill is most precious to us must be cast aside.—Hom. Com.——The Lack of Self-control.—We need to see what this condition really is. Every man is permitted, in a large measure, to be his own sovereign. No tyrant can invade the secret sanctuary of his thoughts. His ideas, passions, and will are his own. Moreover, God has given to us freedom of will, so that we can give the rein to our passions or restrain them. The inner man is like a city full of life. We are each called upon to keep order in our own cities, and, if we do not respond to the call, the result will be riotous confusion. There are wild beasts within that must be chained and caged, or they will break loose and ravage the streets—murderous propensities that must be shut in a deep dungeon; ugly and vile tendencies to sin that need to be crushed lest they usurp the control of the life. When the will is not fortified and exercised against these evil things, we suffer from lack of self-control.—Pul. Com.

"Self-control is one of the last results of true education. Silence may be mightier than passion."—Parker.

Accustom yourself to self-control in matters of small moment, as a training for those of greater importance.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

1—3. (1) **rain in harvest,** in Palestine from spring to October there is little or no rain. So harvest rain was regarded as a strange and incongruous thing. Honor paid to a fool is quite as incongruous. (2) **bird,** "sparrow."[a] **curse causeless,** unmerited; not having sufficient ground or reason. **not come,** R. V., "lighteth not." The birds swiftly vanish, so shall the curse be dissipated, it shall not hit the mark. (3) **whip,** etc., each of these is fitting to its place and use.[b]

Homiletic Hints (vss. 1—3).—Verse 1 suggests a sermon on things out of place; verse 2, things in search of a place; verse 3, things in their right place. The three verses may be combined, and the subject may be on the fitness of things; and the application may be—I. Are we in our right place? II. Has Christ His proper place in our heart and life? III. What are we doing to secure for the Saviour His right place in the world?

The Curse Causeless.—God will not hear a sinful prayer. A curse is a prayer. No one has the power of inflicting direct harm upon his victim by sheer force of malignant words. Only the superstition of magic could suppose any such thing to be possible. A curse is just a prayer for evil to come on the head of the devoted person. But God will not heed such a petition if He disapproves of it. Prayer is not a force that compels God; it is but a petition that seeks His aid, and the response to it is entirely dependent on His will. There is a providence over life. Curses cannot fly about like black-plumed birds of evil, roosting wherever their authors choose. Above the most potent and direful curse of man is the calm, fair, equable government of God. Though the whole human race combined to curse one on whom God smiled, not a shadow of real evil could light on his head. Balaam saw the uselessness of trying to curse a people whom God had blessed (Num. xxiii. 8). Our whole future depends, not on man's opinions, but on God's treatment of us. Yet many men are in an agony of distress when they are visited with the disapproval of society, while they take no steps to secure the favor of God.—Pul. Com.

a "As these birds may fly where they will, and nobody cares or is the worse, so here."—Trapp.

"We know that every bird who casts a shadow over our path will presently settle down again—it will find its nest whence it started, and there take up its abode. And so every curse uttered without a cause will return upon the head of him who uttered it—upon him will come the same, or worse, ills than those he has called down upon another. 'Cursing men,' says Trapp, 'are cursed men.' "—Hom. Com.

b "The rod is as much needed by fools, and as well suited to them, as whips and bridles are for beasts." —Fausset.

"The more you speak of yourself the more you are likely to lie." — Zimmerman.

4, 5. (4) **Answer not,** etc.,[c] do not conform yourself to his style of speech: do not bandy words with him, descending to his level. **like him,** showing the same spirit, as if you approved of it. (5) **Answer,** etc.,[d] meet him wisely as his own folly deserves, i. e. with reproof or moderation, so that his folly may be clearly shown.

Folly.—I recollect one Sunday afternoon passing by a large village public-house, and it chanced that a little group of street preachers were doing their best to make known the Gospel to the idlers who were sitting on the benches outside. Going up to interest the men in what was being said, I was confronted by the landlord, who was in a state of almost frenzied indignation. He denounced the preachers as hypocrites

c Mat. vii. 6.

d "The terms in the first instance mean, 'in a foolish manner,' as is manifest from the reason given. In the second instance they mean, 'in the manner wh. his folly requires.' This is also plain from the reason given. A foolish speech

and scoundrels, who lived on the honest earnings of those whom he saw around him. Every attempt to bring him to reason, to show that the men in question spent their money on drink and not on the preachers, to secure a patient hearing for the gracious message, was met only with violent abuse directed against myself. The man was precisely what is meant in these verses by a fool, one in whom all spiritual vision was blinded by greed and sensuality, in whom the plainest dictates of common sense and human courtesy were silenced; to answer him in his own vein was the only way of exposing his folly, and yet to answer him in such a way was to come down to his own level. What could be done except to leave him to the judgments which are prepared for scorners and to the stripes which await the back of fools?—Exp. B.

6, 7. (6) **hand .. fool,** who cannot be trusted. **cutteth .. feet,** or he might as well have cut off the messenger's feet, for he will not get his message well carried.[a] **drinketh damage,** the foolish messenger will do or say something wh. will bring mischief upon the sender. (7) **legs .. equal,**[b] R. V., "hang loose;" they are as useless to him as a parable or a proverb to a fool.

The Fool.—What is true of the private fool is true also of the public fool; that is to say, of the man who preaches a grand gospel, but does so without himself having any vital relation to it, without having turned that gospel into experience and illustrated it by example. Such a man has no right to have the parable of the gospel entrusted to him, and certainly he has no right to entrust it to himself. There is always to be a distinct relation between the speaker and the speech, between the faculty and the use to which it is put. When things are out of place they may become not only worthless but mischievous. Seed is to be sown in the ground; it is not to be thrown into the air, or to be laid upon marble slabs, or to be cast into iron furnaces; in all these instances it would be thrown away. Right words, wise parables, eternal gospels, are not to be entrusted to loose lips, to misdirected faculties, to foolish expositors: great gospels are to be entrusted to great hearts, and it is evermore to be felt that the speaker of the gospel is a man who has himself realized the gospel; where is this harmony between the speaker and the speech the words will be simple, clear, and mighty.—J. Parker.

8—10. (8) **bindeth .. sling,** the point of comparison is the uselessness of a stone if bound in a sling. (9) **a thorn,** etc., Stuart, "as a thorn-bush which is elevated in the hand," etc., likely to injure himself or others. (10) **great God,** this is incorrect; no reference to God is made. R. V., "As an archer that woundeth all, so is he that hireth the fool and he that hireth," etc. Trusting matters of grave moment to men of bad repute, or to any chance comer, will do as much mischief as one who shoots arrows about at random. **transgressors,** or vagrants; R. V., "them that pass by."

God Rewardeth.—A striking illustration of the folly of counting God out of one's plans for life is given in the course of William M. Tweed, who died in 1878. Here was a man who sought wealth and power, and who for a time seemed successful in their pursuit. Apparently he did not propose to obey God, or to live for a life to come. What he wanted was worldly prosperity. He thought he had it. He went to Congress. He gathered his millions. He controlled the material interests of the metropolis of his country. He openly defied public sentiment and courts of justice in the prosecution of his plans. He was a brilliant and therefore a dangerous example of successful villainy. But the promise of prosperity for even the life that now is, is only to the godly. As William M. Tweed lay dying in a prison-house in the city he once ruled, his confession of bitter disappointment was, "My life has been a failure in everything. There is nothing I am proud of." If any young man wants to come to an end like this, the way to it is simple and plain. "The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool and rewardeth transgressors." "The way of the wicked He turneth upside down."—S. S. Times.

11, 12. (11) **As a dog,** 2 Pe. ii. 22. "The emblem used here is disgust-

is not a rule for our imitation; nevertheless our answer must be so framed by it as to meet and repel it."—And. Fuller.

"A word, a look, which at one time would make no impression, at another time wounds the heart."—Sterne.

[a] "When a message is sent by a fool's hands, he makes so many mistakes, careless or wilful, that it is like bidding him go when we have cut off his legs."—Bridges.

[b] "The legs dangle down from a lame man; so is a parable in the mouth of fools."—Wordsworth.

"None but a fool is always right."—Hare.

"When we allow our heart to wax gross, wisdom itself becomes folly in our lips, and truth herself becomes error."—Horton.

He must be a thorough fool who can learn nothing from his own folly.

"A fool with the Scriptures or a judicial maxim oft causes more harm than profit."—Luther.

"Those who love knowledge for its own sake, ought to wish to see its elements made accessible to all, were it only that they may be the more thoroughly examined into, and more effectually developed. receive that ductility and plastic quality which the pressure of minds of all descriptions, constantly molding them to their purpose, can only bestow."—Sir J. Herschel.

ing, but the thing signified is infinitely more so."[a] **returneth,** "so comes the fool for the second time again with his folly." (12) **wise .. conceit,** has a blind over-estimate of himself. One who is encased in self-sufficiency.[b] "The self-conceited are taught with more difficulty than the stupid."—Fausset.

The Danger of Conceit (vs. 12).—Consider the text—I. As a general truth. Here we may distinctly note—1. The character described; 2. His hopeless condition. II. With more especial reference to religion. 1. A man that carries his conceit into his religion is indeed in a most deplorable state; 2. The fool, then, is in a more hopeful state than he.—Simeon.

The Power of Habit.—There is a fabulous story of a princess who was shut up in a strong castle, out of which she must make her escape or else be starved to death. Well, the door has been taken away; what is there to hinder her? The bright sun is shining on the forest in which the castle stands, and she joyfully hastens down to the gate, that she may pass it and be free. But stop! in this gate a spider's web in hanging from top to bottom. She sweeps it away in a moment, and is going on, when, behold, another spider's web is before her. It is very easy to sweep that away, too, and she does it. But there is a third, and, when that is removed, a fourth; and so on, again and again; and at last the poor princess sits down and weeps bitterly, and feels that though there is only a spider's web between her and liberty, she shall never be free. Habits are like these spider's webs. Each single act of a habit,—what is easier to be overcome! But it is the constant succession of them, one after the other, which, except by God's special assistance, will, in the long run, overcome us.—Old Jonathan.

13—16. (13) **slothful,** the most absurd excuse for his idlness, Pr. xxii. 13. (14) **As .. door,** etc., always moving, yet never moving from its place.[a] "The door turns upon its hinges by others; it does not turn itself. Even so the sluggard."—Stuart. He does not care to get out of his bed, but seems to be hung upon it, as a door upon its hinges.—Henry. (15) **hideth his hand,**[b] comp. ch. xix. 24. **grieveth him,** wearies him, puts him to too much trouble. (16) **sluggard,** another term for the lazy and self-indulgent. **wiser,** in inventing excuses for his indolence. **seven men, i. e.** any number of men. "Indolence feeds intellectual vanity." **render a reason,** or give back an intelligent, wise answer.

Slothfulness.—Sluggishness increases in a man. The spirit of slothfulness is to be fought against as men would fight against a beast of prey: it lulls the senses: it takes away the very strength which it professedly conserves; it destroys the man whom it appears to bless. We are only safe in being faithful, active, devoted to some worthy cause. Every day should have its own plan, every morning should come as a bright opportunity, and every night should find us once more at the altar of praise, thanking God for a day's work well done. It will be difficult for a slothful man to become energetic in middle life. Slothfulness should be early extinguished. We do not act kindly to a child by doing everything for him; on the contrary, we act foolishly and cruelly towards the child himself. Self-help should be one of the earliest lessons taught to children. Every child should be his own servant; every life should learn the great rule of obedience, that it may come gradually and sensibly into the great blessing of rulership. He who cannot serve cannot rule.—Parker. ——Need of Industry in Religion.—"Make one honest effort for your soul's salvation," said a professor of Brown University to young Malcom, then a student in the institution. The student went to his room, and shut himself up with God. The expression, "Make one honest effort," sounded in his ears. He obeyed. He struggled. He cast himself on Christ. He came from that room an altered man. In after years, the preaching of our dear friend Malcom has been blessed with revival influences that have brought scores to the cross, among them, two now in the Presbyterian ministry. "I never can forget that word which was once whispered to me in an inquiry-meeting," said a Christian to his friend. "What word?" "It was the word 'eternity.'" A friend, who was yearning for the salvation of my soul, came up to my pew, and simply whispered "Eternity" in

a "The wicked man often sickens at his wickedness, and then returns to it again. Thus Pharaoh returned from his momentary conviction; Ahab from his pretended repentance; Herod from his partial amendment." —Dav. Thomas.

"Let every man that would avoid a return to his former iniquity be infinitely careful to avoid every new sin, for it is like a blow to a broken leg, or a burden to a crushed arm. Every little thing disorders the new health, and unfinished recovery." —Jer. Taylor.

b "Every man has just as much vanity as he wants understanding."—Pope.

a "Turns lazy and stupid like the dyer's nag round in its circle."—Schiller.

b "Or rather 'in the dish.' The moral is that a fool loves to have his hand (the organ of work) in the dish, the place of sensual pleasure; but he will not use his hand for any active exertion."—Wordsworth.

"Herodotus alludes incredulously to a race of Scythians or Tartars who were reported to sleep six months continuously in a year."

"God gives sleep to the bad, in order that the good may be undisturbed." —Saadi.

"The idle man is slain by his own indolence. Satan, who goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, is kept out by no locks and finds his victims in their most private retreats."—Pul. Com.

my ear with solemn tenderness, and left me. But that word did not leave me; it drove me to the cross for salvation."—Cuyler.

17. passeth by, on his own business. **meddleth with,** R. V., "vexeth himself with," allows himself to be enraged with, and so takes part in strife which does not really concern him. **taketh .. ears,** and so exciteth the dog to bite him.[c]

The Meddler (vs. 17).—I. Describe the meddlesome man. He has a conceited notion of his own practical wisdom; can rectify everything, from the stirring of a fire to the ruling of a nation; interferes with the domestic, social, mental differences of everybody. II. Draw attention to his fate. Like one who takes a dog by the ears, he is sure to be bitten by the strife he meddles with. Application:—Draw a distinction between a mere michievous meddler and a kind-hearted, judicious peacemaker.

18, 19. (18) **mad man,** one who has no self-control, is insane; Stuart suggests, "a jester," one always employed in silly joking. **firebrands,** either sparks, or arrows tipped with a burning substance. **death,** deadly weapons. (19) **deceiveth,** deals craftily with; tells lies to. **in sport,** forgetting that to deal with deceit is to deal with an edge tool.[a] "Many a practical jester does the maniac's mischief without the maniac's excuse."

A Practical Joke with a Purpose.—A wealthy farmer, much affected with hypochondria, came to Langenau to consult Michael Scuppach, better known by the appellation of the Mountain Doctor. "I have seven devils in my belly," said he, "no fewer than seven." "There are more than seven," replied the doctor, with the utmost gravity; "if you count them right you will find eight." After questioning the patient concerning his case, he promised to cure him in eight days, during which time he would every morning rid him of one of his troublesome inmates, at the rate of a louis d'or for each. "But," added he, "as the last will be more obstinate and difficult to expel than the others, I shall expect two louis d'ors for him." The farmer agreed to these terms; the bargain was struck, and the doctor impressing upon all present the necessity of secrecy, promised to give the nine louis d'ors to the poor of the parish. The next morning the imaginary demoniac was brought to him, and placed near a kind of machine which he had never seen before, by which means he received an electric shock. The farmer roared out lustily. "There goes one!" said the doctor, with the utmost gravity. Next day the same operation was repeated; the farmer bellowed as before, and the doctor coolly remarked, "Another is off!" In this manner he proceeded to the seventh. When he was preparing to attack the last, Scuppach reminded his patient that he now had need of all his courage, for this was the captain of the gang, who would make a more obstinate resistance than any of the others. The shock was at this time so strong as to extend the demoniac on the floor. "Now they are all gone!" said the doctor, and ordered the farmer to be put to bed. On recovering himself, the latter declared he was completely cured; he paid the nine louis d'ors, with abundance of thanks, and returned in the best spirits to the village. Credible witnesses attest this extraordinary cure, which proves the acuteness of the doctor, as well as the truth of Solomon's proverb, that with the fool we must sometimes talk like a fool.—Percy Anec.

20—22. (20) **wood is,** for replenishing the fire. **tale-bearer,** or whisperer, slanderer, who is to strife as wood to fire. (21) **coals,** Stuart, charcoal;" just as charcoal feeds glowing embers so a man who loves strife will excite a heated contest. **contentious,** quarrelsome. (22) **wounds,** R. V., "dainty morsels," ch. xviii. 8. **and they go,** "yet they go;" they are received with avidity, yet they are like strings in the vitals.[a]

Fuel for Social Fires (vss. 20—22).—I. The fire, how it is produced; rumors; "they say;" first tales exaggerated; mountains and molehills. Of rumor Tennyson says:—

"The parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,
That a lie which is part a truth is ever the blackest of lies;
That a lie which is all a lie, may be met and fought with outright,
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight."

II. The fire, how it is sustained; by the bearing of tales with sundry accretions, up and down; the tell-tale grows like a rolling ball of snow. III. The fire, how it may be extinguished; by insisting on the silence of the

c "He that has got a dog by the ears, if he lets him go he flies at him, and if he keeps his hold he has his hands full, and can do nothing else."—Mat. Henry.

a "The teacher cuts off the plea men are so ready to make for themselves when they have hurt their neighbor by their lies, that they 'did not mean mischief,' that they were 'only in fun.'" —Spk. Com.

"We must consider the effect, as well as the intention, of our actions; for, as in the old fable, what is sport to us may be grievous hurt to another." — Johnson.

"He who never relaxes into sportiveness is a wearisome companion; but beware of him who jests at everything!"
—Southey.

"A wide difference is made between 'suffering as a busy-body, and suffering as a Christian!' It is alarming to those who have no adequate sense of the criminality to find the apostle classify the one with 'murderers, and thieves, and evil-doers!'" — Bridges.

a "They destroy the mental peace of him to whom they are uttered, the reputation of him of whom they are uttered, and the social happiness of both." — David Thomas.

Ps. lii. 1—5; Ja. iii. 6.

"Scandal generally takes its rise either from an ill-will to mankind, a private inclination to make our-

talebearer. Tell the talebearer that you shall repeat what he has said, and name him as your authority; let it be understood that what is told you as a great secret shall be no secret with you, and he must take the consequences of the repetition.

23—25. (23) **Burning lips,** wh. give warm kisses and seem to glow with affection. **potsherd .. dross,** "a piece of broken earthenware from the furnace, which glitters with the silver drops that stick to it, but is itself contemptible, worthless."—Spk. Com. (24) **dissembleth,** maketh the show of love. (25) **speaketh fair,** then judge not by the speech, but by the character. **seven,** used as the symbol of completeness; meaning, any quantity of abominations.

The Bad Heart.—I. It may be varnished over but is still the bad heart. II. Duplicity is the sign of the bad heart. III. The need of prudence and reserve.—Johnson.

Hypocrisy.—

Neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone.
Oft, though wisdom wakes, suspicion sleeps
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill
Where no ill seems.

26—28. (26) **hatred .. deceit,** R. V., "Though his hatred cover itself with guile;" the enemy often using fawning words. **shall be shewed,** or discovered, and disclosed. (27) **fall therein,** ch. xii. 13; Ps. vii. 16, ix. 17. **rolleth a stone,** up a height; showing the absolute certainty of the workings of the law of retribution. (28) **hateth,** its victims.[a]

Flattery (vs. 28).—A flattering mouth worketh ruin. I. By causing the flattered to be puffed up beyond measure. II. By causing others to form too exalted an opinion of him. Apply:—1. Do not flatter; 2. Do not listen to the flatterer; his opinion of the man he flatters must be mean, or he would not use flattering language.

Spreading the Gospel.—An elderly woman residing near Montreal, in Canada, having obtained a Bible, was visited by her priest, who earnestly endeavored to prevail on her to give it up. Finding he could not persuade her to relinquish her treasure, he attempted to induce her to sell it; offering first five, then ten, fifteen, and at last twenty dollars. The good woman, after refusing these offers, at length consented to sell it for twenty-five dollars. The priest agreed, the money was paid, the obnoxious volume was given up, and he departed in triumph. But the old woman set off immediately to Montreal, and with the priest's twenty-five dollars purchased twenty-five new Bibles, for herself and her neighbors. How vain the attempt to stay the progress of Divine truth, and how fully in this case was the proverb of the wise man fulfilled, "He that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him," Prov. xxvi. 27.—R. T. S.

selves esteemed, an ostentation of wit, and vanity of being thought in the secrets of the world; or from a desire of gratifying any of these dispositions of mind in those persons with whom we converse." — Addison.

"Slander lives upon succession; for ever housed when once it gets possession." —Shakespeare.

[a] "He that injures another hates him in proportion to the injury."—Tacitus.

"Envy is a passion actually diabolical in its nature, for it makes war against God Himself; and being incapable in its impotence of clouding His Sovereign Majesty, it attacks Him in the gifts His beneficence has bestowed on man." —Book of the Fathers.

"It is not easy for us to forgive the injuries we receive; but it is far more difficult to forgive the injuries we do." —Lawson.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

1. of to-morrow, i. e. of the plans for to-morrow. Remember that they are unexecuted, and many things may happen that will prevent your carrying them through.[b] **day .. forth,** life is full of surprises; the unexpected is constantly occurring, so the best plannings may be spoiled. It has been paradoxically said that "nothing happens but the unlikely."

Boasting of the Morrow.—I. Its folly. II. Its danger. III. Its sin. IV. Its punishment. V. Its antidote.—Pul. Com.

To-morrow.—What is "to-morrow"? Who can define it? Who can be certain as to its contents, or even as to its duration? Days are not counted by the hours that are within them, but by the work to which those hours are consecrated, or by the pain by which they are made memorable, or by the hopes which shine from them as new glories in life. The true preparation for to-morrow is a wise use of the present. He who prays well to-day shall sing well to-morrow. The only way in which earnest men can provide for to-morrow is by looking well to the im-

[b] Pr. xvi. 9, xix. 21; Lu. xii. 20; Ja. iv. 13—16.

"Do not throw out with proud assurance high soaring schemes for the future." —Elster.

"'To-morrow,' is the devil's great ally, the very Goliath in whom he trusts for victory. 'Now,' is the stripling whom God sends forth against him."—Arnot.

"This does not forbid preparing for to-morrow, but presuming

upon to-morrow."—Matthew Henry.

"No one has had the gods so favorable that he can promise himself a morrow." —Seneca.

mediate duty. Rest assured that if we are faithful to-day we shall not be left without comfort to-morrow. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, and sufficient unto the day is the joy thereof. The Christian has no "to-morrow" as a fear; he has an everlasting to-morrow as to the hope of growth, progress, and advancement in all capability and faculty for divine service. Woe to the man who has so used his yesterday as to have no hope of to-morrow! Blessed be the man who so uses the present as to divest the future of all terrors!—J. Parker.

2, **another man,** one who can be quite independent; who can have no interested motives in his praise. **not .. mouth,** "self-praise is no recommendation."[a] "Every one will be forward to run him down that cries himself up. There may be a just occasion for us to vindicate ourselves, but it does not become us to applaud ourselves."

Self-Praise.—I. Self-praise is ill-founded. 1. Possibly it is insincere. 2. Probably it is delusive. II. Self-praise springs from selfishness. 1. It reveals a self-regarding habit. 2. It implies a desire of self-aggrandizement. III. Self-praise provokes jealousy. 1. Its defective authority is perceived. 2. It irritates the vanity of others. IV. Self-praise is contrary to Christian humility. V. Self-praise only aims at what can be better attained without it.—Pul. Com.

God Must Have all the Glory of Grace.—A certain king had a minstrel, and he bade him play before him. It was a day of high feasting; the cups were flowing, and many great guests were assembled. The minstrel laid his fingers among the strings of his harp and woke them all to the sweetest melody, but the hymn was to the glory of himself. It was a celebration of the exploits of song which the bard had himself performed. He had excelled high Howell's harp, and emulated great Llewellyn's lay. In high-sounding strains he sang himself and all his glories. When the feast was over the harper said to the monarch, "Oh, king, give me my guerdon; let the minstrel's mede be paid." And the king said, "Thou hast sung unto thyself; pay thyself; thine own praises were thy theme; be thyself the pay-master." He cried, "Did I not sing sweetly? O, king, give me the gold!" But the king replied, "So much the worse for thy pride, that thou shouldest lavish such sweetness upon thyself." Brethren, even if a man should grow grey-headed in the performance of good works, yet when at the last it is known that he has done it all to himself, his Lord will say, "Thou hast done well enough in the eyes of man, but so much the worse, because thou didst it only to thyself, that thine own praises might be sung and that thine own name might be extolled."—C. H. Spurgeon.

3, 4. (3) **stone,** etc., lit., "Heaviness is in stone, and weight is in sand." **fool's wrath,** R. V., "vexation," wh. a fool occasions.[a] (4) **Wrath,** violent passion. **outrageous,** or overflowing; makes a man "savage and furious as a beast of prey." **envy,**[b] R. V., "jealousy." The violent passion in a husband who thinks himself wronged.

Anger and Envy.—Anger in the best sense is the gift of God, and it is no small art to express anger with premeditated terms, and on seasonable occasions. God placed anger among the affections engrafted in nature, gave it a seat, fitted it with instruments, ministered it matter whence it might proceed, provided humors whereby it is nourished. It is to the soul as a nerve to the body. The philosopher calls it the whetstone to fortitude, a spur intended to set forward virtue. But there is a vicious, impetuous, frantic anger, earnest for private and personal grudges; not like a medicine to clear the eye, but to put it out. Anger is a frantic fit, but envy is a consumption. Among all mischiefs it is furnished with one profitable quality—the owner of it takes most hurt. It were well for him that he should dwell alone. It is a pity that he should come into heaven, for to see "one star excel another in glory" would put him again out of his wits. His cure is hard. Two simples may do him good if he could be won to take them—a scruple of content and a dram of charity.—T. Adams.

5, 6. (5) **Open rebuke,** plain, straightforward censure, even though it requires bravery. **secret love,**[c] i. e. love wh. never discloses itself by self-sacrifice or generosity and shrinks from reproving, and is willing to let a friend's faults continue rather than speak about them. (6) **wounds,** given to our feelings by pointing out our faults.[a] **deceitful,** R. V., "pro-

"Praise is sweet music, but it is never tuneable in thine own mouth; if it come from the mouth of another, it soundeth most tuneably in the ears of all that hear it. Praise is a rich treasure, but it never makes thee rich, unless another tell the sum."—Jermin.

"Flattery is a sort of bad money, to which our vanity gives currency." — La Rochefoucauld.

a Ungoverned passion. The fool being usually conceived as one having no power of self-control.

"Say nothing to any one in a fury, for that is like putting to sea in a storm. Wise men, remembering their own infirmities, bear with those of others."—Quoted by Nicholls.

b "Envy is the daughter of pride, the author of revenge and murder, the beginner of sedition, and the perpetual tormentor of virtue."—Socrates.

Ja. iii. 14, 16.

c "Love which from false consideration dissembles, and does not name to one's neighbor his faults even where it should do so."
—O. Zockler.

fuse;" an enemy is lavish of his Judas kisses to hide his perfidy and hatred.

The Wounds of a Friend (vs. 6).—I. They are of the most painful. II. They are accompanied with sympathy. III. They are followed by healing words. IV. They manifest to us our weak part of character. V. God is our chief friend;—notice how He wounds the heart by bringing sin to remembrance, but only to heal and save.

Read Thyself.—Reade not books alone, but men and amongst them chiefly thyselfe; if thou find anything questionable there, use the commentary of a severe friende, rather than the glosse of a sweete-lipt flatterer; there is more profit in a distastefull truth, then in deceitfull sweetness."—Enchiridon.

7, 8. (7) **loatheth,** Heb. "treadeth under foot." The teaching is that indulgence in any sensual pleasure is sure to bring on satiety, while self-restraint increases our capacity for enjoyment. **hungry,** etc., comp. the Eng. proverb, "Hunger is the best sauce;" and the Ger. prov., "Hunger is the best cook." (8) **bird .. nest,** a prov. against the restless love of change and travel.[b]

A Bird Wandering From her Nest.—I. How a man may wander from his place. 1. He may leave the work he is suited for. 2. He may forsake his duty. 3. He may depart from God. 4. He may renounce his human status. (1) In descending to that of an animal. (2) In degrading himself to diabolical living. II. How such a man must suffer as a bird that wanders from her nest. 1. He loses peace. 2. He is removed from congenial companionship. 3. He is not able to fulfill his mission. 4. He is exposed to danger.—Pul. Com.

Content.—

Some murmur when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue.
And some with thankful love are filled
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a dreary task,
And all good things denied.
And hearts, in poorest huts, admire
How love has, in their aid—
Love that not ever seems to tire—
Such rich provision made.—Trench.

9, 10. (9) **Ointment,** etc., things highly esteemed, pleasing, and refreshing. **the heart,** the organ of perceiving what pleases the senses. **by,** R. V., "that cometh from." **hearty** counsel, sincere, faithful, and loving.[a] (10) **Thine own friend,** one long tried and proved.[b] In the time of trouble such a one will prove better to you than relatives. **neighbour .. near,** in heart and sympathy. Not even the ties of blood are to be relied upon so firmly in times of calamity as the long-tried family friend.

Old Family Friends (vs. 10).—I. Consider some of our fathers' old friends. 1. The Sabbath; 2. The sanctuary; 3. The Saviour; 4. The Scriptures. II. Consider some reasons for being true to them. 1. Because of what they have done for those who are dear to us; 2. Because of what they promise to do for us; 3. Because of what they have already done for some of us.

"He that wrongs his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about
A silent court of justice in his breast—
Himself the judge and jury; and himself
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemned:
And that drags down his life: then comes, what comes, hereafter."

"I thank that man as my friend through whose advice I am enabled to wipe off the blemishes of my soul before the appearance of the awful Judge.''—Gregory I.

a "There cannot be a more worthy improvement of friendship than in a fervent opposition to the sins of those we love."—Bp. Hall.

b "A prov. directed against weariness of one's home, and a restless roving, without quiet domestic tastes."—O. Zockler.

"He whose discontent makes him rashly leave his country, rarely mends his condition."—Bp. Patrick.

1 Co. vii. 24; 1 Th. iv. 11.

"The road to contentment lies not in despising what we have not got. Let us ackuowledge all good, all delight, that the world holds, and be content without it. But this we can never do but by possessing the one thing,—without which no one can be content,—the Spirit of the Father."—George Macdonald.

a "Every friend is to the other a sun, and a sunflower also; he attracts and follows."—Richter.

b "Friendship, like certain wines, becomes valuable with years. The old family friend, with whom are associated the touching memories of many loved ones in the dust, his presence is more than sunshine to the soul, his voice richer than any music."—Dav. Thomas.

"A brother, if he be worthy, is the readiest and nearest to be a friend; but till he be so, he is but the twilight of the day, and but the blossom to the fairest fruit of Paradise. A brother does not always make a friend, but a friend ever makes a brother, and more."—J. Taylor.

"If aid is wanted, neighbors come ungirt, but relations stay to tuck up their robes."—Hesiod.

Friendship.—The best physic for man is man. For friendship is a kind of life to man, without which there is no comfort of a man's life. Friendship is in men a kind of step to God, and by means of love man draweth near to God, when, as from being the friend of man, he is made the friend of God. But as among the Jews there was no oil that did so rejoice the heart as that wherewith the kings were anointed; no perfume that did so delight the soul as that which the priest offered; in like manner as there is no friend so sweet as God, so there is no counsel that doth so glad the soul, so cheer the heart, as that which He giveth in His word, whereby we are made even kings and priests unto him.—Jermin.

11, 12. (11) **wise**, a word including here all virtue and goodness. The goodness of the children, when grown up, takes all reproach away from their parents.[c] **reproacheth me,** as having failed in parental duty. (12) **prudent,** etc., comp. ch. xxii. 3.

A Father's Wish (vs. 11).—I. The nature of the father's desire. That his son may be wise. This from a good father includes wisdom of the highest kind—religion. II. The reason of the father's desire. That he may boldly speak his son's praise to inquirers, that when any reproach him with too much indulgence, he may point to his son as an answer.—Hive.

Duke of Burgundy.—Louis, Duke of Burgundy, was a pattern of filial obedience. It was never necessary to threaten or punish him in order to make him do his duty. A word, or even a look, was sufficient. He was always much grieved when his mother seemed displeased with him, or spoke to him less kindly than usual. On such occasions he would often weep, and say to her, clasping his little hands, "Dear mamma, do not be angry with me; I will do what you please."—R. T. S.——Prudence.—A prudent man looks forward to the consequences of things, and particularly to the consequences of his own conduct. O, how much misery and mischief might be avoided or prevented by attending only to this single principle, for what are most of the calamities we see in the world owing to but this—that men will not look before them? To the want of this wise foresight Moses attributed all the rebellions and enormities of the Jewish people, and therefore breathed forth this ardent prayer on their behalf, "O, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end."—Mason.

13, 14. (13) **Take . . stranger,** comp. ch. xx. 16. (14) **loud voice,** the sign of intensity and extravagance.[a] The person referred to is the flatterer or sycophant.[b] **rising early,** the sign of zeal and eagerness. **counted a curse,** bec. men are sure to suspect that he has some sinister motive.

Insincerity in Friendship.—The picture is that of one who indulges in the noisy ostentation of friendship, without having the reality of it at his heart. I. Excess in praise or blame is to be guarded against. Luther shrewdly observes, "He who loudly scolds, praises; and he who excessively praises, scolds. They are not believed because they exaggerate." Language should be used with sobriety and temperance. II. Insincerity is subject to a curse. It is odious to God and to man. One of the constant moral trials of life is in the observance of the golden mean of conduct in social relations—to be agreeable without flattery, and sincere without rudeness. Here, as ever, we must walk in the bright light of our Saviour's example, the All-loving, yet the All-faithful.—Johnson.

The Flatterer.—It is an excellent description of a notorious flatterer, and a just denunciation of his due reward. First, he blesseth with a loud voice, as if he wanted breath and sides to set out the praises of his friend, and as if he would not only awaken him with the news of it but many others also with the loudness of it. Secondly, he doth it rising early, as if it were some main and principal business which he had to do, and wherein he would show himself more forward than any others. Thirdly, he doth it in the morning, as if he would bless his friend before he blessed God, or rather would make him his God by offering his sacrifice of praise unto him.—Jermin.

15, 16. (15) **dropping,** etc., comp. ch. xix. 13. **rainy day,** or more pointedly, a day of violent showers. (16) **hideth her,** i. e. the quarrelsome wife. R. V., "restrain," endeavors to keep her temper within limits. It is just as rational to undertake to govern the wind. **ointment,**[a] etc., R. V., "his right hand encountereth oil." She slips from him like oil.

c "The uprightness of the scholar will be the truest answer to all the attacks on the character or teaching of the master."—Spk. Com.

a "Clamorous and hasty professions of affection are to be distrusted. They may have the sound of benedictions in the morning, but often they are soon turned into cursing."—Wordsworth.

b "Of all wild beasts, preserve me from a flatterer."—Johnson.

"Good-nature is a disposition to please, and is compounded of kindness, forbearance, forgiveness, and self-denial."—C. Buck.

a "However he may attempt to conceal the domestic troubles which arise from the contentions of his wife, yet they proclaim themselves, as the ointment of his right hand betrays itself by its scent."—Wordsworth.

The Quarrelsome Wife.—She is compared to the continual dropping of a shower; and the attempt to restrain her is like seeking to fetter the wind or to grasp at oil. I. The monotony of ill temper. It persists in one mood, and dyes all it touches with one color, and that a dismal one. II. The corroding effect upon others' minds. Fine tempers cannot resist this perpetual wear and tear; the most buoyant spirits may be in time depressed by this dead weight. III. The inflexibility of ill temper. Alas! it is one of those things we are tempted to say cannot be mended. Nothing indeed but that Divine grace which can turn the winter of the soul into summer is able to remedy this ill. In reliance upon this, the exhortation may be given, "Purge out the old leaven!"—Johnson.

17, 18. (17) **iron,** lit. "iron to iron maketh sharp." **sharpeneth . . friend,** some think the meaning is, "one enrages, provokes the other." But the best commentators understand the maxim to say that intercourse with other men influences the manner, appearance, deportment, and character of a man, sharpens his wits, controls his conduct, and brightens his very face.—Pul. Com. **the countenance,** wh. is the revealer of the soul. (18) **keepeth,** i. e. patiently and perseveringly watcheth and tendeth. "Diligence secures its reward, even for the humble servant."

Renewal of friendship (vs. 17).—I. A friend separated from his friend grows dull; so iron becomes dull of edge when kept from sharpening process. II. As iron becomes bright and sharp by friction, so the meeting of friends tends to sharpen and polish the understanding and refresh the heart. III. There is a Friend with whom communion is better than with any earthly friend.

The Advantages of Society.—We have ancient authority for the idea that it is not good for man to be alone (Gen. ii. 18). Man is naturally a gregarious being. Though some people are more sociable than others, no one can be healthy in perpetual solitude. The isolation of the hermit engendered the wildest hallucinations of fanaticism together with the narrowest conception of the world. Prisoners of the Bastille, in solitary confinement, were reduced to a condition of semi-idiocy. Robinson Crusoe made the best of his situation, yet he could not live without the companionship of animal pets, and he was glad of the humble friendship of a poor savage. Even Wordsworth was thought by some to have deteriorated mentally in his comparative seclusion at Rydal Mount, and yet there were other men of high mental power in his neighborhood. Men's thoughts are stimulated and sharpened by conversation. Empty society of mere pleasure-seekers only dissipates a man's powers in frivolity. But the society of earnest men stimulates by sympathy, emulation, and encouragement. He is able to see how other men think and feel. They may not all have greater advantages than he possesses; but at least they are differently constituted and situated from himself. Thus he is lifted out of the narrowness of his own single vision. Such breadth gives strength when it is accompanied by an earnest love of truth and right.—Pul. Com.

19, 20. (19) **As . . face,** "As we see our own face when we look on the mirror-like surface of the water, so in every heart of man we may see our own likeness. In spite of all diversities we come upon the common human nature in wh. we all alike share."—Spk. Com. Or, "A man molds society by his own behavior. A parent will find himself reflected in his children; an instructor will find himself reflected in his scholars," etc.—Wordsworth. (20) **Hell . . full,** R. V., "Shoel and Abaddon are never satisfied." **eyes of man,** what Jno. calls the "lust of the eyes;" sensuous gratification whets its appetite by what it feeds upon; comp. Ec. i. 8.[a]

The Hearts of Men Alike (vs. 19).—I. Explain this assertion. It is taken for granted that there is a parity—1. Of age; 2. In character; 3. In condition. Taking the assertion of Solomon in this qualified sense, we proceed to—II. Confirm it. 1. This similarity will be found in all; 2. Whilst in an unenlightened state; 3. When awakened to a sense of their perishing condition; 4. When truly converted to the faith of Christ. Apply:—This subject is not one of curious speculation; but of real use, of most important use—(1) For our humiliation; (2) For our consolation; (3) For our encouragement.—Simeon.

True Friendship.—In the heart of our friend we see our own charac-

"Those that are froward and brawling will proclaim their own shame, even when their friends, in kindness to them, would cover it."—Mat. Henry.

"Iron sharpeneth iron by removing the rust wh. has been contracted from their lying apart; so intercourse between friend and friend rubs down the prejudices which they have contracted in their separate state."—Ed. Irving.

"In the collision of minds the man brings his own thoughts to light, and whets his wits against a stone that cuts not."—Bacon.

"Companionship is that which teaches mortals everything."—Euripdes, Androm.

"You may take sarza to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flower of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart but a true friend."—Ld. Bacon.

[a] Men's cupidity is insatiable as the grave.

"The heart must be made a temple to God, wherein sacrifices do ascend: but that they may be accepted it must be purged of idols, nothing left in any corner, though never so secret, to stir the jealousy of our God, who sees thro' all. Oh, happy that heart that

is, as Jacob's house, purged; in which no more idols are to be found, but the holy God dwelling there alone as in His holy temple."—Leighton.

ter reflected just as gazing into a still pool we see the reflection of our own face. It is in the frank and sympathetic intercourse of friendship that we really get to know ourselves, and to realize what is in us. We unfold to one another, we discover our similarities and mark our differences. Points which remained unobserved in our own hearts are immediately detected and understood when we see them also in our friends; faculties which remained unused are brought into play to supplement the discovered defects in our friend's nature. We hardly guess what a fund of happy humor is in us until we are encouraged to display it by observing how its flashes light up the face we love. Our capacities of sympathy and tenderness remain undeveloped until we wish eagerly to comfort our friend in a sudden sorrow. In a true friendship we find that we are living a life which is doubled in all its faculties of enjoyment and of service; we quite shudder to think what cold, apathetic, undeveloped creatures we should have been but for that genial touch which unfolded us, and warmed our hearts into genuine feeling while it brought our minds into active play.—Exp. B.

21, 22. (21) **so .. praise**, R. V., "So is a man tried by his praise;" i. e. "let him purify it from all the alloy of flattery and baseness with wh. it is too probably mixed up." As the crucible brings all impurities to the surface, so public opinion drags forth all that is bad in a man, and he who stands this test is generally esteemed.[a]—Pul. Com. (22) **bray .. mortar,** or pound him with a pestle in a mortar:[b] a most thorough and efficient operation for wheat, and such things. It is a figure of the severest afflictions and testings: and even such are useless to the obstinate fool.[c]

The Jewish and the Christian Thought of Man:—I. the Jewish conception of man. It involved—1. A similarity of nature to that of God Himself. 2. Likeness of character to the Divine. 3. A share in Divine authority. 4. Divine interest and attention. 5. Privilege of approach to the Most High. 6. A sense of man's degradation and misery through sin. The same heart that swelled with loftiest hope and noblest aspiration, as it felt that God was its Father and its King, was the heart that filled with tremor and shame, as it saw the heinousness of its guilt and the depth of its declension. II. the distinctively Christian view. What has Christ added to our thought about ourselves? 1. He has led us to take the highest view of our spiritual nature. A treasure of absolutely inestimable worth. 2. He has drawn aside the veil from the future, and made that long life and that large world our own. 3. He has taught us to think of our selves as sinners who may have a full restoration to their high estate.—W. Clarkson.

23, 24. (23) **diligent..flocks,** the farmer's eye needs to be on everything every day. (24) **riches..ever,** they can only be preserved by constant care and wise tending. **the crown,** not even royal authority is secure enough to endure forever, how much less the agriculturist's wealth.

Saving in Order to Give.—Two persons who were employed in collecting money for some public charity, knocked at the door of a certain gentleman, intending to solicit his donation. While waiting there, they overheard the master of the house severely reproving his servant for the waste of a small piece of candle. Judging from this appearance of extreme parsimony, that he was a covetous man, one of them proposed that they should lose no more time in waiting there, but go on to another house; the other person, however, thought it best to stay. At length they were introduced, when the gentleman, having read their case, immediately presented them with five guineas. The collectors, so agreeably disappointed, could not conceal their surprise; which being observed by the donor, he desired to know why they expressed so much wonder at the gift. "The reason, sir," said one of them, "is this; we happened to hear you severely blaming your servant for losing an inch of candle, and expected nothing from a person who, we feared, was so parsimonious." "Gentlemen," replied he, "it is true I am very exact in the economy of my affairs; I cannot endure the waste of anything, however small its value; and I do this, that I may save out of a moderate income something to give to God and religion."—Whitecross.

25—27. (25) **hay appeareth,** R. V., "is carried"; the providential arrangement for the seasons is here presented as an incentive to diligence.[a] Prob. the idea is, "the hay disappeareth, and then the tender grass com-

[a] "Or render, 'But man according to his glorying,' i. e. one is judged according to the standard of that of wh. he makes his boast."—O. Zockler.

[b] "Every family has one of these large stone mortars, and you may hear the sound of the braying at all hours as you walk in the streets of the city." — Thomson.

[c] "An obstinate man does not hold opinions, they hold him." —Pope.

"Economy is the parent of integrity, of liberty, and of ease, and the beauteous sister of temperance, of cheerfulness, and health; and profuseness is a cruel and crafty demon, that gradually involves her followers in dependence and debts; that is, fetters them with 'irons that enter their souls.' "—Hawksworth.

"I had rather see my courtiers laugh at my avarice, than my people weep at my extravagance." — Louis XII.

[a] "God's bounty is a great encouragement to our industry."—Lawson.

"It is no small commendation to manage a little well. He is a

eth." **herbs,** etc. "the fodder fr. off the hills is cut and stored." This vs. is the protasis, the following vss. the apodasis. (26) **the lambs** wh. give their wool. **goats,** etc. the sale of the bucks will bring enough to buy land. (27) **goat's milk,** more plentiful of old than milk of cows. The picture of the abundance of material blessings wh. reward the diligent agriculturist.

The Man Diligent in his Business.—He looks after the outgoings of his farm, well aware that there is in all things constant waste, that even the royal crown is a perishable thing. All knowledge is useful, and prudence applies through the whole scale of our being. Let the man, "if he have hands, handle; if eyes, measure and discriminate; let him accept and hive every fact of chemistry, natural history, and economy; the more he has, the less he is willing to spare any one. Time is always bringing the occasions that disclose their value. Some wisdom comes out of every natural and innocent action." To preserve and hold together are as necessary as to gain in every kind of riches.—Pulp. Com.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

1. **flee .. pursueth,** "like one that absconds for debt, who thinks every one he meets a bailiff." "Conscience makes cowards of us all." **righteous,** right-hearted, who have a "conscience void of offence." **bold as a lion,**[b] the lion is generally regarded as the type of boldness. The lion is bold bec. confident of his strength, the righteous man is bold bec. he has confidence in Jehovah the source of his strength.. "A man whose conscience is with him can dare the universe."

Moral Cowardice (vs. 1).—This is a fact that may be accounted for on moral grounds. Conscience is the tormentor of the bad man. I. Then the finest faculties of men may become terrible scourges. II. Then no dependence is to be placed on the wicked in the time of danger. III. Then the wicked are always making fools of themselves. IV. Then the wicked cannot bear the judgment of man; how can they endure the vengeance of God? V. Then man may come to be regarded as the enemy of man.—Parker.

Moral Cowardice.—"When I used to go," said a man who formerly lived in sin, "to all kinds of fairs, and revels, and horse-races, I was never happy. As I was coming home through the woods at night, the rustling of a leaf would frighten me; terrified by I knew not what, fleeing when no man pursued, I galloped home as fast as my horse could carry me. Now, if I go to visit a poor dying man, or if I have been enjoying the word of life, I come home in a calm and peaceful frame of mind. I find that the Lord is present with me; and as I walk my horse gently along, I look up and see the bright stars above my head, and am happy in the assurance that the God who made them all is mine in Christ. O, what a mercy!—the loneliness of the wood, the rustling of the leaves, the stillness of night, no longer alarm me. I am, I trust, reconciled to my God, and at peace with Him and my own conscience, through the death of His Son. He that fills the heavens with His glory, and the earth with His mercies, condescends to dwell in, and to comfort, my poor sinful heart."—Whitecross.

2, 3. (2) **For,** i. e. on account of. **transgression,** against the laws of God and the statutes of the State, either in sinning or committing crimes. **many are the princes,** there is constant change of officials and dynasty, and so the restlessness and insecurity of the nation.[a] **a man,** better in the plural, men, with reference to the wise effort of the people to preserve and to improve the existing order.[b] **prolonged,** or maintained. Establish order and government by wisely adjusting it, and making it every way efficient and satisfactory. Stuart sees in this last clause a contrast bet. many usurping and unstable dynasties and one righteous ruler: "a sole and intelligent ruler will prolong the life and safety" of his subjects. (3) **poor,** etc., ref. to some indigent petty ruler or to some tyrant who has risen to his position from low estate by extortion and robbery. **no food,** bec. it washes out of the ground the seed-corn.

A Poor Man's Worst Oppressor (vs. 3).—Another poor man. I.

good wagoner that can turn in a little room. To live well in abundance is the praise of the estate, not of the person. I will study more how to give a good account of my little, than how to make it more." — Bishop Hall.

Ge. iii. 9, 10.

"Suspicion always haunts the guilty mind; the thief doth fear each bush an officer."
—Shakespeare.

[b] Comp. Ps. xxvii. 1-3; Ac. iv. 13; Ro. i. 15, 16.

"Conscience within a man is one extremity of an electric wire, whose other extremity is fastened to the judgment-seat."
—Arnot.

"Whose anger should he fear who knows that God is propitious to him? that supreme King, the light of whose countenance is life, and who, by one smile, disperses the darkest cloud, and calms the most turbulent tempest."—Abp. Leighton.

[a] "Illus. forcibly in the later history of Rome; or in the troublous times of France. See also the rapid succession of sovereigns in the idolatrous kingdom of Israel.

[b] There are few national governments so bad that they may not better be improved than removed.

"When any of the four pillars of government are mainly shaken or weakened (which are religion, justice, counsel, and treasure), men had need to pray for fair weather."—Bacon.

Who hastens to be rich. II. Who, being in office, tyrannizes over fellow-servants. III. Who betrays his friends, or turns king's evidence. IV. Such conduct is unnatural. Who may be expected with the poor so much as others of the poor who know, by their own experience, the wants and sorrows of poverty? V. Though unnatural, it has often been noted: negro slave-drivers the most unmerciful; see also Ex. ii. 13. Ziba sought the injury of Mephibosheth—Judas betrayed Jesus.

A Sweeping Rain.—This illustrative comparison is here most impressive. It is founded upon a phenomenon which I have frequently seen, and sometimes felt. A small black cloud traverses the sky in the latter part of summer or beginning of autumn, and pours down a flood of rain that sweeps all before it. The Arabs call it sale; we, a water-spout, or the bursting of a cloud. In the neighborhood of Hermon I have witnessed it repeatedly, and was caught in one last year, which in five minutes flooded the whole mountain side, washed away the fallen olives—the food of the poor—overthrew stone walls, etc. Every summer threshing-floor along the line of its march was swept bare of all precious food. . . . And such is the oppression of a poor man that oppresseth the poor. These landlords, and sheiks, and emirs are generally poor, hungry, greedy, remorseless, and they come in successive swarms, each more ravenous than his predecessor. On a gigantic scale, every hungry pasha from the capital is such a sale, sweeping over the distant provinces of the empire. Vast regions, formerly covered with golden harvests in their season, and swarming with people full of food and gladness, are now reduced to frightful deserts by their rapacity.—Thomson's "The Land and the Book."

4, 5. (4) **praise the wicked,** i. e. when he seems to be successful. They who disregard the law do not estimate actions by their rightness, or their motives. Special reference here seems to be to the successful but unrighteous ruler. **contend with them,** refusing to praise successful villainy.[c] (5) **understand not judgment,** i.e. their faculty for distinguishing between good and evil is darkened. "We lose ethical discernment in proportion as we do evil."

True Wisdom.—Not only are the good to be blessed with what are known as distinctively spiritual blessings; they are to receive mental illumination, they are to be intellectually strengthened, their natural sagacity is to be enlarged and quickened into a truer and keener penetration—"The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." All knowledge does not come through the medium of formal learning, as, for example, by attending school, by reading books, and by passing critical examinations; there is a spiritual genius, a high, keen, responsive sympathy, which overpasses all the mere processes of intellectual acquirement and realizes its results without toilsome labor. We have a right to expect divine inspiration, if we be in Christ, and if our souls be hidden in the Eternal God as in an inviolable refuge. If we live and move and have our being in God, we have a right to expect that every idea will bear the divine stamp, and that every aspiration will be but a return of the divine breathing.—Parker.

6, 7. (6) **Better,** etc., comp. ch. xix. 1. **perverse,** etc., lit. "than one who is crooked by double dealing,"[a] Jas. i. 8. **be rich,** since riches can never make up for the lack of integrity. (7) **the law,** here prob. with special ref. to wise self-restraints and moral purity, as indicated in next clause. **companion,** etc., lit. "one who has fellowship with gluttons;"[b] the profligate or waster (ch. xxiii. 21). **shameth,** ch. xxv. 8.

The Advantage of Uprightness (vs. 6).—It makes the poor who has it better than the rich who lacks it. I. In himself—heart, conscience, hopes. II. In the respect of other men—contemporaries, posterity. III. In the judgment of God. IV. In the great hereafter.

8, 9. (8) **usury . . gain,** or "usurious increase," the term including all overreaching and fraudulent efforts to get gain.[c] Excessive interest. **for him . . poor,** bec. in the long run God's providence will surely direct the proper use of wealth,[d] ch. xiii. 22. (9) **turneth . . ear,** wilfully resisting instruction and refusing obedience.[e] Here especially defying social and moral rules. **his prayer,** that offered as religious formality, or that pressed out from him in the time of his distress.

Thomson cites an Arabic proverb, "May Allah multiply your sheikhs!" as embodying in its intense malediction a constant Oriental experience of fearful calamity.

"God's law is certainly a restraint, but it is such a restraint as the irons which prevent children from getting into the fire."
—Newton.

c "There have been men in all ages who have had the manly honesty to stand up against the hollowness and the corruptions of their age."—Dav. Thomas.

"It is fearful to sin; more fearful to delight in it; yet more to defend it."
—Bp. Hall.

a "One who unskilfully and waywardly passes from one way to another, one who, with divided heart, stands midway between the right path and the by-path of immorality."
—O. Zockler.

b The carousing, self-indulgent, extravagant spendthrift.

c "Orientals, ancient and modern, have a peculiarly deep and painful experience of the enormities of usury."
—O. Zockler.

d "The law of God's government is that ill-gotten gains do not prosper; that after a time they pass into hands that know how to use them better."
—Spk. Com.

e Pr. xv. 8, xxi. 27, Jno. iv. 24.

10. **causeth . . way,**[a] i.e. acteth the tempter, or solicitor. Draws the righteous into the enticements of sensuality and moral evil. **own pit,** his attempts to destroy the righteous will lead him further and deeper into sin, with all its consequences. **in possession,** i.e. R. V., "Shall inherit good;" be preserved through the temptation. God will defend His own who put their trust in Him.

Good Things in Possession (vs. 10).—I. Who is the possessor? The righteous, that is—1. The man who tries to do right; 2. And trusts for Divine acceptance in the righteousness of Christ. II. What are the good things in possession? 1. A conscience at peace; 2. Approval of men; 3. Favor of God; 4. A good hope through grace.

11, 12. (11) **wise . . conceit,** comp. ch. xxvi. 16. The acquisition of riches usually nourishes a peculiar self-confidence. Men are apt to think the skill to get money a proof of extraordinary wisdom.[b] **searcheth him,** tests whether his wisdom is true or counterfeit.[c] (12) **do rejoice,** the idea rather is, when they are set in positions of authority and influence; when righteousness (not riches) "triumphs," R. V. **great glory,** i.e. there is cause for public glorifying and rejoicing. Men have no occasion to hide their joy. **wicked rise,** into power. **a man is hidden,**[d] R. V., "men hide themselves;" in order to escape danger to life and property.

Advantages of the Rich and Poor Compared (vs. 11).—I. The poor have really the advantage of the rich in reference to Divine knowledge. 1. They had the advantage in the days of old; 2. They have also the advantage at this day. II. Account for this fact. 1. The rich are more blinded by prejudice; 2. More enslaved by custom; 3. More deluded by conceit. Learn:—(1) Envy not those who are rich in this world; (2) Seek to be rich towards God.—C. Simeon.

Poverty and Riches have their Compensation.—Confidence in riches begins in illusory self-confidence; and there is much to abet and foster it in the opinion of the multitude; for, as the old saying runs, "Rich men have no faults." But the poor man, endued with sense and with religion, sees through these false estimates; knows that the rich feel misfortunes which pass over his own head; that they pay a tax of constant care and anxiety; and that it is ever better to fare hard with good men than to feast with bad.—Pulp. Com.

13, 14. (13) **covereth,** tries to hide fr. himself, fr. others, and fr. God.[a] Sin may be covered up by denying it, extenuating it, and forgetting it. **not prosper,** hushing up sin does but increase a man's misery.[b] **confesseth,** 1 Jno. i. 8—10. **forsaketh,** wh. gives the proof of the sincerity of the repentance. The truly penitent strive not to fall into sin after confession.[c] (14) **feareth,** not merely dreads, but cherishes a reverent fear of grieving God.[d] True fear is loving awe, sensitiveness to evil. **hardeneth,** etc., resisting the softenings and humblings of the near thought of God. **mischief,** better, "calamity."

Sin Covered and Sin Confessed (vs. 13).—I. The guilt of those who cover their sins, and the misery that awaits them. Men hide their sins—from God, from fellow-men, from themselves. II. The prudence of those who confess and forsake sin, and the happiness awarded. Two ways are indicated by which we may avoid the misery of those who cover their sins—confession and forsaking. Confession is necessary; God demands it. It must be universal, contrite. Sin must be forsaken. This is the touchstone of sincerity.—H. Chatelain.

Sins Forsaken as the Result of Kindness.—A servant of the Rev. Rowland Hill suddenly died, and his master preached his funeral sermon to a numerous audience, in the course of which he mentioned the following anecdote: Many persons present were acquainted with the deceased, and have had it in their power to observe his character and conduct. They can bear witness that I speak the truth when I assert that he has proved himself a perfectly sober, honest, industrious, and religious man, faithfully performing, as far as lay in his power, the duties of his station in life, and serving God with constancy and zeal; yet this very man, this virtuous and pious man, was once a robber on the highway. More than thirty years ago he stopped me on the high-road and demanded my money. Not at all intimidated, I argued with him. I asked him what could induce him to pursue so iniquitous a course of life.

[a] Its ruinous consequences to which the tempter is finally brought.

"A good intention will no more make a truth, than a fair mark will make a good shoot."
—Spurstowe.

[b] "Wealth has a tendency to make the weak-minded and self-indulgent opinionated and oracular. They imagine their mental tastes more refined, their thoughts more elevated, their intelligence more clear and comprehensive than those of other men. Hence they speak with an air of authority." — Dav. Thomas.

[c] "Wealth blunts, poverty sharpens, the critical power of intellect."
—Spk. Com.

[d] "When the ungodly reign, it is the ruin of men." — Vulgate Version.

[a] Ps. xxxii. 3—5.

[b] "While the patient conceals his distemper he cannot expect a cure."
—Mat. Henry.

"To cover the sin which lies on the conscience with a layer of earnest efforts to do right will not take the sin away; the underlying sin will assimilate all the dead works that may be heaped upon it, and the result will be a greater mass of sin."
—Arnot.

[c] O Saviour! our breasts are too oft shut upon Thee; Thy bosom is ever open to us."—Bp. Hall.

[d] 2 Co. v. 11; Phi. ii. 12.

"I have been a coachman, sir," said he, "but am now out of place, and not being able to get a character, can get no employment, and am therefore obliged to resort to this means of gaining a subsistence." I desired him to call upon me; he promised he would, and kept his word. I talked further with him, and offered to take him into my service. He consented, and ever since that period he has served me faithfully, and not me only, but he has faithfully served God. And instead of having finished his life in a public ignominious manner, with a depraved and hardened mind, as he probably soon would have done, he has died in peace, rejoicing in hope, and prepared, we trust, for the society of just men made perfect.

15, 16. (15) **roaring lion,** who frightens the beasts, and so prepares them to become his easy prey. **ranging bear,** some prefer ravening, in allusion to the "bloodthirstiness" of this beast; as these beasts crush and devour their prey, so the tyrant consumes his people.[a] (16) **wanteth understanding,** a king who is weak is practically as mischievous as one who is wicked.[b] **covetousness,** regarded here as the real root of kingly oppressions.

A Wicked Ruler (vs. 15).—I. His character is delineated by a graphic comparison. 1. Roaring lion—hungry, terrible; 2. Ranging bear—prowling about stealthily in search of prey. II. His victims: the poor, timid, defenceless. III. May be illustrated at this day by the rulers of barbarous countries—Turkey, Burmah, etc., where the poor are helplessly oppressed. IV. Rejoice in that King under whose rule the poor, oppressed, orphan, widow, may trust.

The King.—Where absolute monarchy is not Christship it becomes, as so many familiar passages in the Old Testament show, a tyranny and an oppression, a cause of national corruption and decay. Now this leads us, in the second place, to notice how the actual failure and consequent mischief of the kingship are reflected in the proverbs, and especially those later proverbs which date from the decline and fall of the monarchy. We have only to glance over the books of Samuel and Kings to see what kind of men the occupants of the throne were; few of them show any marked ability, most of them by their folly and stupidity lead their people with hurried strides towards the threatened catastrophe. So far from acting as vicegerents of the Lord, it is their special characteristic that they are the authors of the prevailing religious apostasy. Even the more favorable exceptions, the kings who in the main did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, had not spiritual energy enough to purify the worship and restore the allegiance of their people to the Lord.—Exp. B.

17, 18. (17) **violence,** etc., taketh the life; committeth murder.[a] The idea is that one who keeps the guilt of blood on his conscience is simply hurrying on his own destruction. **flee,** in vain fr. remorse, seeking some refuge. **pit,** sepulchre. **stay him,** or try to save him.[b] (18) **uprightly,** note the fig. in this word. His course of life is straight, without a bend in it. **saved,** better, safe, R. V., "delivered." **perverse .. ways,** better, "He that walks perversely in two ways, will fall in one of the two."—Wordsworth. Comp. vs. 6. The evil of vacillation is here reproved.[c]

The Murderer's Doom (vs. 17).—I. His crime: murder by whatever means. II. His course: having been guilty of so great a crime, he hurries on with hard heart to destruction. Often his anxious efforts to conceal his crime lead to its detection. III. His isolation: he has no sympathy, no help; all friends even look upon him with horror.

The Murderer.—Even the heathen judged this awful transgressor to be under the Divine vengeance. (Acts xxviii. 4.) The death therefore of the murderer is an imperative obligation. It is miscalled philanthropy that protests against all capital punishments. Shall man pretend to be more merciful than God? Pity is misplaced here. The murderer therefore of his brother is his own murderer.—Bridges.

19, 20. (19) **tilleth,** etc., see ch. xii. 11. **poverty enough,** or is surfeited with poverty. Contrast with "plenty of bread." (20) **faithful,**[d] one who must do right though he keeps poor. **haste to be rich,**[e] so does not stop to consider the means he uses. **innocent,** R. V., "unpunished."

"A Faithful Man."—I. His character. Nothing can be more grand than fidelity. When found in a man it is an image of the eternal con-

He that lives without fear shall die without hope.

"A child of God will confess sin in particular; an unsound Christian will confess sin by wholesale." — Watson.

[a] Ps. vii. 2, xvii. 12.

[b] "Let not the world see fear and sad mistrust govern the motion of a kingly eye." — Shakespeare.

"The itch of getting ends in the sore of keeping"

"They that stand high have many blasts to shake them;
And if they fall, they dash themselves to pieces."
—Shakespeare.

[a] Ge. ix. 6; Ex. xxi. 14.

A man laden with the blood of a soul.

[b] "By the conviction and execution of a murderer humanity is not extinguished, but enlarged; it is individual compassion overcome by a regard to the general good."—Fuller.

[c] "As vacillation rises out of want of the one guiding principle of right, it is contrasted with the straightforwardness of the man that 'walketh uprightly.'"
—Spk. Com.

[d] Pr. xx. 6; 2 Ki. xii. 15, xxii. 7.

[e] "Seek not proud riches, but such as thou mayest get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly."
—Lord Bacon.

"No man was ever kept out of heaven for his confessed badness; many are for their supposed goodness." — Trapp.

stancy of God; it is like that Divine righteousness which the psalmist compared to the "everlasting hills"—so firm, so enduring, so changeless. It would be well if this grand Old Testament grace were more prized and cultivated in the Christian Church. Let us consider it in some of its manifold aspects. What is the character of the faithful man? 1. He is true to himself; 2. He is true to his God; 3. He is true to his friend; 4. He is true to his word; 5. He is true when unobserved; 6. He is true in face of danger. II. His fruitfulness: 1. He is a recipient of abundant blessings; 2. He is a source of abundant blessings.—Pul. Com.

21, 22. (21) **for . . bread,**[a] i.e. for the smallest inducement. **that man,** better, "a man." (22) **evil eye,** that envies the gains and prosperities of others. **the covetous man,** R. V., "He that hath an evil eye hasteth after riches." **considereth . . him,** "He does not see that that very temper of grudging, carking care is leading him to poverty."

Haste to be Rich.—A Wyoming stock-raiser, dissatisfied with his surroundings and in haste to be rich, sold his land and started for the Klondike. A few months later a French mineralogist discovered near the despised ranch a mine of cobalt, a rare and valuable metal. The whole district promises to become a new centre of wealth. It was upon land sold to enable the former owner to start for the gold-mines of California, that the great oil-wells of Pennsylvania were afterward found; and both these incidents accentuate the fact that we are continually within reach of important discoveries and great opportunities, missing them by a hair's breadth of impatience, failure to observe or lack of preparation.

23, 24. (23) **rebuketh,** pointing out his fault. He may be disliked at first, but by-and-by he will be recognized as the truest friend.[b] **flattereth,** etc., and glosses over faults in order to keep in favor. (24) **robbeth . . mother,** comp. Mat. xv. 5, 6, and Pr. xix. 26.[c] **no transgression,** he salves his conscience by the plea that all would be his ere long in the course of nature. **companion,** etc., stands on the same footing. For "what wickedness will he scruple to commit who will rob his own parents?"[d]

Tact in Reproving.—A general who was in early life much addicted to profane oaths, dates his reformation from a memorable check he received from a Scottish clergyman. When he was a lieutenant, and stationed at Newcastle, he got involved in a brawl with some of the lowest class in the public street, and the altercation was carried on by both parties with abundance of impious language. The clergyman, passing by, was shocked with the profanity, and stepping into the crowd with his cane uplifted, thus addressed one of the leaders of the rabble:—"Oh, John, John! what is this I hear? You, only a poor collier boy, and swearing like any lord in all the land. Oh, John! have you no fear of what will become of you? It may do very well for this gallant gentleman (pointing to the lieutenant) to bang and swear as he pleases; but you—but you, John! it is not for you, or the like of you, to take in vain the name of Him in whom ye live and have your being." Then turning to the lieutenant, he continued, "Ye'll excuse the poor man, sir, for swearing; he is an ignorant body, and kens no better." The young officer slunk away in confusion, unable to make a reply.—Whitecross.

25, 26. (25) **proud,**[a] R. V., "greedy spirit," covetous and insatiable. **made fat,** or prospered and blessed,[b] bec. of his industry and dependence upon Jehovah. (26) **own heart,** here, his mere impulses, in contrast with the inspiration, counsel and precepts of God. **wisely,** i. e. carefully, considerately; but with reference to previous verse, looking for grace from God.

Self-confidence Reproved (vs. 26).—I. What is the conduct here reprobated? Such a man—1. Relies on his own wisdom and understanding; 2. On his own purposes and resolutions. II. The folly of it. 1. It robs us of the benefit we might derive from trusting in God; 2. It ensures beyond all doubt our ultimate disappointment; 3. It will keep us from discovering our error till it is past a remedy. See, then, from hence —(1) How desirable itself is knowledge; (2) How necessary is the knowledge of Christ.—C. Simeon.

Pride.—The proud man can never be contented. When he rises it

What is ill-gotten is commonly ill-spent.

[a] "The concrete designation of a trifle, a very slight value or advantage of any sort."
—O. Zockler.

"Those that are partial must be paltry. Those that have once broken through the bonds of equity, when they have debauched their consciences, will, at length, be so sordid that for a piece of bread they will give judgment against their consciences."
—Mat. Henry.

[b] "He that cries out against his surgeon for hurting him when he is searching his wound, will yet pay him well, and thank him too, when he has cured it."
—Mat. Henry.

[c] "Such, though heirs, are virtually thieves, to be ranked with highwaymen."
—Fausset.

[d] "The aggravation of sin is proportioned to the obligation of duty. Ingratitude is added to injustice."
—Bridges.

[a] "Or puffed-up soul, self-confident, and hence overbearing and litigious."
—Fausset.

[b] "Though the mariner sees not the polestar, yet the needle of the compass, which points to it, tells him which way he sails. Thus the heart that is touched with the loadstone of Div. love, trembling with godly fear, and yet still looking to-

wards God by fixed believing, interprets the fear by the love in the fear, and tells the soul that its course is heavenward, towards the haven of eternal rest." — Abp. Leighton.

"In folly we advance to perdition, in aiming at our weal, in wisdom, renouncing self, we enter blessedness."

—Johnson.

[a] De. xv. 7.

[b] Is. i. 15.

[c] "Good men retire from public business into obscurity when the dregs of the nation rise up to the summit of public affairs and float as scum upon the surface." — Wordsworth.

"As the deepest hate may spring from the most violent love, so the greatest ingratitude may arise from the largest benefits. It is said that Cicero was slain by one whom his oratory had defended when he was accused of his father's murder." — J. Beaumont.

"Formerly it was the fashion to preach the natural; now it is the ideal. People too often forget that these things are profoundly compatible; that in a beautiful wor' of imagination the natural should be ideal, and the ideal natural."—A. W. VonSchlegel.

[d] Ex. xxxii. 9; 2 Ch. xxxvi. 16; Ne. ix. 29; Is. xlviii. 8; Je. xvii. 23; Ac. vii. 51.

"Sins repeated and reiterated are much greater than sins once committed. . . As in numbers, one in the is only to some pedestal from which he can see further wealth yet to be coveted, and further territory yet to be unrighteously claimed. When we trust in our own hearts we lived in wicked isolation. We are not here in the presence of that self-dependence which comes as the result of a large reading of history and a large comparison of facts; we are not in the presence of real self-dependence, but in the presence and under the dominion of false pride. We are called upon to walk in wisdom, and to remember that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Those who put their trust in God will not find in themselves an answer to the enigmas and mysteries of life, but will continually turn to heaven that the key may be given to them wherewith to unlock the stubborn gate.—Parker.——Hope for the Foolish.—A noble Roman in the time of the Punic Wars received an honorable recognition from the Senate because he had not in the darkest times despaired of the Republic. That is the kind of debt that we owe to the Saviour. He has not despaired of any human being; He will not let us despair. It is His peculiar power, tried and proved again and again, to turn the fool into the wise man.—Exp. B.

27, 28. (*27*) **not lack,** the needful for himself.[a] **hideth,** etc.,[b] with the intention of disregarding the wants and cries of the poor. **curse,** fr. the neglected ones, wh. the Almighty ratifies and executes. (*28*) **wicked rise,** comp. vs. 12.[c] **increase,** in numbers, wealth and influence.

The Generous Man (vs. *27*).—Something is here said by implication of—I. His hand. He giveth. II. His eye. The cause he knows not; he searches out. Many when aware of the approach of the poor look another way. III. His heart. Sympathizing, benevolent, tender. IV. His mind. He works and saves, that he may give. V. His recompense. God takes care that He shall have somewhat to give. Learn:—1. Let the rich remember their duty to the poor; 2. Let the poor rejoice that God takes care of their rich helpers.

The Life that Breeds Perpetual Benediction.—The kindly and generous heart prompts the generous hand; gathers more than it sows; is not suffered to want any good thing. It stands out in bright colors and warning aspect against the dark background of the selfish, self-concentrated, hard-hearted life. Let us cultivate the open eye which drinks in the knowledge of all that concerns our fellows, and the open hand in harmony with it.—Johnson.——Rev. Matthew Henry.—It is related of the excellent commentator, Matthew Henry, that he enforced upon himself and others sentiments calculated to promote a charitable disposition. "We lose," said he, "what we save. Withholding that which is meet tends to spiritual poverty—the worst of all husbandry: it is like grudging seed to the ground." As occasion served, he plainly pointed out the great evil of covetousness. Sometimes he urged upon all around him their exposure to that sin, and advised them to suspect themselves guilty of it. "We are born," said he, "with the world in our hearts." After lending seven guineas to obtain a discharge of the son of a poor friend, who had enlisted in the army, he observed that many reasons offered themselves why he should have abandoned him; but, in the spirit of genuine Christianity, he added, "The mercy of God to me, a provoking, backsliding sinner, answered them all. God doth not cut them off, though, by their iniquity, they have sold themselves."—R. T. S.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

1. hardeneth his neck,[d] in a stiff-necked way persists in carrying through his own will. Allusion is made to the intractable, stubborn ox. He will not bend to the yoke, so he must be killed. **without remedy,** for who can help a man who thus refuses to be helped? Lit. "shall be destroyed, and no healing."

The Conduct and Punishment of Sinners (vs. 1).—I. Here is the conduct of an incorrigible sinner described. 1. He is often reproved; 2. He hardeneth his neck. II. The punishment of incorrigible sinners threatened. 1. He shall suddenly be destroyed; 2. He shall be destroyed without remedy. Apply:—(1) The season of God's long-suffering is limited; (2) Those who defer repentance deceive their own souls; (3) The

reproofs of God should be regarded as expressions of His mercy; (4) Seasonable subjection to God's authority will be attended with certain salvation.—Alpha in 100 Sks.

Man's Self-will.—The godless man is content to live upon a level with the lowest level of brute life—to satisfy his bodily appetites, to eat and drink, and die and leave undeveloped all his capacities for spiritual growth and blessedness. But God would make him a co-worker with Himself in lifting him to a higher level and in making him a more useful and blessed creature. But men often resist this benevolent intention, and resent this check upon their self-will.—Pul. Com.

2, 3. (2) **righteous,** etc., comp. ch. xxviii. 12. (3) **wisdom,** here, the counsels of moral purity. **keepeth company, or,** more forcibly, who feedeth. **harlots,** who "play sad havoc with families; they draw sons to ruin, and parents to an untimely grave."[a] **spendeth,** R. V., "wasteth."

The Tradesman and the Prince.—A tradesman was sent for by the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., on the Sabbath day, as his Royal Highness was preparing to leave town early the next morning. That tradesman was one who feared God more than man; and at the risk of offending the prince and losing his valuable patronage, he declined to attend on God's day, but took care to be at the palace at a very early hour on Monday morning. "I sent for you yesterday," said the prince; "why did you not come?" "Your Royal Highness, the King wanted me." "The king! I thought my father never sent for tradesmen on Sundays." "Please your Royal Highness, I do not mean the king your father, but the King of kings." A word fitly spoken is indeed, as Solomon says, like apples of gold in pictures of silver.—Tract Mag.——The Religion of Politics.—Religion is concerned with politics. Too often the two spheres are kept disastrously distinct. On the one hand, it is pretended that the sacred character of religion would be desecrated by its being dragged into the political arena; and on the other hand, the claim of religion to have a voice in public affairs is set down to the ambition and tyranny of priestcraft. Now, it is not to be supposed that purely religious subjects should be obtruded on the uncongenial platform of a public meeting. Very possibly they would be resented; we are not to cast pearls before swine. Moreover, there is a time for everything. But religion claims to influence politics, to be a leading factor in public movements, to hold the standard by which all political actions are to be judged. It must do this if it is to carry out its mission of leavening the whole lump. It should leave no region of life untouched; commerce, literature, art, science, recreation, society and politics must all come under its influence. For religion to withdraw from politics is to hand that important region of life over to the devil. We find that the Bible has much to say on the conduct of public affairs.—Pul. Com.

4. **by judgment,** or the just administration of justice. By righteous decisions, as opposed to those which are given on the persuasions of bribes.[a] **receiveth gifts,** gladly accepts bribes for partiality. **overthroweth it,** bec. nothing so unsettles a nation as corruption in the seat of judgment.

Peter the Great.—In the year 1718 Peter the Great assembled a grand council, in order to state to them a new project of internal government. When they were met, he first reminded them of the duty of all monarchs to protect their people from foreign assaults; to preserve peace, order, and quiet, at home; and to execute justice alike against the prince, the peer, and the peasant; he added, that he then found it necessary to turn his attention towards repressing and correcting the abuses of power and authority of some of his governors of the provinces, and of the lieutenants under them, who he found had been guilty of oppression and peculation, and had enriched themselves at the expense of his people—a people, whose contributions and sacrifices had, for eighteen years, merited every attention, and now called for him to defend them against all such bloodsuckers. The emperor then announced that he had established a tribunal of justice, for the inquiry into, and the redressing of, all abuses; and that he had appointed as president the most honest of his counsellors. Among those brought before this new council or chamber of justice, were Princes Menzikof and Dolgoroucki, the grand admiral, and other minor offenders. The court, in its inquiries, spared

first place stands but for a single one, in the second place ten, in the third place for a hundred, so here, each repetition is a great aggravation." — Swinnock.

[a] "She weaves the winding sheets of souls, and lays them in the urn of everlasting death."—Pollok.

"Let every man ask himself with which of his faculties he can and will somehow influence his age." — Goethe.

"If you would be well with a great mind, leave him with a favorable impression of you; if with a little mind, leave him with a favorable opinion of himself." — Coleridge.

"Religion, unfeignedly lived, perfecteth man's abilities unto all kinds of virtuous services in the commonwealth." —Hooker.

"Beware of little expenses; a small leak will sink a great ship." — Franklin.

[a] "A king must make religion the rule of government, and not to balance the scale; for he that casteth in religion only to make the scales even, his own weight is contained in those characters.

"That was not an inconsiderable moment, when wild armed men first raised their strongest aloft on the buckler-throne and, with clanging armor and hearts said solemnly Be thou our acknowledged strongest (well named King, Kon-ning, Canning, or Man

that was Able), what a symbol shone now for them — significant with the destinies of the world! A symbol of true guidance in return for loving obedience; properly, if he knew it, the prime want of man. A symbol which might be called sacred, for is there not, in reverence for what is better than we, an indestructible sacredness?"

—Carlyle.

b "When we are most commended for our discernment we generally act most foolishly, for those very praises cloud the understanding and pervert the judgment." — Scott.

c "A flatterer spreads a net for a friend's feet, but a sinner lays a snare for himself." — Wordsworth.

"In the steps of a bad man lie snares, but the righteous runs and rejoices."— Delitzsch.

"Many times God is present in the still voice, and private retirements of a quiet religion, and the constant spiritualities of an ordinary life; when the loud and impetuous winds, and the shining fires of more laborious and expensive actions are profitable to others only, like a tree of balsam distilling precious liquor for others, not for its own use." — Doddridge.

"There may be times when you cannot find help, but there is no time when you cannot give help." — George S. Merriam.

"He does this even when he is not intending it; neither rank nor influence, and brought before its bar Baron Schafiroff, the vice-chancellor, the favorite of the emperor, and his prime minister. The baron was convicted on several charges; one of which was for raising the rates of postage, and keeping the advance for himself; and another for giving his brother a lucrative position, unknown to the emperor or senate. The baron was condemned to death. When the day of execution came, the people were summoned by sound of trumpet; he was led to the public place, and his sentence read to him; but when his head was laid on the block, and the axe raised over him, a herald proclaimed the mercy of the emperor, in changing the sentence of death for perpetual banishment to Siberia, with the confiscation of all his property. This severity had, however, a good effect, in rendering the administration less corrupt.—Percy Anec.

5, 6. (5) **flattereth,** comp. ch. xxvi. 28. **net,** etc., by misleading the man as to his real character, he puts him in the power of the tempter.[b] (6) **a snare,** for the man himself: entanglement in it, and punishment at the end of it.[c] **sing,** in the confidence and joy of his security and divine favor.

The Gladness of Goodness (vs. 6).—The righteous rejoices—I. In the works and ways of God. II. In the comfortable assurance of his own mind. III. In the prosperity of other men. IV. At all times: "songs in the night." V. At the prospect of a glorious resurrection.

Abdallah and the Fly.—It was the third hour of the day, and Abdallah still lingered over the morning repast, when there came a little fly and alighted on the rim of his goblet. It sipped a particle of syrup and was gone. It came next morning, and the next, and the next again, till it caught the eye of the scholar. As he considered it, and as it gave forth its many colors and moved itself aright, it seemed beautiful exceedingly, and in his heart he could not find to drive it away. Wherefore it came day by day continually, and waxing bolder and bolder it withal became greater and greater, till in the size of a locust could be perceived as the likeness of a man; and the greater that it grew, the more winning were its ways, frisking like a sunbeam, singing like a peri, so that the eyes of the simple one were blinded, and in all this he did not perceive the subtlety of an evil jinn. Wherefore, waxing bolder and yet bolder, whatsoever of dainty meats its soul desired the lying spirit freely took, and when, waxing wroth, the son of the prophet said, "This is my daily portion from the table of the mufti; there is not enough for thee and me," playing one of its pleasant tricks, the brazen-faced deceiver caused the simple one to smile; until in process of time the scholar perceived that as his guest waxed stronger and stronger, he himself waxed weaker and weaker. Now also there arose frequent contention between the demon and his dupe, and the youth smote the demon so sore that it departed for a season. Thereupon Abdallah rejoiced exceedingly, and said, "I have triumphed over mine enemy, and when it seemeth good in my sight, I shall smite him that he die." But after not many days, lo and behold! the jinn came again, arrayed in goodly garments, and bringing a present in its hand, and with its fair speech saying, "Is it not a little one?" it enticed this silly dove so that he again received it into his chamber. On the morrow, when Abdallah came not into the assembly of studious youths, the mufti said, "Wherefore tarrieth the son of the faithful? perchance he sleepeth." Therefore they resorted even to his chamber, and knocked and lifted up their voice; but as he made no answer the mufti opened the door, and behold! on the divan lay the dead body of his disciple. His visage was black and swollen, and on his throat was the pressure of a finger broader than the palm of a mighty man. All the stuff belonging to the hapless one was gone, the gold and the jewels, and the parchment rolls, and the changes of raiment; and in the soft earth of the garden was discerned the footsteps of a giant. The mufti measured one of the prints, and lo! it was six cubits long. What means the apologue? Who can expound the riddle? Is it the bottle or the betting-book? is it the billiard table? is it the theater, or the saloon? is it laziness? is it debt? is it the wasted Sunday? But know that an evil habit is an elf constantly expanding. It may come in at the keyhole, but it will soon grow too big for the house. At first it may seem

too trivial for serious attack, but it will presently prove the death of the owner.—J. Hamilton.

7. **cause .. poor,** Job xxix. 13—16. **regardeth not,** careth not, will not set himself to gain a true knowl. of their condition and needs.

Louis IX. and the Kitchen-boy.—Louis IX., king of France, was found instructing a poor kitchen-boy; and being asked why he did so, replied, "The meanest person hath a soul as precious as my own, and bought with the same blood of Christ."—Cheever.——Giving to the Needy Giving to Christ.—St. Martin, before he was baptized into the faith of Christ, and while still a soldier, showed a rare instance of love and charity. In the depth of winter, a beggar, clothed in rags, asked an alms of him for the love of God. Silver and gold he had none. His soldier's cloak was all he had to give. He drew his sword, cut it in half, gave one portion to the poor man, and was content himself with the other. And of him it may be truly said, "He had his reward."—Bib. Ill.

8, 9. (8) **Scornful,**[a] mockers, such as head civil strife. Such as contemptuously disregard God's law, and are not swayed by moral principles or national virtues. **bring .. snare,** better, "set the city on fire:" kindle, with their inflammatory counsels, the fire of civil discord.[a] **wrath,** if it is found among the people.[b] (9) **rage or laugh,** try to influence him by denunciations, or humble him by satire; his work will be in vain. The foolish, and frivolous will learn of no masters. Delitzsch and others, deeming that the rage and the laughter are not becoming to the character of the wise man, take the fool as the subject; so that the sense is, that after all has been said, the fool only falls into a passion or laughs at the matter, argument is wasted upon him, and the controversy is never settled.—Pul. Com.

The Scoffer Silenced.—A Presbyterian minister delivered a series of discourses against infidelity, in a town in Louisiana, on the Red River, some of the citizens of which were known to be sceptical. A few days afterwards he took passage in a steamer ascending the Mississippi, and found on board several of the citizens of that town, among whom was a disciple of Tom Paine, noted as the ringleader of a band of infidels. So soon as he discovered the minister, he commenced his blasphemies; and when he perceived him reading at one of the tables, he proposed to his companions to go with him to the opposite side of the table and listen to some stories that he had to tell upon religion and religious men, which he said would annoy the old preacher. Quite a number, prompted by curiosity, gathered around him to listen to his vulgar stories and anecdotes, all of which were pointed against the Bible and its ministers. The preacher did not raise his eyes from the book which he was reading, nor appear to be in the least disconcerted by the presence of the rabble. At length the infidel walked up to him, and, rudely slapping him on the shoulder, said, "Old fellow, what do you think of these things?" He calmly pointed out of the door, and said, "Do you see that beautiful landscape spread out in such quiet loveliness before you?" "Yes." "It has a variety of flowers, plants, and shrubs, that are calculated to fill the beholder with delight." "Yes." "Well, if you were to send out a dove, he would pass over that scene and see in it all that was beautiful and lovely, and delight himself in gazing at and admiring it; but if you were to send out a buzzard over precisely the same scene, he would see in it nothing to fix his attention, unless he could find some rotten carcass that would be loathsome to all other animals, in which case he would alight and gloat upon it with exquisite pleasure." "Do you mean to compare me to a buzzard, sir?" said the infidel, coloring very deeply. "I made no allusion to you, sir," said the minister, very quietly. The infidel walked off in confusion, and went by the name of "The Buzzard" during the remainder of the passage.

10, 11. (10) **bloodthirsty,** Heb. "men of blood." Ps. v. 6, xxvi. 9. **upright,** R. V., "him that is perfect." **seek, etc.,** i. e. care for, in order to preserve, the righteous; R. V., "and as for the upright they seek his life," i. e. to take it away. (11) **all his mind,**[c] no matter how imprudent the occasion. Over-free speech is characteristic of the foolish; mind may stand for spirit, passion; R. V., "anger." The foolish man has no self-

the web of enticing errors before his neighbors' eyes becomes, when he comes into contact with them, a net in which he is caught."—Hitzig.

"The happiness of love is in action; its test is what one is willing to do for others." — Gen. Lew Wallace.

a "Such as scorn to be hampered by laws and constitutions." — Mat. Henry.

a "Set the minds of the people on fire against the powers that be." —Spk. Com.

b "Nothing can make a man so good a patriot as religion." — Bp. Hall.

"The fool of Scripture is not an idiot, but an absurd person; not one who does not reason at all, but one who reasons wrong; also any one whose conduct is not regulated by the dictates of reason and religion."—Kitto.

"If a bee stings you, will you go to the hive and destroy it? Would not a thousand come upon you? If you receive a trifling injury, do not go about the streets proclaiming it, and be anxious to avenge it. Let it drop. It is wisdom to say little respecting the injuries you may have received." —Anon.

"The best ground untilled, soonest runs out into rank weeds. A man of knowledge that is either negligent or uncorrected, cannot but grow wild and godless."—Bp. Hall.

c Usually they that speak much, speak much amiss.

"He is wise who knows when to hold his peace." — Ambrose.

"As small letters hurt the sight, so do small matters him that is too much intent upon them; they vex and stir up anger, which begets an evil habit in him in reference to greater affairs." —Plutarch.

"It is a shameful thing to be weary of inquiry, when what we search for is excellent." —Cicero.

restraint. **keepeth .. afterwards,** R. V., "keepeth it back and stilleth it:" i. e. exercises self-control.

The Feeling of Resentment.—"A fool uttereth all his anger, but a wise man keepeth it back and stilleth it." Nothing more distinctly marks the presence of wisdom or folly than the habit of speaking quickly or restraining speech under provocation. It is an unfailing criterion. The reasons for silence at such a time are obvious enough, and they should be strong enough. 1. Hasty speech is (1) very likely indeed to be incorrect, imperfect, if not wholly wrong, for our judgment is sure to be disturbed and unhinged when our spirit is wounded; (2) Most likely to provoke our opponent to feel strongly and to strike severely, and thus the flood-gates of strife are opened; (3) unworthy of the wise and strong, lowering in the eyes of our best friends and in our own regard; (4) Condemned of God. 2. Conscientious silence under provocation is (1) An admirable victory over our lower nature; (2) The way of peace in the council, in the home, in the Church; (3) The path in which we follow Christ our Lord, and gain His Divine approval.—Clarkson.

12, 13. (12) **to lies,** or falsehood, all sorts of talebearing.[a] **wicked,** knowing just what pleases their master, they will become informers and backbiters. (13) **deceitful man,** or usurer. He takes his advantage of the poor. **meet together,** either socially, or in conflict: the needy resist the exactions of the usurer. **lighteneth,** etc., He knows both. "He is their common Father and Judge." "Both depend on Him, and He will do justice."[b]

Open Ears and Nimble Tongues (vs. 12).—I. A ruler with an open ear; ready to hear anything; easily imposed upon; plenty to detract from others, and be the purveyors of scandal; most that will be told him will be false. II. The servants' nimble tongues; each one anxious to get favor for himself; hopes to do this by depreciating others; the ruler hears of each in turn, and according to the tale of each, all save himself are wicked. III. The judicial mind. The ruler should bring the traducer and the traduced face to face; this done at once and in the first instance would operate as a caution to others.

Corrupt Royalty.—Here is the complete and absolute corruption of the Divine royalty. The description holds true age after age; suggested by the decline of the monarchy in Israel, it applies accurately to the Imperial government at Rome, and it might have been written to describe the character and the government of the Stuarts in England. Strong in what they supposed to be their Divine Right, they became liars and hearkened to falsehood; their servants became wicked; their government perished from its own inherent rottenness. The description holds, too, of the French monarchy from the time of Louis XIV. to its fall. And it would seem, as indeed we may confidently believe, that the slow and imperceptible decay of the faith in the divine right of kings has been in God's hands a long preparation for the reign of Him whose right it is to reign, Jesus Christ, the true King of men.—Exp. B.

14, 15. (14) **judgeth the poor,**[c] who cannot secure decisions by bribes. (15) **rod,** the symbol of parental correction.[d] But correction must never take the place of moral persuasion. Both are requisite. **left to himself,** "left loose, as a horse without a rein." Pampered and indulged. "Exempted fr. discipline, left to his own will."

The Three Philosophers.—A very rich man once upon a time chanced also—strange to say!—to be a very unhappy man, and offered an immense sum of money to any one that would make him happy. A philosopher brought to him a new game that he had invented. It was a good game, and whoever invents a good game does a good deed. But in a few days the rich man wearied of the game. Came next a philosopher who set the rich man to work sawing boards, and planing them, and making things; and for a time he was very happy, for labor is a great lightener of the heart. But one day he could think of nothing else to make, and of no place to put it after it was made, so that all his gloom returned. Whereupon came a third philosopher, who set the rich man to doing things for other people. And the rich man has been happy ever since.—Chr. Endeavor World.——Good Government.—Must not the test of every government be at last this—What did it accomplish for the poor, for the burdened, for the slave, and the oppressed? "Glorious"

a "He that carrieth Satan in his ear is no less blameworthy than he who carrieth him in his tongue." — Muffet.

b "Here is comfort to the poor in his sufferings; here is warning to the rich in his violence." — Wordsworth.

"A man who takes delight in hearing the faults of others, shows sufficiently that he has a true relish of scandal, and consequently the seeds of this vice within him." —Addison.

"Rulers are the looking-glasses according to which most men dress themselves." — Hom. Com.

c Pr. xx. 28, xxv. 5.

"So that he permits true judgment to reach the poor."—Hitzig.

d Comp. Pr. xiii. 24, xxiii. 13.

"The mother who thus yields weakly to what is really a self-indulgence, is as guilty of abandoning the child she spoils, as if she cast him forth; and inasmuch as evil neglect no less

wars and additions of territory can never compensate for injustice at home; the renown of arms for a people's misery. The throne that is not propped by bayonets, but built upon a people's gratitude and loyalty, may defy the storms of revolution.—Johnson.

16, 17. (16) **wicked . . increaseth,** this is a general truth; wicked men encourage one another, and so increase wickedness; or reference may be to wicked rulers, who encourage the wicked in the land. **see . . fall,** and triumph in it;[a] look on it with satisfaction, bec. of their deliverance fr. civic misrule. (17) **Correct,** as vs. 15.[b] **delight,** lit. delights, the plural signifying the variety of forms of pleasure, in well-trained children, which parents may gain.

Causes of Public Immorality (vs. 16).—I. A case supposed—"the wicked multiplied." 1. By miscarriage of justice—undetected crime; 2. Venality of officers of justice; 3. By personal influence of ungodly; 4. By neglected youth—as, from the connection, this seems to be the cause indicated. II. The result anticipated. 1. Increase of transgressors; 2. Reign of lawlessness; 3. One encouraging and tempting another. III. The inevitable issue. 1. Transgressors shall fall, "though wickedness join hand in hand," etc.; 2. The righteous shall see it. Hence we infer that while the wicked shall fall, the righteous will look safely on.

18. **no vision,** as 1 Sa. iii. 1. "Redemptive revelations of God are meant."—Thomas. More generally, instruction in God's truth, given mainly in those days by prophets, who received visions. **people perish,** lit. "are let loose,"[a] like hair dishevelled. Are unprincipled, unbridled; R. V., "cast off restraint." Hos. iv. 6.

Divine Vision Essential to Human Salvation (vs. 18).—I. True vision is a revelation from God. Such a communication is probable from—1. The conflicting indications of the Divine character furnished by nature; 2. The universally felt moral necessities of man. II. There are many places where, as yet, this vision is not. III. Where it is not the people perish. 1. It alone reveals a Saviour adapted to man; 2. It alone is associated with spiritual power to deliver man from the bondage, and misery, and guilt, and doom of sin. Learn:—(1) The vision of God is, to those who possess it, a most precious thing; (2) They who possess it not ought to be the objects of the deepest compassion; 3. They who possess it are bound by every consideration of gratitude and pity to send it to those who do not.—J. M. Tarvie.

Power of Scriptures.—The power and efficacy of the Scripture upon the souls of men showeth it to be of God; and the wonderful alteration that it makes in a man for God, when he doth entertain and believe it in his heart. It makes him more than a man in power to oppose, resist, and fight against his own corruptions; it brings him into wonderful familiarity and acquaintance with God. It puts such life and strength into him that, for God's sake and His truth, he can suffer all the hardest things in the world without complaining, yea, with exceeding and wonderful rejoicing.—E. Leigh.——A Scientist's Testimony.—The highest and most consoling beliefs of the human mind are to a great extent bound up with the Christian religion. If we ask ourselves frankly how much, apart from this religion, would remain of faith in a God, and in a future state of existence, the answer must be, very little. Science traces everything back to primeval atoms and germs, and there it leaves us. How came these atoms and energies there, from which this wonderful universe of worlds has been evolved by inevitable laws? What are they in their essence, and what do they mean? The only answer is, It is unknowable. It is "behind the veil," and may be anything. Spirit may be matter, matter may be spirit. We have no faculties by which we can even form a conception, from any discoveries of the telescope or microscope, from any experiments in the laboratory, or from any facts susceptible of real human knowledge, of what may be the first cause underlying all these phenomena.—S. Laing.

19, 20. (19) **servant,** or slave. Reference is to one who lacks right principle, who is stubborn and sulky. **words,** i. e. words alone. He needs chastisement.[a] **not answer,** in obedient action. (20) **hasty,** etc., see ch. xxvi. 12. **of a fool,** i. e. the dull, stupid fool who is sensible of his folly. The free talker is usually the conceited boaster.

than evil act works out its own punishment, there shall fall upon her the righteous punishment of shame and ignominy."—Spk. Com.

[a] Ps. xxxvii. 34—38, lviii. 10, 11.

[b] Pr. xiii. 24, xix. 18, xxii. 15, xxiii. 13, 14.

Cyrillus Alexandrinus tells us when man was alone upon the earth there was then no such matter as sinning.

[a] "Or 'are made naked.' Stripped of their ornaments and so exposed to shame; stripped of their armour, and so exposed to danger."—Mat. Henry.

We may then a little amplify the proverb for the sake of exposition: "Where there is no living revelation between man and God, there the bonds which hold society together are relaxed or broken; but he that holds by the revelation that has been given, so far as it has been presented to him, happy is he."—Exp. B.

Bonaventure wrote out the Scriptures twice, and learned most of them by heart.

[a] "If thou wouldst have a good servant, let the servant find thee a good master. Be not angry with him too long, lest he think thee malicious; nor too soon, lest he conceive thee rash; nor too often, lest he count thee humorous."—Quarles.

The Emperor Valentinian punished the Quadi with great severity; and when they came to implore his mercy he upbraided them with every mark of resentment, and spoke with such vehemence, that he broke a blood-vessel, and fell lifeless on the ground.

"The way to avoid the imputation of impudence is not to be ashamed of what we do, but never to do what we ought to be ashamed of."—Tully.

"The only disadvantage of an honest heart is credulity." —P. Sidney.

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."—Pope.

"If you have nothing be an honest beggar, rather than a respectable thief.' — Emerson.

"Honesty coupled to beauty, is to have honey a sauce to sugar." — Shakespeare.

"He that would build lastingly must lay his foundation low. As man falls by pride, he recovers by humility."

[a] "The more God honoreth men, the more they should humble themselves. The more bounty God shows, the more humility He requires."—Reynolds.

[b] Bewray is old Eng. to disclose.

"The partaker is as bad as the thief."

"Tell me what company you keep, and I will tell you what you are."

Servants and Servants (vs. 19).—I. Servants of all qualities may need to be occasionally corrected. The employer must have his work done in his own way since he pays for it, though it may not be the best way. II. Some servants are pert, give saucy answers, show they forget their position, prove that they are intractably conceited. III. Others are sulky, will not answer at all, either by apology or promise of amendment. IV. God is the great Master of all; He issues distinct commands all may understand, and should promptly make confession of fault and promise of improvement.

21, 22. (21) **delicately,** i. e. that pampers him; allows him undue familiarity and indulgence. **become .. son,** i. e. assume the place and privilege of one. Some render the word used ungrateful, or refractory. (22) **angry,** etc., as ch. xv. 18.

The Spoiled Servant (vs. 21).—I. The cause of this unwise treatment. 1. The unwise preference of the master; 2. The sneaking duplicity of the servant; 3. Often the absence of a trusted domestic companion; sometimes the fact that the children are disobedient; 4. Frequently through not perceiving the proper relations of parties. II. The consequences that flow from it. 1. The gradual ascendency of the servant, until he obtains power, through a knowledge of the master's private affairs; 2. The displacement of the children from the parent's love; 3. The entire family at length tyrannized over by the servant.

Swift's Butler.—During the publication of the Drapier's Letters, Swift was particularly careful to conceal himself from being known as the author. The only persons in the secret were Robert Blakely, his butler, whom he employed as an amanuensis, and Dr. Sheridan. It happened that on the very evening before the proclamation, offering a reward of £300 for discovering the author of these letters, was issued, Robert Blakely stopped out later than usual without his master's leave. The dean ordered the door to be locked at the accustomed hour, and shut him out. The next morning the poor fellow appeared before his master with marks of great contrition. Swift would hear no excuses, but, abusing him severely, bade him strip off his livery, and quit the house instantly. "What!" said he, "is it because I am in your power that you can dare to take these liberties with me? Get out of my house, and receive the reward of your treachery." Mrs. Johnson (Stella), who was at the deanery, did not interfere, but immediately despatched a messenger to Dr. Sheridan, who, on his arrival, found Robert walking up and down the hall in great agitation. The doctor bade him not be uneasy, as he would try to pacify the dean, so that he should continue in his place. "That is not what vexes me," replied Robert, "though to be sure I should be sorry to lose so good a master; but what grieves me to the soul is that my master should have so bad an opinon of me as to suppose me capable of betraying him for any reward whatever." When this was related to the dean he was so struck with the honor and generosity of sentiment which it exhibited in one so humble in life, that he immediately restored him to his situation, and was not long in rewarding his fidelity. The place of verger to the cathedral becoming vacant, Swift called Robert to him, and bestowed it upon him.—Percy Anecdotes.

23, 24. (23) **pride,** etc., as ch. xvi. 18, xviii. 12. **honour shall uphold,** R. V., "he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor"[a] (ch. xi. 16). (24) **partner .. thief,** may not be himself a thief, but he cannot keep from himself the shame of his partner's wrongdoing. As the concealer of the thief he must share the thief's penalty. **heareth cursing,** the public declaration of the crime; R. V., "heareth the adjuration." When a theft was committed, the person wronged or the judge pronounced an imprecation on the thief and on any one who was privy to the crime, and refrained from giving information; a witness who was silent under this formal adjuration is not only an accomplice of a criminal, he is also a perjurer.—Pul. Com. **bewrayeth,**[b] does not reveal the thief; keeps silence.

Humility.—Be sure that God who made us knows how much honor or wealth we can sustain; when he draws the line and says, "Hitherto shall fortune come, and no farther," he knows that any addition to what we already possess would destroy our equilibrium, and cause us, it may be, to plunge into some infinite chasm. What have we that we have not

received? If we have genius, the light is not of our own kindling; if we have great practical power, we hold it as a trust; if we have wealth, we should remember the words, "The Lord thy God giveth thee power to get wealth." Humility is the salvation of character. Humility, however, cannot be put on; it cannot be arranged for, or be made matter of calculation, as who should say, See how I succeeded in humbling myself, or in clothing myself with the beautiful garments of modesty. Humility is the result of divine action in the soul. To have seen God is to have been cleansed from all vanity; to have been near the king is to turn our eyes with contempt upon all the circumstances and fading glory of this transient world.—Parker.

25. fear of man, i. e. of what he may be able to do to us. **snare,** entangles us in the consequences of wrongdoing.[c] **trust . . Lord,** and so fears Him only. **safe,** "set on high;" secured and established.

The Fear of Man.—I. The fear. 1. In what it consists; (1) Fear of human authority; (2) Fear of the great; (3) Fear of society; (4) Fear of the multitude; (5) Fear of those we love. 2. How it originates; (1) In cowardice; (2) In godlessness. II. Its snare. 1. The deception of it; (1) In regard to duty; (2) In regard to danger. 2. The fatality of it. III. Its antidote.—Pul. Com.

Trust in God.—A traveler in the Alps had been climbing a precipice which gradually became more and more steep. But he was lured onward by the pleasure of the exercise and the purpose of reaching the top, till he found he could go no further. Now, looking back, he saw he could not return. To attempt to descend would be certain destruction. He was in great peril. He had but an inch or two of footing, which might at any moment give way, and his strength was beginning to fail. He had been watched by a friend, who saw his peril, and by another route reached the summit of the rock, and lowered a rope. What must he do? Believe! He hesitated. The rope might break, his friend's arm might fail, but the path was crumbling, his own strength was going; so he believed: that is, he trusted his friend and obeyed his directions, and so was drawn up to safety. So let us believe and be saved. Let us take Christ at His word. Let us accept His mercy and obey His commands. Then shall we be saved—saved from guilt and condemnation; saved from death and judgment; saved now from wretchedness and ruin. We shall be saved, and so able to fulfil our high vocation to live for God and serve Him.—Newman Hall.

26, 27. (26) **Many,** etc., as ch. xix. 6. **from the Lord,** fr. Jehovah, the Supreme Ruler. "It is better to wait for the judgment of the Lord than to run hither and thither, canvassing, bribing, flattering."—Spk. Com. (27) **abomination,** in each case the word applies to "instinctive antipathy."[a]

The Supreme Arbiter.—I. It is a common mistake to ascribe to man the influence which belongs only to God. II. God's judgment will be experienced by every man. III. It is good news for the world that God is the Supreme Arbiter. 1. God is just; 2. God is wise; 3. God is strong. IV. It is well for men to acknowledge God as their Arbiter.—Pul. Com.

English Sirdar.—Mr. Forbes, who passed nearly twenty years in India, says that "the character of the English in India is an honor to their country." That his own was is pretty evident from the highly flattering address which the inhabitants of Dhubay presented to him on the morning of his final departure. "Dhubay," says this address, "famed among the cities of the East, was happy when the English sirdar presided in their durbar; his disposition towards the inhabitants was with the best consideration. He afforded shelter to all, whether they were rich or poor; he delivered them from trouble, and restored them to comfort. All castes who looked up to him obtained redress, without distinction, and without price. When he took the poor by the hand he made him rich; under his protection the people were happy, and reposed on the bed of ease. When he superintended the garden, each gardener performed his duty; rills of water flowed to every flower, and all the trees of the garden flourished. So equal was his justice, that the tiger and the kid might drink at the same fountain; and often did he redeem

c "It easily betrays into a participation in the sinful actions of men."—O. Zockler.

"There cannot be a more worthy improvement of friendship than in a fervent opposition to the sins of those whom we profess to love."—Bp. Hall.

"The soul that cannot entirely trust God, whether man be pleased or displeased, can never long be true to him; for while you are eyeing man you are losing God, and stabbing religion at the very heart." — Manton.

"It is not a transference of fear from man to God that can make the sinner safe. The kind of affection must be changed as well as its object."

a "It is no good sign for him who would be upright when he can be on friendly terms with the ungodly." —Von Gerlach.

"Acquaintance is mere collocation of persons; friendship and Christian communism are the eternal affinity of souls in God."—Johnson.

"There is a mutual hatred between the good and the bad, old as the devil, deep as hell, strong and universal as death. So long as wickedness exists this mutual antagonism must continue."—Dav. Thomas.

the kid from the tiger's mouth. Under his administration the rich dared not oppress the poor, for his eyes were open to the great and small. In this country we have not known any government so upright as that of the English. Alas! if our protector forsakes us, we shall be disconsolate as a widow; we shall mourn the loss of a father, and weep as for the death of a mother! Allah! in thy mercy, continue him to us."—Percy Anec.

Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22; Jno. xv. 17—19; Ro. viii. 7. "A faithful friend is better than gold, — a medicine for misery, an only possession." — Burton.

CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH.

1. **Agur,** a name wholly unknown. Some suppose him to have been an honored teacher, and Ithiel and Ucal two of his scholars. **Jakeh,** some render, "son of her who was obeyed (i. e. the queen of), Massah,"[a] **the prophecy,** R. V., "the oracle." That "the words" are not of the nature of Divine communications can be seen at once by consideration of their contents, which are mainly of human, and not of the highest type, and, though capable of spiritual interpretation, do not possess that uniqueness of purpose, that religious char. and elevation of subject, wh. one expects in the enunciations of an inspired prophet.—Pul. Com. **Ithiel** means "God with me." **Ucal,** the Mighty One. "Prob. indicating the moral character wh. the author desires, and the kind of persons whom Agur addresses."—Wordsworth. Stuart (with whom some others agree) translates the vs. as follows: "The words of Agur, the son of her who was obeyed in Massa. Thus spake the man: I have toiled for God, I have toiled for God, and have ceased."

a "Son of the princes of Massah."—O. Zockler.

The word jakeh, signifies reverent, pious, obedient; from the verb yakah, to fear.

Agur.—This chapter is full of curious interest. It is a collection of sayings which are apparently connected only by the circumstance that they were attributed to one person, Agur, the son of Jakeh. Whoever Agur was, he had a certain marked individuality; he combined meditation on lofty questions of theology with a sound theory of practical life. He was able to give valuable admonitions about conduct. But his characteristic delight was to group together in quatrains visible illustrations of selected qualities or ideas.—Exp. B.——Traveler's Fare.—I ask only a pittance for my passage, but not an abundance for my portion in these things: yea, though Thou shouldst give me no kid to make merry with, yet will I not murmur at Thy bounty to prodigals, if Thou wilt say, "Son, all that is laid up is thine, though thou hast little or nothing of what is laid out:" but I will pray, "Turn, Lord, mine eyes from beholding, and my heart from affecting earthly vanities, and fix all my desires upon heaven, that I may look and long for it, in which there is nothing that can offend, but everything that will delight and satisfy to eternity."—W. Spurstowe.

"To believe in Christ is to be like him. All other faith is a mere mist of words dissolving into empty air. To live our human lives as he lived his—purely, lovingly, righteously — is to share his eternity." — Lucy Larcom.

Some Christians are like decayed milestones which stand in the right road and bear some traces of the proper impression, but so wretchedly mutilated and defaced that those who pass by can hardly read or know what to make of them.

2, 3. (2) **more brutish,** comp. confession of Ps. lxxiii. 22. The admission not merely of ignorance, but even of natural incapacity for apprehending Divine things.[a] A strong term to denote his lowly self-estimation. (3) **learned wisdom,** i. e. he did not regard himself as learned, certainly not as having complete knowledge. **nor, etc.,** R. V. marg., "that I should have the knowl." **the holy,** i. e. the Holy One, God. It was in the higher truths he most felt his failure.

a Comp. Mat. xi. 25; 1 Cor. iii. 18, iv. 10.

"Humility is at once the characteristic and qualification of all true philosophy.'

The Source of True Humility.—I. In proportion as men know God they confess they know Him not. II. Therefore humility is the sign of high attainments in Divine knowledge, and those who know most will be the most able and willing to be taught more. III. The unsearchableness of God is no hindrance to practical godliness.—Hom. Com.

"Every believer's experience witnesseth to this, that every one that believes on Jesus Christ, acts that faith as the chief of sinners; every man that seeth himself rightly thinks so of himself, and therein thinks not amiss. God only knows who is truly the greatest sinner, and every humbled sinner will think he is the man."—Traill.

Humility.—Self-contempt may be the beginning of true wisdom. Here is a rebuke to that pride which brings destruction, and to that haughtiness which precedes a fall. Every man should know exactly how little he is, how frail, in some aspects and senses how worthless, and out of this self-abasement will come a correct conception of the possibilities of life and destiny of the soul. We must not begin too high. Children of the dust should begin where God Himself began them: they did not begin as divine, and then proceed to incarnation; they began as dust, and then received the Divine breath.—Parker.

4. **Who .. heaven,**[b] God is in heaven, and yet descends to visit man, but He is the only being that can be everywhere. **bound the waters,** with the girdle of the shores.[c] **all the ends,** so that nothing whatever can be found that is beyond His control. **his name,** or His adequate and perfect description: a name should be a complete definition. **son's name,**[a] i. e. we do not know God or His family, so to speak; the Almighty is a profound mystery to speculative thought.

Trusting in God.—A military officer being in a dreadful storm, his lady, who was sitting in the cabin near him, and filled with alarm for the safety of the vessel, was so surprised at his composure, that she cried out, "My dear, are you not afraid? How is it possible you can be so calm in such a storm?" He rose from a chair lashed to the deck, and drew his sword. Pointing it to his wife's breast, he said, "Are you not afraid?" She instantly replied, "No—certainly not." "Why?" said the officer. "Because," rejoined his lady, "I know the sword is in the hand of my husband, and he loves me too well to hurt me." "Then," said he, "remember, I know in whom I have believed, and that He holds the winds in His fists, and the waters in the hollow of His hand."

5, 6. (5) **pure,**[d] R. V., "tried," Ps. xii. 6, xviii. 30, xix. 8, cxix. 140. It is far better humbly to study the revealed Word than to puzzle over unexplained and insoluble mysteries. **shield,** etc., Ps. xviii. 30; contrast bet. the possibility of speculative knowl. (vs. 4) and the reality of revelation and experience. (6) **Add .. words,**[e] the tendency to add to God's revelation is seen in the crowding traditions of our Lord's time. But reference is here specially intended to vain human speculations. **a liar,** one making representations and explanations which are proved to be false and unworthy.

The Purity of God's Words.—I. The refuge from vain speculation is practical revelation. II. The revelation of God is pure. 1. It is free from error; 2. It is free from moral corruption. III. The purity of God's Word should inspire trust and reverence.—Pul. Com.

The Composition of the Law of God.—There is a bell in the cathedral of Cologne, made by the melting together of French cannon. It would have been a very difficult task, indeed, to analyze the bell and determine whence the cannon came. Something like this, however, is the task before those who adopt the extreme theories of the rationalistic critics of the Pentateuch. You must be supposed to show in the minute literary traits of this series of documents the dates of their origin, the dates of their combination, and the dates of subsequent editorial supervisions. Even if it were to be granted that documents drawn from many polytheistic nations and ages were the original constituents of the Pentateuch, we have not touched the doctrine of the inspiration of the combined mass at all. The mass is strangely purified from all false doctrine. A Divine fire has burned all adulterate elements wholly out of it, and fused the constituents in a combination wholly new. These cannon are one set of objects; melted together into a bell, hung in a cathedral tower, they are another object altogether. Mere white dust is one thing; compacted into marble, in a vase, it has a ring, and is quite another. These cannon, melted and hung aloft in the form of a bell, are no longer cannon. They are an inspired work. It is our business, indeed, to know all we can as to the composition of this bronze; but our highest business is to ring the bell in the cathedral tower. The moral law, and the ethical monotheism of the Pentateuch, have proved their resonance as often as they have been put in practice, age after age. The Pentateuch hung in the cathedral tower of the world has uttered God's voice, and it is our business to ask how we can ring the bell in the heights of history, rather than how it originated by the melting together of many fragments. —Joseph Cook.

7, 9. (7) **deny,** or withhold not from me. **before I die,** or, as long as I live. (8) **vanity,** etc., with special reference to vain speculations and lying assumptions of special knowledge. He wants the spirit of contentment, that he may be kept within the limits of revelation. **poverty,** etc.,[a] a wise limitation of his circumstances would be in harmony with the wise limitation of his thinking. **convenient,** or a necessary, appointed portion. Comp. our Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." (9) **deny thee,** in self-satisfaction and luxurious enjoyment. [b]**take the**

[b] Comp. Jno. iii. 13; Is. xl. 12; Ro. x. 6, 7.

[c] "Or, reference may be 'to the upper mass of waters, wrapped in the clouds of heaven as in a capacious garment, and so kept back from pouring down upon the earth.'"—O. Zockler.

[d] Re. xix. 12.

"We are but of yesterday and know nothing. Tomorrow is the secret of time, which the wisest man can only guess at." —Parker.

[e] Heb. tseruphah, purified and refined in fire.

"Look not for another master, thou hast the oracles of God. No one teaches like them. Ignorance of the Scriptures is the cause of all evils." — Chrysostom.

"The first and almost the only book deserving universal attention is the Bible. It is a book which neither the most ignorant and weakest, nor the most learned and intelligent mind, can read without improvement."—John Quincy Adams.

"I know the Bible is inspired, because it finds me at greater depths of my being than any other book." — Coleridge.

[a] "One staff will help a man on his way, but a bundle of staves would burden and weary him." —Abp. Leighton.

[b] "Lest I assail God's name or attributes, as justice, mercy, etc., which the poor are tempted to do."—Fausset.

1 Ti. vi. 6, 10; 1 Jno. ii. 16.

name, etc., in view of the proverbs that follow, this clause may best be taken of the blasphemy attending on impatience and want of resignation to the Divine will. Comp. Isa. viii. 21.

The Prayer of Agur (vss. 7—9).—I. It was short—long and short prayers. II. It was comprehensive—two petitions—for his soul grace, for his body suitable food. III. It was spiritual—against excessive wealth and pinching poverty. IV. It was wise—proceeding from an accurate and judicious survey of the moral effects produced by the different conditions of human life. The rich and the poor have their peculiar temptations. V. It was believing. It breathes a fine spirit of dependence upon God. VI. It was moderate—the golden mean.—G. Brooks.

10. **Accuse,** Heb. "Hurt not with thy tongue." Slander not.[c] Do not increase by useless suspicion the burdens of the lowly. **curse thee,** turn on thee, and tell of thy wrong doings. Masters and mistresses should be very careful of listening to reports about their servants; and men should take heed and not spoil the harmony of family life and social relations.

Malicious Accusations.—There are men in society who seem to live like beasts of prey. As the lion or the tiger is ever watching his opportunity to spring upon some defenceless creature at an unguarded moment, so these men seem to make it their business to watch their fellow-creatures for opportunities to injure their reputation and mangle their character. And in a world of faulty human beings, it is not difficult for such men to find food for their malicious appetites, without transgressing the limits of truth. In most men there is enough imperfection, and in many of actual sin, to render it easy to make out a case against them. But if no actual good can come to anybody by exposing their failings, much harm will come to the man who thus bears witness against them without a cause. The evil tendencies of his own evil nature will be strengthened by the act, and he will be exposing himself to the danger of having a causeless testimony borne against himself in his turn.—Hom. Com.

11—14. (11) **generation,** or class of people.[a] **curseth . . mother,** are abusive to their parents. The lawless. (12) **pure,** etc., the hypocrites, such as the Pharisee who boasted of his goodness in his prayer.[b] "It is of the essence of this temper that its hypocrisy is unconscious."[c] (13) **lofty,** etc., the proud and arrogant. The attitude characteristic of the proud is vigorously sketched. (14) **teeth,** etc., the avariciously cruel.

The Self-deceiver Exposed (vs. 12).—Among the generation of self-deceivers we must number—I. The decent formalist: he is pure in his own eyes, he is not washed from his filthiness. II. The almost Christian: he goes much farther than the formalist, but, like him, he deceiveth his own soul. III. The inconsistent professor: who more confident of the goodness of his state than he who professes to believe in Christ, but who more open to self-deception? Address—1. Those who, though pure in their own eyes, are not washed; 2. Those who, though not pure in their own eyes, are really washed from their filthiness.—C. Simeon.

Not My Mother!—Well, do you see, at night we used to amuse each other by telling our tricks, urging one another on in daring vice and wickedness. Amongst us we had one uncommon bright girl—a first rate mimic, and she used to make us roar with laughter. Well, this fun had been going on for weeks; she had gone through most of her characters, from the governor to the turnkey, when she starts on a new tack, and commenced taking off Parson Cowper and Father Therry; some way it did not take, so she went back to Newgate and took off Mrs. Fry to the very life, but it would not do; we did not seem to enjoy it—there was no fun in it for us. So then, she began about the ships leaving, and our mother's crying, and begging of us to turn over a new leaf; and then, in mimicking, jesting sport, she sobbed and bade us good-bye. Well, how it happened I know not, but one after the other we began to cry, and say, "Stay, not my mother! Not my mother!" Said one: "Let Mrs. Fry alone; Father Therry must not be brought here, nor Parson Cowper —stay, stay!" Well, she did stop, but tears were shed the whole of that night. Everything had been tried with me; good people had sought in vain to convince me of my evil ways; but that girl's ridicule of my mother I could not stand! Her grief was brought home to me, and not

"To be truly and really independent, is to support ourselves by our own exertions." —Porter.

"Richer than doing nothing for a bauble; prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk."—Shakespeare.

[c] Ps. x. 7.

"Make not a slave to accuse his master." So rend. Bertheau, Hitzig, etc.

"In a word, ingratitude is too base to return a kindnes ,and too proud to regard it; much like the tops of mountains, barren indeed, but yet lofty; they produce nothing, they feed nobody, they clothe nobody, yet are high and stately, and look down upon all the world about them."—South.

[a] Young men of that black character commonly herd together, and irritate one another against their parents.

[b] Lu. xviii. 11.

[c] Of some sins we are not sensible, because they are habitual, wh. very circumstance is an aggravation of their guilt.

"Solon, when asked why he had made no law against parricides, replied that he could not conceive of anyone so impious and cruel. The divine lawgiver knew that man's heart was capable of wickedness beyond conception."

—Bridges.

"Early impressions are not easily erased; the virgin wax is faithful to the signet, and subsequent impressions seem rather to indent the former ones

to me alone, but to many. I do believe that night was a great blessing to many. I was so unhappy that the next day I tried to get out of sight to pray; and when I got to a hiding place I found three girls on their knees. We comforted each other, and then how we spoke of our mothers! Mine was dead; she left this world believing me past hope—but the picture of her grief made me earnest in search of that peace which endureth forever.—Journal of Prison Discipline.

15—17. (15) **horseleech,** the leech fastens with the utmost tenacity on the mouths of cattle or legs of travelers, and is used as an emblem of the eager desire that nothing can satisfy. R. V. marg. "vampire." "This is an imaginary spectre or ghost in popular mythology, wh. sucks human blood, specially that of children, and is insatiable for it."—Stuart. **two daughters,** "that wh. is characteristic of the creature, its voracious appetite, is here represented as its daughters." **enough,** i.e. there are four things wh. have the characteristic of insatiability. (16) **filled with water,** such earth will take any quantity of rain. (17) **eye,** chief organ for expressing mockery and contempt. **ravens,** wh. are still found in the ravines and valleys of Syria.[a]

Dr. Adam Clarke.—The late Dr. Adam Clarke, when but a little boy, one day disobeyed his mother, and the disobedience was accompanied with some look or gesture that indicated an undervaluing of her authority. This was a high affront; she immediately took up the Bible, and opened on these words (Prov. xxx. 17), which she read and commented on in a most solemn manner: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." The poor culprit was cut to the heart, believing the words had been sent immediately from heaven: he went out into the fields with a troubled spirit, and was musing on this terrible denunciation of Divine displeasure, when the hoarse croak of a raven sounded to his conscience an alarm more dreadful than the cry of fire at midnight! He looked up, and soon perceived this most ominous bird, and actually supposing it to be the raven of which the text spoke, coming to pick out his eyes, he clapped his hands on them, and with the utmost speed and trepidation ran towards the house, as fast as his alarm and perturbation would admit, that he might escape the impending vengeance!—R. T. S.

18—20. (18) **too wonderful,** beyond my tracing so as fully to explain. (19) **way,** or path: in each of the things here mentioned no such trace is left as may enable the course taken to be detected. **midst,** or heart. **man . . maid,** the sin of unchastity is signified, which demands secrecy and affords no token of its commission.—Pul. Com. (20) **done no wickedness,** bec. none can point out the signs of the wrong, she brazenly denies it.[a]

The Four Teachers (vss. 18, 19).—Many things became to Agur the inlets of wise reflection. I. An eagle in the air; that sublime thing, overcoming, walking, on the wings of the wind, sailing through the thunderstorm, living where the lightnings play, able to gaze on the sun. II. A serpent: that long, cruel creature, its coils, its rapid spring, its strange interlocking of vertebræ. III. Man imitating nature; the way of a ship, that dead yet living bird of art and science; art has nothing more graceful, more amazingly buoyant and natural. IV. More wonderful than all other, relation of hearts. How two people who never saw each other, meet, and how a lifelong relationship rises, so that if one heart is torn from the other the survivor pines and almost dies.—E. Paxton Hood.

The Flight of the Eagle.—Great as are the distances which these birds sometimes fly, it becomes comprehensible when we know that an eagle, as he sweeps freely through the air, traverses a space of sixty feet in a second of time. To be able thus rapidly to move along is undoubtedly an attribute of power; but there is something far more imposing, far more majestic, in that calm onward motion, when, with wings outspread and quite still, the mighty bird floats buoyantly in the atmosphere, upheld and borne along by the act of mere volition. The length of time he can thus remain suspended without a single beat of his broad, shadowy pinions, is to me still an inexplicable fact. He will sail forward in a perfectly horizontal direction for a distance of more than a mile, without the slightest quiver of a feather giving sign that the wings are moved.

than to eradicate them."—Colton.

"'Tis but instruction, all! Our parent's hand writes on our heart the first faint characters, which time, retracing, deepens into strength, that nothing can efface but death or Heaven."—Aaron Hill.

[a] Ref. would be either to the unnatural death of such unnatural children, or to the fact that they should lie unburied, men being unwilling to give them the respect shown in decent burial.

"If I had no other reason and motive for being religious I would earnestly strive to be so for the sake of my aged mother, that I might requite her care of me, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy."—Hooker.

Bochart asserts that the "two daughters" signify Hades and the grave, which are never satisfied.

[a] "The soul wh. has revolted from the heavenly Bridegroom thinks that it can wash away its pollution by its own hands, and it justifies itself in its own eyes."—Wordsworth.

"Beasts, birds, and insects even to the minutest and meanest of their kind, act with the unerring providence of instinct; man, the while, who possesses a higher faculty, abuses it, and therefore goes blundering on. They, by their unconscious and unhesitating obedience to the laws of nature, fulfil the end of their existence;

Not less extraordinary is the power the bird possesses of arresting himself instantaneously at a certain spot and dropping through the air with folded wings from a height of three or four thousand feet. When circling so high up that he shows but as a dot, he will suddenly close both wings, and, falling like an aerolite, pass through the intervening space in a few seconds of time. With a burst his broad pinions are again unfolded, his downward progress is arrested, and he sweeps away horizontally, smoothly, and without effort. He has been seen to do this when carrying a sheep of twenty pounds' weight in his talons; and from so giddy a height that both the eagle and his booty were not larger than a sparrow. It was directly over a wall of rock in which the eyrie was built; and while the speck in the clouds was being examined, and doubts entertained as to the possibility of its being the eagle, down he came headlong, every instant increasing in size, when, in passing the precipice, out flew his mighty wings, the sheep was flung into the nest, and on the magnificent creature moved, calmly and unflurried, as a barque sails gently down the stream of a river.

21—23. (21) **is disquieted,** R. V., "doth tremble." **cannot bear,** they are things intolerable; "by them the state of nations and the world is turned upside down." (22) **reigneth,** becomes king. **fool**[b] **. . meat,** or those who are worthless and yet are prospered and honored. The profligate rich man is almost always haughty and cruel. (23) **odious,** unlovable: one worthy of hate.[a] One who when married triumphs insolently over others. **heir,** etc., takes her place as a wife.[b] These are "odious incongruities."

Intolerable Things.—I. The examples. 1. The slave in authority. 2. The self-satisfied fool. 3. The ill-tempered wife. 4. The ambitious maid-servant. II. The general lessons. Order and rank are Divine institutions. To overturn this is no work of the true reformer or friend of the social weal. Rule rests ultimately upon ability to rule; government, upon power; authority, upon wisdom. When these relations are actually reversed, society is disturbed, matters are unhappy. When they only seem to be reversed, there will be distress and discomfort in right minds, until the just order and the nominal state of things shall be restored.—Johnson.

24—28. (24) **wise,** specially here the wonderful instinct of the creatures is referred to. Wise here means "quick of wit." (25) **ants,** ch. vi. 6—8. Their collective and organized action is very striking. **prepare,** R. V., "provide," their foresight is specially noticed. This is only true of some kinds of ants. (26) **conies,**[c] either field-mice or rabbits. (27) **by bands,** in masses, under some kind of organization.[d] (28) **spider . . hands,** R. V. marg. "The lizard thou canst seize with thy hands, yet is she," etc.

Spiritual Diligence a Source of Happiness (vss. 24—28).—Let us take a general view of the whole passage, and notice the great moral truths which it teaches. I. That we ought to act according to the whole of our nature,—they do so. II. That we ought to secure all the happiness of which our nature is susceptible,—they do so. 1. God has provided happiness for every nature, and for every nature its own happiness; 2. Man's happiness is to be obtained in connection with its own activity; 3. We ought not to be satisfied without obtaining all the happiness which the Divine mercy has provided for us.—Caleb Morris.

True Wisdom.—The whole study becomes an argument. If God has given such wisdom to insects, how much more will he give to men? They cannot ask for any more: we are urged to speak to him to give us further supplies. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." Then if we are not wise, whose blame is it? It is not God's blame. He waits to communicate, he loves to give. An ungiving God! That would be a monstrosity of paganism,—a degradation of mythology itself. We are called to asking, to prayer, to pleading, that the volume of our being may be increased, that our spiritual graces may be multiplied, and that all that is divine in us may be enhanced and confirmed. No man can be wise without this union with God. He may have devoured whole libraries, but he is not wise. If God so commends the right use of instinct, how will he complain of the abuse of reason! Men are sent to the ants to learn

he, in wilful neglect of the laws of God, loses sight of the end of his." —Southey.

"Instinct is that power of volition or impulse produced by the peculiar nature of an animal which prompts it to do certain things independent of all instruction or experience and without deliberation, where such act is immediately connected with its own individual preservation or with that of its kind." —Maunder.

[b] A silly, rude, boisterous vicious man.

[a] An ill-natured, cross - grained woman.

[b] Or persuades her mistress to leave her her money.

Provs. "The lion had need of the mouse." — English.

—"Every ten years, one man has need of another."— Italian.

[c] Le. xi. 5; Ps. civ. 18.

[d] Is. xxxiii. 4.

"Man's instincts are elevated and ennobled by the moral ends and purposes of his being. He is not destined to be the slave of blind impulses, a vessel purposeless, unmeant. He is constituted by his moral and intelligent will to be the first freed being, the masterwork and the end of nature; but this freedom and high office can only co-exist with fealty and devotion to the service of truth and virtue." — Mat. Greene.

"Vain man! to be so fond of breathing long, and spinning out a thread of misery. The longer

diligence. They are sent to the conies to learn that there is a way which terminates in a great rock. They are sent to the locusts to learn how littles, when combined, may become mighty, sufficient for all the duty and obligation of the day. What if it be found at the last that all the lower orders and ranks of creation have been obedient, dutiful, loyal,—and that man only has wounded the great heart?—Parker.

29—31. (29) **go well,** R. V. "are stately in their march." (30) **lion,** comp. his movement with that of tiger. (31) **greyhound,** poss. should be a horse. Lit. "one with loins girded;" with allusion to stately trappings of the war-horse. **he-goat,** the leader of a large Oriental flock of goats, marching along with great dignity. **king,** in his state robes. **against . . up,** R. V. marg. "when his army is with him."

Moffat and the Lion.—"At Sitlagole River," says Mr. Moffat, in his Missionary Labours and Scenes, "about a hundred and sixty miles from the Kuruman, we halted in the afternoon, and allowed our oxen to graze on a rising bank opposite our waggons, and somewhat farther than a gunshot from them. Having but just halted, and not having loosened a gun, we were taken by surprise by two lions rushing out from a neighboring thicket. The oldest one, of enormous size, approached within ten yards of the oxen, and bounding on one of my best, killed him in a moment, by sending his great teeth through the vertebræ of the neck. The younger lion couched at the distance, while the other licked his prey, turning his head occasionally towards the other oxen, which had caught his scent and scampered off; then, with his forefeet upon the carcase, he looked and roared at us, who were all in a scuffle to loosen our guns and attack his majesty. Two of our number, more eager to frighten than to kill, discharged their muskets; and probably a ball whistling past his ear induced him to retire to the thicket whence he had come, leaving us in quiet possession of the meat."

32, 33. (32) **lay . . mouth,** the sign of humiliation.[a] (33) **forcing,** or pressing.[b] **forcing . . strife,** "if one urges and presses hard on an angry man, the consequence of such a course is a quarrel."—Stuart.

Count Cavour and Garibaldi.—Bixio rose to speak in the name of concord and Italy. He said he was Italian above all things. He had faith in Garibaldi! but he also trusted the patriotism of Count Cavour. "Gentlemen, I have a beloved family at home. Gentlemen, I would willingly give that family and my own self to be able to join the hands of these two great men,—bring them to forget and forgive. Parties, gentlemen, are ruining us; they disgrace us; we must forget and forgive." This blunt but hearty eloquence went home to every man's soul. After Bixio's speech, another outbreak would have been impossible.—The Times.

CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

1—3. (1) **Lemuel,**[c] some take Lemuel as a symbolical name, designating an ideal king to whom an ideal mother speaks as follows.—Pul. Com. Stuart translates: "The words of Lemuel, king of Massa; which his mother taught him." (2) **What, my son?** shall I advise thee: the language of emphasis. **son . . vows,** one dedicated to God. (3) **strength,** bodily vigor, wh. is soon wasted by the indulgences of vice. **destroyeth,** enervates: plucks away the physical and the mental energy and causes premature death and decay of dynasties.

A Mother's Counsel.—I. It springs from a woman's nature. II. It is inspired by a mother's heart. III. It is characterized by unselfish devotion. IV. It is guided by deep knowledge. V. It cannot be neglected without cruel ingratitude.—Pulp. Com.

Mothers.—We have seen that mothers were regarded with great veneration in the East. The mothers of kings were treated with great distinction, and were known as "queen-mothers." We have seen that they were not always good women; on the contrary, some of them seem to have been inspired by the very spirit of evil. The mothers of Jewish kings are constantly mentioned in the Bible. It has been noticed as characteristic of Oriental courtesy that the mother of the Khedive ranks

life, the greater choice of evil." —Young.

Some years since, several persons saw a young man approach the river Seine, in Paris, with the intention of drowning his dog. Having rowed into the stream, he threw the dog into the water. The poor creature attempted to crawl up the side of the boat, but his cruel master always pushed him back with the oars. In doing this, he himself fell into the water and would certainly have been drowned, had not his faithful dog instantly laid hold of him, and kept him above water till assistance arrived, when his life was saved.

"Live as long as you may, the first twenty years are the longest half of your life." —Southey.

[a] Comp. Job xxi. 5, xxix. 9, xl. 4.

[b] "The Oriental mode of churning by squeezing and wringing a leathern bag or bottle that contains the milk, makes more apparent and vivid the meaning of this comparison." — Thomson

[c] Lemuel means to God, or more fully, dedicated to God.

"The ways of licentiousness are here intended, wh. ruin physically and morally kings and princes who give themselves up to them."—O. Zockler.

"The fear of God is the leading thought in these meditations; and this in a twofold relation — to the king in his rule in the state, and

the woman in her rule in the house." — Pul. Con.

[a] 'Stimulants enfeeble reason and pervert the heart, and do not suit rulers, who need clear and steady minds, and well-governed affections."—Fausset.

[b] Ps. civ. 15.

"Is he a fanatic who warns the young man to abstain from wines and strong drink? Such exhortation is based on the highest psychology and physiology: for the good man sees that every passion that strays away in illicit directions carries the mind with it into captivity."—Parker.

[c] Ruined by their oppressors.

"To send the injured unredressed away how great soe'er the offender, and the wrong'd howe'er obscure, is wicked, weak and vile, — degrades, defiles, and should dethrone a king." —Smollet.

The greatest pleasure of life is love; the greatest treasure contentment; the greatest possession health; the greatest ease sleep; and the best medicine a true friend.

"The injustice of men subserves the justice of God, and often His mercy." — Madame Swetchine.

[a] Pr. xii. 4.

[b] "A strong expression to describe the rich profit to which the co-operation of the efficient wife helps her husband's activity in his occupation." — O. Zockler.

before his principal wife. It would seem then as if mothers were the orators of their families,—teaching, exhorting, and stimulating them with many words of kindness and wisdom. The mother was indeed the schoolmistress of her family, the governess in the best sense, not looking merely after their bodily health and social comforts, but after the training and culture of their noblest nature.—Parker.

4—7. (4) **strong drink,** reference is made here to drinking habits, wh. loosen the self-restraint, and destroy the faculty of clear judgment.[a] "Strong drink was distilled from barley, or honey, or dates." (5) **pervert,** alter, so as to injure the poor as a class or individually. (6) **heavy hearts,** R. V., "bitter of soul." The medicinal use of such stimulants seems to have been recognized. "It was a Jewish custom to give a cup of wine to mourners."[b]

Fidelity to Principle.—An officer in the American army, who had some business to transact with General Washington, was invited to dine with him. Just before dinner was concluded, Washington called him by name, and requested him to drink a glass of wine with him. "You will have the goodness to excuse me, General," was the reply, "as I have made it a rule not to take wine." The eyes of a numerous company, of both sexes, were instantly turned upon the young officer, and expressions of disapprobation appeared on all sides. Washington, observing the feelings of his company, thus addressed them:—"Gentlemen, Mr. —— is right. I do not wish any of my guests to partake of anything against their inclination, and I certainly do not wish them to violate any established principle in their social intercourse with me. I honor Mr. —— for his frankness, for his consistency in thus adhering to an established rule which can never do him harm, and for the adoption of which, I have no doubt, he has good and sufficient reasons."—Whitecross.

8, 9. (8) **appointed,** etc.,[c] lit. "children of bereavement:" those destined to, or in danger of, the loss of their goods. It is king's work to defend and plead for such. Or ref. may be to helpless, orphaned children. (9) **judge righteously,** R. V., "minister judgment," Le. xix. 15; De. i. 16.

A Judge above Resentment.—In the latter half of the last century the lord justice clerk of Scotland, who had a fine avenue of trees leading to his country house, though not growing on ground which he could call his own, happened to displease the proprietor, who caused all the trees to be cut down. The damage was irreparable, but his lordship, who was of a mild and amiable disposition, submitted to it in silence. Two or three years afterward, it happened that this laird's whole estate was put in jeopardy by the next heir-at-law producing a will, which, though it had long lain dormant, appeared so plain and genuine, that the laird nearly gave up his right; and abandoned all hope, when he found it must be decided by the man he had so deeply injured. The strict integrity of the judge was, however, a sufficient guarantee that justice would be impartially administered. The judge, when the cause came before him, sifted it with indefatigable industry and zeal for public justice, when he discovered the will was a forgery; and thus, contrary to all expectation, the laird gained his cause. He then waited on the judge with shame and confusion, and acknowledged that he would never have recovered the suit had it not been for his lordship, as his own counsel had given it up. "You have nothing to thank me for," said the judge, "but my having taken due pains to do you justice. This was a duty I owed to myself, and I should have been unworthy of the place I occupy if I suffered any injury done to myself to influence me in the administration of justice."—Percy Anec.

10—12. (10) **virtuous,**[a] not merely chaste, but including moral strength, uprightness, cultured and noble character, fitness for domestic duties, etc. **her price,** or value. **rubies,** better, pearls. (11) **safely trust,** this is unusual; husbands in the E. generally trust locks and keys. **need of spoil,**[b] R. V., "no lack of gain." The results of honest labor being wisely and well expended at home, no need arises for unlawful schemes for raising money. (12) **do him good,** in every sense, moral and intellectual good, as well as temporal. She fears to do anything that may turn to his prejudice. **all . . life,** in adversity as well as prosperity this wife loves and cherishes her husband.

A Perfect Home.—The most perfect little home I ever saw was a little house into the sweet incense of whose fires went no costly things. A thousand dollars served as a year's living for father, mother, and three children. But the mother was a creator of a home; her relations with the children were the most beautiful I have ever seen; every inmate of the house involuntarily looked into her face for the keynote of the day, and it always rang clear. From the rosebud or clover-leaf, which, in spite of her hard housework, she always found time to put beside our plates at breakfast, down to the story she had on hand to read in the evening, there was no intermission of her influence. She has always been and always will be my ideal of a mother, wife, and home-maker. If to her quick brain, loving heart, and exquisite face had been added the appliances of wealth and enlargements of wide culture, hers would have been absolutely the ideal home. As it was, it was the best I have ever seen.—H. H. Jackson.

13, 14. (13) **wool and flax,** "in Sidon, at this day, a majority of the women are thus working in raw silk and cotton, instead of wool and flax. The produce is sold to merchants who come from afar."—Thomson. **with her hands,** so we are taught that handicraft is not unworthy of princesses.[c] "The most distinguished queens of the ancient time excelled in the art of spinning."—Bushnell. (14) **food from afar,** either by selling to foreign merchants, or by carefully finding out the best markets, though they may be distant ones. Comp. vs. 24.

A Good Wife.—A good wife is heaven's last best gift to man; his angel of mercy; minister of graces innumerable; his gem of many virtues; his casket of jewels; her voice, his sweetest music; her smiles, his brightest day; her kiss, the guardian of his innocence; her arms, the pale of his safety, the balm of his health, the balsam of his life; her industry, his surest wealth; her economy, his safest steward; her lips, his faithful counselors; her bosom, the softest pillow of his cares; and her prayers, the ablest advocates of heaven's blessing on his head.—Jeremy Taylor.

15—17. (15) **riseth . . night,** in the E. the industrious are usually very early risers. In hot countries early morning is the best time for work. **meat,** or rations of food. **portion,** or allotment of work. If the wife had to start them forth into the fields, she would need to arrange the work and food for each. Doing this early prevented the servants wasting their time. (16) **buyeth it,** by the produce of her own labor she even adds to the property of the family. **vineyard,** she plants vines in this field she buys.[a] (17) **girdeth,** etc., the girdle being an important article of dress, and especially tightened in prepartion for work. She is active and energetic.

An Old Proverb Verified (vss. 15—17).—"Early to bed," etc. We have here—I. An early riser. 1. This good for body and mind; 2. A corrective of lazy and luxurious habits; 3. House in order for early meals, work, and worship. II. A careful housewife. If the mistress rises late waste comes of servants helping themselves, or they imitate her example of idleness. III. She is a thoughtful bargainer—considers before she buys. IV. She enjoys good health, in great measure the result of good habits and thoughtfulness, as she promotes early rising, cleanliness, industry, and economy.

Industry.—Industry doth not consist merely in action, for that is incessant in all persons; our mind being like a ship in the sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, yet tossed by the waves of fancy, or driven by the winds of temptation some-whither; but the direction of our mind to some good end, without roving or flinching, in a straight and steady course, drawing after it our active powers in execution thereof, doth constitute industry.—Barrow.

18—20. (18) **perceiveth,** tastes, discerns, finds out that it is good thus to labor and sell the produce of her labor, and so finds new incentives. **good,** R. V. "profitable." **candle . . night,** Thompson says that in the E. the very poorest people even keep a light burning all through the night, in fear of night-dangers.[b] (19) **distaff,** referred to in vs. 13.[c] Lit. the whorl, or wheel. (20) **stretcheth . . hand,** her open palm. Her hollow or bent hand, holding some gift.[d] She has no fear that generosity will issue in poverty.

"All other goods by fortune's hand are given;
A wife is the peculiar gift of Heaven."—Pope.

"If women be good, the half of the commonwealth may be happy where they are."—Aristotle.

c Lit. "And laboreth with her hand's pleasure," or, "and laboreth in the business of her hands."

It is reported of Augustus himself, at the height of the Roman splendor, that he wore a robe which was made for him by Livia, his wife.

a "She does this with what she can spare out of the gains of her own housewifery. Men should not lay out anything upon superfluities, till, by the blessing of God upon their industry, they have got beforehand, and can afford it; and then the fruit of the vineyard is likely to be doubly sweet, when it is the fruit of honest industry."—Mat. Henry.

b The idea of this vs. may be that, estimating the value of her merchandise, she takes care to watch over it well during the darkness of the night.

c "the distaff was held in one hand, or under one arm, and the spindle, hanging by the thread, was occasionally hit and twirled by the other. The weaving process was equally rude and simple." —Bushnell.

d "The industry is not selfish, but bears the fruit of an open-handed charity." —Spk. Com.

As if one hand were not enough for her it is said she reacheth forth her hands; and if she had more than two no doubt she would reach them all forth to the poor.—Jermin.

The Most Beautiful Hands.—There is an old legend, says the Sunday Magazine, concerning three young women who disputed as to who had the most beautiful hands. One dipped her hands into the pure running stream, another picked berries until her fingers were pink, a third gathered roses until her hands were made sweet by their fragrance. An aged woman, careworn and decrepit, leaning upon her staff, came asking a gift, but all alike refused her. A fourth young woman, making no claims to beauty, ministered unto her needs. The aged woman then said: "It is not the hand that is dipped in the brook, nor the hand made red with berries, nor the hand garlanded or perfumed with roses, that is most beautiful. but the hand that giveth to the poor." As she thus spoke her mask fell off, her staff was cast aside, her wrinkles vanished, and she stood before them an angel of God. It matters not whether the hand gives in money or whether it gives in sympathetic acts; whether it gives much or little, it is all given unto Christ. In some cases, money would be quite useless, whilst kindness is priceless.

21—23. (21) **snow,** the indication of cold weather, for wh. clothing should be adapted. **scarlet,** the warm color, put here for warm clothing. (22) **coverings,** i.e. "carpets" or "cushions." **silk,**[a] better, fine linen, the byssus of Egypt. (23) **known,** i.e. observed, as a singularly well-cared-for man. "The husband of such a wife is distinguished among his compeers by a costume clean, whole, and handsome, and a countenance contented and happy."[b]

A Perfect Woman.—
Within the home she rules with quiet might,
By virtue of her perfect womanhood;
A child in years, but with all grace and good
Enshrined in her truth-flashing orbs of light.
A woman strong and firm to do the right,
Who with the old-time martyrs might have stood,
Yet full of sympathy with ev'ry mood,
In times of trouble cheery still and bright;
O queen of maidens! it must surely be,
If ought that to perfection cometh near
Can e'er be found in this imperfect life,
You, perfect daughter, will but disappear
To shine as perfect mother, perfect wife.—G. Weatherby.

a "Scarlet, purple, tapestry and embroidery are still the favorite colors and patterns of Oriental taste." — Thomson.

b "'Tis meet for thee to sit among the princes and hold thy council, with thy body clad in raiment fair and clean."—Homer.

"She may safely wear elegant garments, who in character and bearing is elegant without their aid. If honor be your clothing, the suit will last a life-time, but if clothing be your honor, it will soon be worn threadbare."
—Arnot.

24—26. (24) **fine linen,** R. V., "linen garments," the word used here indicates not the material, but the made-up garments.[c] **merchant,** lit. "Canaanite," or the Phœnician merchant. (25) **rejoice,** etc., "She laugheth at the time to come," in reliance on her stores and her skill. The evil day finds her provided for. (26) **openeth . . wisdom,** her conversation to her household is sensible. **law of kindness,**[d] she rules, but with due consideration and tenderness. "She was too rich in love for envies, too noble for jealousies, too confiding for suspicions, too truthful for falsehood, too good for scandal."

A Good Wife's Future Joy.—I. The provision for this joy: her character, habits. II. The subject of this joy: her home, children, husband, prosperity. III. The nature of it: her children, etc. The joy of rest and reward in advanced life, the favor of God, joy in anticipation of the future life.—A Good Woman's Tongue.—It is marked by—I. Wisdom: she does not prate of things beyond her sphere; has good advice for her daughter and her husband. II. Kindness: she is no scold, or loud-voiced woman; her words are full of tenderness, love, truth, cheerful piety.

The Power of Kindness.—A horse passing down the street in a stage suddenly stood still, and refused to go. He put down his forefoot and became as stubborn as a mule. The driver beat him with great severity, but the animal still refused to go. Finally, a respectable person, a passer-by, picked up a little hay and put it before the horse. He ate it, and the friend kindly patted him on the neck and coaxed him. In a minute or two the stubbornness was gone, and the horse, with driver, were on their way. So let parents, masters, teachers, ministers, try the hand and food of kindness with all stubborn souls with whom they may have to do. —John Bate.

c Isa. iii. 23.

d "Her wisdom and kindness together put a commanding power into all she says; they command respect; they command compliance." — Mat. Henry.

1 Ti. ii. 8-10; 1 Pe. iii. 3, 4.

"The very word kindness comes from the cognate word kinned, that is, one of the same kin or race; acknowledging and reminding us of the fact that all men are brethren—all of the same blood—and therefore they should all act as brethren. All who are of the same kindred should be kind."
—Bowes.

27—29. (27) **bread of idleness,** leaving others to do her duty. (28) **blessed,** bec. of her earnest labors on their behalf, and because of her gracious influence upon them. (29) **thou,** the ideal person described. Or this may be the exclamation of the grateful, trustful husband.

Faithfulness.—But what will avail all eloquent description? The portrait of a true woman is drawn, not to be admired, but to be reproduced in living character. It will be a grievous mistake to suppose that nothing that is less than heroic is to be attempted either by men or women. We deceive ourselves when we think that if some great occasion would arise we should be equal to the sublime opportunity, but it is not worth our while to attend to daily tasks and little services and small occasions. Here the rule holds good as elsewhere, "He that is faithful in little is faithful also in much." Every man or woman can find a sphere of usefulness if disposed to find it. What a school may the house become; what a church of the living God is the family; within the four walls of a home what battles may be fought, what victories may be won! Each should consider what he can do to contribute towards the general weal. A gracious word, a tender look, an assurance of sympathy, how far these go, and what miracles they work! How they abide in the memory; how they enable the soul to sing in the night-time; how full they are of divine encouragement!—Exp. B.

30, 31. (30) **Favour,** grace of person. **deceitful,** it may hide really unworthy character. **beauty,** of countenance. **vain,** bec. not lasting. It passes with the advancing years, and sad is that woman's lot who has only her beauty to depend upon. **feareth the Lord,** piety in the home is everything.[a] "The fear of the Lord is the condition of all womanly as well as manly excellence." (31) **fruit . . hands,** which is the praise due to a skilful, diligent, and faithful wife.

Feminine Beauty (vs. 30).—I. It is attractive while it lasts. II. With some it lasts to old age; the beauty of such women then. III. The thoughtless have eyes for physical beauty only. IV. Beauty often provokes vanity, and is vain to charm the minds of others who at length discover nothing beneath it. V. Seek that beauty that comes of piety, beauty of heart, and mind, and life, these really promote beauty of person.

Beauty.—Hearing a young lady highly praised for her beauty, Gotthold asked, "What kind of beauty do you mean? Merely that of the body, or that also of the mind? I see well that you have been looking no further than the sign which nature displays outside the house, but have never asked for the host who dwells within. Beauty is an excellent gift of God, nor has the pen of the Holy Spirit forgotten to speak its praise; but it is virtuous and godly beauty alone which Scripture honors, expressly declaring, on the other hand, that a fair woman which is without discretion is as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout (Prov. xi. 22). Many a pretty girl is like the flower called the imperial crown, which is admired, no doubt, for its showy appearance, but despised for its unpleasant odor. Were her mind as free from pride, selfishness, luxury, and levity, as her countenance from spots and wrinkles, and could she govern her inward inclinations as she does her external carriage, she would have none to match her. But who loves the caterpillar and such insects, however showy their appearance, and bright and variegated the colors that adorn them, seeing they injure and defile the trees and plants on which they settle? What the better is an apple for its rosy skin, if the maggot have penetrated and devoured its heart? What care I for the beautiful brown of the nut, if it be worm-eaten, and fill the mouth with corruption? Even so external beauty of person deserves no praise, unless matched with the inward beauty of virtue and holiness. It is therefore far better to acquire beauty than to be born with it. The best kind is that which does not wither at the touch of fever, like a flower, but lasts and endures on a bed of sickness, in old age, and even unto death." Is it beauty that you are proud of? I have told you what sickness and death will do to that before. "When God rebuketh man for sin, He maketh his beauty to consume away as a moth; surely every man is vanity. "And if your beauty would continue, how little good will it do you? and who but fools do look at the skin of a rational creature, when they would discern its worth?—Baxter.

"A woman's tongue is her sword, and she does not let it rust."—Chinese.

"A lamp is lit in woman's eye, that souls else lost on earth remember angels by."—N. P. Willis.

"Say the world what it will, a drachm of holiness is worth a pound of good nature."—Trapp.

"Of every woman the highest praise is that 'She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.' There is the epitome of all trustworthy and honorable character."— R. F. Horton.

[a] "As an imperishable and therefore really praiseworthy possession, there is contrasted with favor and beauty the disposition to fear God."—O. Zockler.

"If husbands and wives are each reconciled unto God in Christ, and so heirs of life and one with God, then are they truly one in God, and that is the surest and sweetest union that can be."—Abp. Leighton.

"A woman distinguished for her modesty, meekness, and prudence, and other virtues, will engage affection and respect when other accomplishments fade and decline."

"Beauty, what is it, but a dash of nature's tincture laid upon the skin, which is soon washed off with a little sickness? What, but a fair blossom which, with one hot sunbeam weltereth and falls?"

—Hall.

INDEX I.

SUBJECTS.

[*Index of archæological notes, etymologies and quotations in the margin, and of all in the body of the comment except anecdotes and illustrative matter.*]

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